



## ROCO ANNOUNCES ITS 2019–20 SEASON: “COMING OF AGE”

The 15th season from the innovative Houston-based professional music ensemble features a record-breaking 21 world premiere commissions, and an introspective series of concerts in which the musicians tell their coming of age stories through music

New pieces include a thought-provoking triptych by Bruce Adolphe, Lisa Bielawa’s examination of historically invisible women, an Erhu concerto by Kevin Lau, and an unusual duo concerto for flute and viola d’amore by Marcus Maroney.

ROCO continues to change the way audiences think about and experience classical music concerts with a reimagining of The Age of Aquarius at Rienzi, a new special partnership with the Holocaust Museum Houston, and Yuletide and New Year celebrations ROCO-style.

ROCO is thrilled to announce its 2019-20 season, entitled “Coming of Age.” To celebrate their milestone fifteenth season, ROCO will present a record-breaking 21 new commissions, bringing their total to a whopping 100 distinct premieres since their formation in 2005. Throughout the season, 15 of these new works — comprising the FIFteen project: Fanfares, Interludes, and Finales, organized by Mark Buller — will be sprinkled among each series.



This year's ***In Concert*** Series is built around these new commissions and will explore themes of hope, beauty, and humanity. The ***Unchambered*** Series will once again redefine the role of musicians in an orchestra, with the players curating their own concert programs and telling their coming of age stories through music. The ***Connections*** series continues to take the music out of the concert hall and into new and unusual places with the return of the beloved ROCO Brass Quintet's Yuletide Concert & Coffee at a new location, Beer & Brass ringing in the New Year again at Saint Arnold Brewing Company, a reimagining of the Age of Aquarius at Rienzi, and a new special partnership with the Holocaust Museum Houston to inaugurate their newly opened building.

“Having been a docent at the HMM,” said founder and principal oboist Alecia Lawyer, “their message of hope is what I always want our language of music to convey.”

Additionally, ROCO is pleased to welcome Mei-Ann Chen as their first-ever Artistic Partner, returning each season for a dynamic collaborative concert, and to work closely with ROCO as a creative and thought partner moving forward. Chen led their debut recording “Visions Take Flight” this past season and will be conducting the season opener on September 27 and 28.



Mei-Ann Chen, Conductor

“ROCO comes of age in this anniversary 15th season through exploring the individual musical journeys of our musicians and collectively building a vast new repertoire for our field,” says Alecia Lawyer. “We are blazing a trail for the creation of innovative and community-specific arts groups around our country and look forward to inviting our audience into deeper musical conversations.”

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## ROCO 2019–20 SEASON

### *IN CONCERT* SERIES



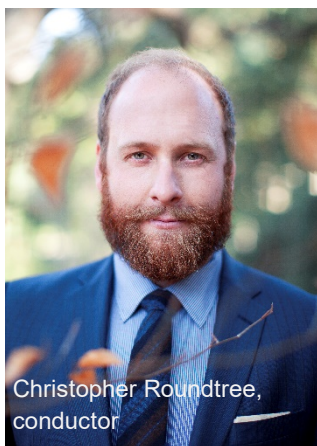
Laurie Rubin, mezzo-soprano

ROCO's *In Concert* series, which showcases the full 40-piece orchestra in live-streamed performances, kicks off **September 27 and 28** with "Time for Hope," a concert built around a world premiere by Lisa Bielawa entitled *Centuries in the Hours*, sung by mezzo-soprano Laurie Rubin, which features as text a collection of personal writings by American women of the 18th–20th centuries whose life circumstances rendered them historically invisible. The concert also highlights ROCO's first-ever Artistic Partner, conductor Mei-Ann Chen, who will be returning each season for spirited collaborations. Chen will additionally conduct works by local Houston composer Alejandro Basulto, Franz Joseph Haydn, and Judith Shatin, whose piece will be accompanied by photos by Libbie Masterson.

On **November 16**, ROCO will present "Hope for Beauty," featuring the premiere of Bruce Adolphe's full chamber orchestra piece *I too Bleed, and Hope for Beauty*, which is a tribute both to Alma Rosé, conductor of the women's orchestra at Auschwitz and niece of Gustav Mahler, and to the enduring power of music, which, even in the worst circumstances imaginable, offers hope and beauty. Alastair Willis returns to ROCO as conductor, also leading additional works by Edward Elgar, Giya Kancheli, and Manuel de Falla.



Bruce Adolphe, composer



Christopher Roundtree,  
conductor

The series will continue with "Beauty is in the Eye" on **February 8**, and the premiere of a new concerto by Kevin Lau for the Erhu, a traditional Chinese stringed instrument, which will be performed by Andy Lin and conducted by Christopher Roundtree, who will be making his ROCO debut. Also featured will be William Grant Still's tone poem *Darker America*, exploring themes of sorrow, hope, and prayer, plus works by Missy Mazzoli, François Rebel, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

The season concludes on **May 2** with "Eye of the World," conducted by Shi-Yeon Sung, also making her ROCO debut. Featured will be the premiere of a duo concerto for flute and viola d'amore by Marcus Maroney, written for ROCO husband and wife musicians Matthew Dane and Christina Jennings, and Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and Milhaud's *La Creation du Monde* will round out the program.



Shi-Yeon Sung, conductor



## *UNCHAMBERED SERIES*

The ROCO Unchambered Series will once again redefine the role of musicians in an orchestra, with players curating their own concert programs and telling their coming of age stories through music. The series starts on **October 19** with clarinetists Nathan Williams and Maiko Sasaki performing “Mendelssohn to Maroney: ROCO Clarinetists Come of Age,” with works by Stravinsky, Michael Tenzer, Gary Schocker, Marcus Maroney, Béla Kovács, Felix Mendelssohn, Theresa Martin, and Amilcare Ponchielli. On **November 2**, concertmaster Scott St. John will present “From a Musical Awakening at Marlboro,” featuring selections from string quartets by Haydn, Mozart, Dvořák, Hindemith, Webern, Reger, and a premiere by Rob Maggio. The series continues on **February 22** with hornist Danielle Kuhlmann, and on **April 4** with ROCO founder and oboist Alecia Lawyer.



Nathan Williams & Maiko Sasaki, clarinet

Scott St. John, violin

Danielle Kuhlmann, French Horn

Alecia Lawyer, oboe

## CONNECTIONS SERIES



ROCO's Connections Series will continue to take classical music outside of the concert hall and bring it to new and unexpected places. In **December**, a Concert and Coffee will celebrate Yuletide, and on **January 9**, Beer and Brass will ring in the New Year again at Saint Arnold Brewing Company with good music, good food, and good company. The Age of Aquarius gets a reimagining with the help of composer and lecturer, Robert Greenberg of The Great Courses on **January 30** at Rienzi, exploring music from the '70's - that is, the 1770s, 1870s, and 1970s. ROCO is honored to partner with the Holocaust Museum Houston this season to celebrate the opening of their new building with a chamber concert featuring premieres of two of Bruce Adolphe's triptych of commissions, for oboe, cello, and piano on **March 5**.



## CHRONOLOGICAL LISTING

**September 27 & 28, 2019**

Time for Hope | In Concert

**October 19, 2019**

Nathan Williams & Maiko Sasaki (clarinet) | Unchambered

**November 2, 2019**

Scott St. John (violin, concertmaster) | Unchambered

**November 16, 2019**

Hope for Beauty | In Concert

**December 2019**

Yuletide Concert & Coffee | Connections

**January 9, 2020**

Beer & Brass @ St. Arnold | Connections

**January 30, 2020**

Age of Aquarius @ Rienzi | Connections

**February 8, 2020**

Beauty is in the Eye | In Concert

**February 22, 2020**

Danielle Kuhlmann (Horn) | Unchambered

**March 5, 2020**

Holocaust Museum Houston | Connections

**April 4, 2020**

Alecia Lawyer (Oboe) | Unchambered

**May 2, 2020**

Eye of the World | In Concert

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## ABOUT ROCO

ROCO is a dynamic and innovative professional music ensemble that flexes from 1 to 40 players from all over the US and Canada, with guest artists from around the world. Performing intimate concerts in dozens of venues, ROCO's musicians don't just give concerts – they challenge preconceptions, create extraordinary experiences, and foster new relationships with audiences through the language of music.

Expanding the repertoire, ROCO has premiered over 75 commissions from living American composers. ROCO embraces technology, with free worldwide concert live-streams and real-time artist commentary via a smartphone app, as well as on-demand recordings of past concerts via The Listening Room. A vital part of the community, ROCO concert DVDs are sent to nursing homes and hospitals to bring music to those immobile communities, and their music education/childcare program attracts multigenerational audiences.