

A Stitch in Time



ROCO In Concert • A Stitch in Time

November 13 • 5:00 PM • The Church of St. John the Divine

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November 13, 2021 • 5:00 PM

Live from The Church of St. John the Divine



Jeri Lynne Johnson,
conductor

Richard Belcher,
cello

Mark Adamo,
composer

Hilary Purrington

*Threshold**

ROCO COMMISSION WORLD PREMIERE

-----3 minutes-----

Mark Adamo (Ah-DAH-moh)

Last Year

I. Autumn: Dismissing Eunice • II. Winter: Le triangle noir
III. Spring: Zephaniah 1:14-15 • IV. Summer: For Julia, born 2045

ROCO CO-COMMISSION TEXAS PREMIERE

-----25 minutes-----

Jonathan Peters

Arthropod Suite

[featuring images from the
Houston Museum of Natural Science Cockrell Butterfly Center
and the Houston Arboretum & Nature Center]

-----11 minutes-----



Ludwig van Beethoven (BAY-tow-van)

Symphony 8 in F Major, Op. 93

I. Allegro vivace e con brio • II. Allegretto scherzando
III. Tempo di menuetto • IV. Allegro vivace

-----26 minutes-----

*Part of Season FIFteen (Fanfares, Interludes, and Finales) Commissioning Project
that was postponed due to COVID-19.

Please see page 12 for instructions on how to access *LiveNote*.

This evening's program is listed in concert order, plus possible surprises,
should last approximately 90 minutes with no intermission

Gavin Reed
Beverly & Bill Coit
Chair

Rachel Childers*
Principal
Musician Consortium
Chair

Horn

Sandor Ostlund
Principal
Leslie & Jack Blanton
Chair

Erik Gronfor
Founding Consortium
Chair

Bass



Andreea Muț
Jim Cross
Chair

Piano

Rachel Jordan
Amanda McMillian &
Benjamin Holloway
Chair

Amy Thiaville
Musician Consortium
Chair

Violin I

* ROCO guest musicians

Melissa Williams*
Mrs. Clare A. Glassell
Chair

Mary Reed
Musician Consortium
Chair

Scott St. John
Concertmaster Consortium
Chair

Philip Borter*

**Courtenay Vandiver
Pereira**
Musician Consortium
Chair

Cello

Shino Hayashi
The Deshpande-Helmer Family
Chair

Richard Belcher
Principal
Denman/Newman
Foundation
Chair

Maiko Sasaki
Founding Consortium
Chair

Clarinet

Brook Ferguson
Principal
Mary Margaret &
Russell Schulze II
Chair

**Rebecca Powell
Garfield**

Flute/Piccolo

Nathan Williams
Principal
Jeanie Flowers
in loving memory of
Dan Flowers
Chair



**Jeri Lynne
Johnson**
Conductor
Consortium

Kristin Wolfe Jensen
Principal
Sarah & Jeffrey McParland
in memory of Angeleen McParland
Chair

Bassoon

Alecia Lawyer
Principal
Mike Stude
Chair

Oboe

Spring Hill
Musician Consortium
Chair

Meredith Harris
Kit Gwin
Chair

Andy Lin*
Principal
Susanne & Randall Evans
Chair

Viola

Lorento Golofeev
Musician Consortium
Chair

Lizzy Charles*

Kana Kimura
Ann & Randy Fowler
Chair

Rasa Kalesnykaite
Principal

George Chase
Musician Consortium
Chair

Trumpet

Anthony DiLorenzo*
Principal
Lori and Joseph Flowers
Chair

Trombone

Thomas Hultén
Principal
Musician Consortium
Chair

Christina Carroll
Principal
Susan Whitfield
Chair

Craig Hauschildt
Gretchen & Andrew McFarland
Chair

Timpani & Percussion

Laurie Meister
Principal
Founding Consortium
Chair

Harp

Tammy Linn
Founding Consortium
Chair

Pasha Sabouri
John Bradshaw Jr.
Chair

Ben Grube
Musician Consortium
Chair

Violin II

Andrés González
Ali & Frank Donnelly, III
Chair



Jeri Lynne **Johnson** *Guest Conductor*

Conductor Consortium



Jeri Lynne Johnson is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra which she established in 2008 as a model for the 21st-century orchestra. The hallmark of Black Pearl has been its total commitment to bringing a younger, more culturally-diverse audience to classical music and as the Music Director and creative force behind Black Pearl, Ms. Johnson conceives and designs all concert, outreach and educational programming to reinforce this commitment. Through unique

collaborations with some of the city's great institutions like the Free Library of Philadelphia, the Barnes Foundation, and Opera Philadelphia among others that create classical music experiences that blur the lines between audience and performers, Black Pearl has garnered critical acclaim for its innovative audience engagement activities from the National Endowment for the Arts and is the only organization ever to win three prestigious Knight Foundation Arts Challenge grants.

A graduate of Wellesley College, Ms. Johnson began conducting while completing a Master's Degree in music theory and history at the University of Chicago and in 1998 she won the Jorge Mester Conducting Scholarship to attend the Aspen Music Festival. Since then, her conducting teachers and mentors have included Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop, Daniel Barenboim, and John Harbison. In 2005 Ms. Johnson made history as the first African-American woman to win an international conducting prize when she was awarded the Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship.

Ms. Johnson's conducting engagements have included orchestras around the world including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Colorado Symphony, Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, Chicago Sinfonietta, Bournemouth Symphony (UK) and the Weimar Staatskapelle (Germany).

Her conducting repertoire is unusually broad and has led her to performances of premieres of leading classical composers as well as a ground-breaking collaboration at Carnegie Hall with rapper Jay Z, singer/songwriter Alicia Keys, and hip hop band The Roots.

A recipient of many civic, community and artistic honors, including a 2011 Woman of Distinction from the Philadelphia Business Journal, 2010 British American Project Fellow, 2010 Philly 360 Creative Ambassador by the Greater Philadelphia Tourism and Marketing Corporation, Ms. Johnson has been featured in numerous magazines and newspapers as well as television and radio shows including 20/20 and the "Tavis Smiley Show" on NPR and she was heralded as one of today's leading young women conductors on the NBC Today Show alongside prominent woman conductors Marin Alsop and Joann Falletta.

Mark **Adamo** *Commissioned Composer*

American composer-librettist **Mark Adamo's** latest opera, *Becoming Santa Claus*, was released on DVD/Blu-Ray in September 2017; it was commissioned and introduced by Dallas Opera in December 2015. The DVD release follows a new production in Boulder, Colorado, which Adamo directed, of a chamber version of *The Gospel of Mary Magdalene*, his third full-length opera, which was commissioned and introduced by San Francisco Opera in June 2013 and which itself followed a busy season of opera and chamber



premieres. In May 2012, Fort Worth Opera opened its first production of his second opera, *Lysistrata*; that September, the Constella Festival in Cincinnati opened their season with *August Music*, for flute duo and string quartet, commissioned by Sir James and Lady Jeanne Galway; in December, Sasha Cooke and the New York Festival of Song introduced *The Racer's Widow*,

...continued

a cycle of five American poems for mezzo-soprano, cello, and piano; and, in April 2013, baritone Thomas Hampson and the Jupiter String Quartet introduced Aristotle, after the poem by Billy Collins, in concerts at the Mondavi Center in Davis, California before continuing to Boston and New York under the auspices of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

Adamo first attracted national attention with his uniquely celebrated début opera, *Little Women*, after the Alcott novel. Introduced by Houston Grand Opera in 1998 and revived there in 2000, *Little Women* is one of the most frequently performed American operas of the last fifteen years, with more than 80 national and international engagements in cities ranging from New York to Minneapolis, Toronto, Chicago, San Francisco, Adelaide, Perth, Mexico City, Brugges, Banff, Calgary, and Tokyo, where it served as the official U.S. cultural entrant to the 2005 World Expo. The Houston Grand Opera revival (2000) was telecast by PBS/WNET on Great Performances in 2001 and released on CD by Ondine that same year; in fall 2010, Naxos released this performance on DVD and on Blu-ray. (*Little Women* was the first American opera recorded in high-definition television.) Comparable enthusiasm greeted the début of the larger-scaled *Lysistrata*, Adamo's second opera, adapted from Aristophanes' comedy but also including elements from Sophocles' *Antigone*. *Lysistrata* was commissioned by Houston Grand Opera for its 50th anniversary and introduced in March 2005: its New York City Opera debut in March 2006 led to concert performances by Washington National Opera (May 2006) and Music at the Modern by the Van Cliburn Foundation (May 2007) before the new staging of the work at Fort Worth Opera in spring 2012, which was included on the best-of-2012 lists of both *D Magazine* and the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*.

While Adamo's principal work continues to be for the opera house, over the past 5 years he has ventured not only into chamber music but also into symphonic and choral composition. Adamo's first concerto, *Four Angels*, for harp and orchestra, was commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra and debuted in June 2007: the Utah Symphony, led by their

Music Director Emeritus, Keith Lockhart, presented *Four Angels* in January 2011. In May 2007, Washington's Eclipse Chamber Orchestra, for which Adamo served as its first composer-in-residence, performed the revised version of Adamo's *Late Victorians*, a cantata for singing voice, speaking voice, and orchestra: Naxos released *Late Victorians* in 2009 on Eclipse's all-Adamo CD, which also included Alcott Music, from *Little Women*, for strings, harp, celesta, and percussion; "Regina Coeli," an arrangement of the slow movement of *Four Angels* for harp and strings alone; and the Overture to *Lysistrata* for medium orchestra. In April of 2010, Harold Rosenbaum's New York Virtuoso Singers paired six of Adamo's newly-published choral scores with the complete chamber-choral work of John Corigliano. This concert featured the New York premières of *Cantate Domino* (after Psalm 91,) *Pied Beauty* and *God's Grandeur* (Gerard Manley Hopkins; commissioned by the Gregg Smith Singers,) *Matewan Music* (Appalachian folk-tune variations,) *Supreme Virtue* (Stephen Mitchell's translation of the Tao te Ching,) and *The Poet Speaks of Praising* (Rilke: commissioned and introduced by Chanticleer.)

Composer-in-residence at New York City Opera from 2001 through 2006, where he led the VOX: Showcasing American Composers program, Adamo also served as Master Artist at Atlantic Center for the Arts in May 2003. Since 2007 he has served as the principal teacher of American Lyric Theatre's Composer-Librettist Development Program in New York, in which he coaches teams of composers and librettists in developing their work for the stage.

Adamo began his education in the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, where, as a freshman in the Dramatic Writing Program, he received the Paulette Goddard Remarque Scholarship for outstanding undergraduate achievement in playwriting. He went on to earn a Bachelor of Music Degree cum laude in composition in 1990 from the Catholic University of America. His music is published exclusively by G. Schirmer, Inc.

Richard **Belcher** *Cello*

Denman-Newman Foundation Chair



New Zealand cellist **Richard Belcher** has performed as ROCO's principal cellist since 2008. He is also active as a chamber musician and soloist across the USA and internationally. He is a founding member of the Grammy-nominated Enso String Quartet, which boasts multiple highly acclaimed recordings and regular performances in many of the major concert halls, including Carnegie Hall, the Lincoln Center of New York, and the Library of Congress.

Richard has appeared at many festivals, including those in France, the UK, Brazil, Australia, Mexico, Canada, and throughout the U.S. He has been involved with many live and pre-recorded radio, TV, and internet broadcasts in the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the UK.

Richard enjoys teaching and has served as Adjunct Faculty at the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University, Boston University Tanglewood Institute, and currently is on the faculty at the Interlochen Adult Chamber Music Camp.

Richard moved to the U.S. in 1998 to study with Aldo Parisot at Yale University, and it was there in 1999 that he founded the Enso String Quartet. Other major teachers include Norman Fischer, Marc Johnson, and Alexander Ivashkin.

Richard is married to ROCO violinist, Cecilia Belcher. When possible they enjoy playing chamber music together, and they also recently performed the Brahms Double Concerto together in St Paul, MN. They live in Minneapolis with their young son, Finn.

Hilary **Purrington**

Commissioned Composer



Hilary Purrington is a New York City-based composer of chamber, vocal, and orchestral music. Her work has received recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), the International Alliance for Women in Music, and the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMCC), among others.

Purrington's music has been performed by many distinguished ensembles, including the Minnesota Orchestra, the American Modern Ensemble, the Peabody Modern Orchestra, and the Yale Philharmonia. Recent commissions include new works for the Albany Symphony, the New York Youth Symphony, and the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra. Upcoming projects include commissions from the American Composers Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Also an accomplished vocalist, Purrington has developed a reputation as a skilled composer of solo and choral music. Recent vocal commissions include new works for the Melodia Women's Choir of NYC, Yale Glee Club, inFLUX, and the Bowers/Fader Duo. In April 2019, C4: The Choral Composer/Conductor Collective premiered John Eason Stops Preaching, a new work with words by contemporary poet Julia Bouwsma.

Purrington holds degrees from the Yale School of Music, The Juilliard School, and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

----- www.hilarypurrington.com -----

ROCO has an App for our LiveNote!

In keeping with our commitment to innovation, ROCO has partnered with InstantEncore to bring you the ROCO App! On the app, you can access LiveNote which brings you unique, real-time commentary during the concert. The ROCO App also keeps you up-to-date on everything ROCO between concerts.

Here's how you can get in on the action:

- Place your phone on "silent" or "do not disturb".
- Go to the **App Store** or **Google Play**, search for "**ROCO Houston**", and download the app to your phone.
- Open the ROCO app.
- LiveNote only runs during specific pieces (check your program). When it's time, you'll see a "LiveNote" icon along the bottom menu of the app. Tap this to launch LiveNote and access the musician commentary.
- On the next screen, tap on the highlighted box around the name of the first movement and LiveNote will automatically advance once the music starts.
- Two fun features: The dot at the bottom of the screen shows where we are in the piece, and if you see any highlighted terms, you can tap on them to view a definition.
- In a multi-movement piece, each movement will start automatically – just sit back and enjoy!



I. Hilary Purrington:

Threshold

■ **Quick Intro:** Commissioned by ROCO for the FIFteen commissioning initiative. This is the world premiere performance..

■ **In her own words:** Purrington writes, "*Threshold* is a quirky fanfare that struggles to contain its energy within pulsating rhythms and chorale-like harmonies."

■ **Using the Entire Palette:** Listen to how the composer 'paints' with sound by dove-tailing instruments and instrument sections, shifting the sound around the ensemble. This effect is heightened by her choice to begin with all the instruments playing a single note – a C-sharp – and only gradually expanding the pitches as well. Then by instructing various sections to grow and diminish in volume in different, non-overlapping places, the texture of the piece becomes three-dimensional, a gently rolling sea.

■ **Further Listening:** For a piece which explores similar orchestration devices, take a listen to Purrington's guitar concerto *Harp of Nerves*, commissioned by American Composers Orchestra.



Buller *Points* by Mark Buller



II. Mark Adamo:

Last Year

■ **Quick Intro:** A co-commission with American Composers Orchestra, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and Manitoba Chamber Orchestra. The piece is being co-premiered this month, with performances in Berkeley, Palo Alto, San Francisco, and Houston.

■ **Movements:**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| I. Autumn: Dismissing Eunice | II. Winter: Le triangle noir |
| III. Spring: Zephaniah 1:14-15 | IV. Summer: For Julia, born 2045 |

■ **In his own words:** "In 2018, for reasons that don't really matter now, I'd listened - really listened - to a new-to-me recording of Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. And I marveled: not only at the score's vigor and clarity, but at its innocence, too - as it portrayed each season offering its own delights and terrors while still yielding, safely, to the next. The recording finished: I turned to the news, and learned that - due to the latest in our series of once-in-a-lifetime-except-now-every-year storms - a hurricane had left the city of Houston nearly drowned.

"Vivaldi couldn't write those scores today, I thought. But - if he were alive now, and knew what we know - what would he write?

"*Last Year* is my answer. While *Four Seasons* is a cycle of four concerti for violin and strings, mine is a single concerto in four movements (the last three played without pause) for the richer-voiced cello; I also add to the string ensemble a choir of piano, harp, timpani, and ringing percussion. A fanfare that shifts, uneasily, between the major and minor modes precedes *I: Autumn: Dismissing Eunice*. The title remembers Eunice Foote, the American scientist who was the first scientist - in 1856! - to describe and theorize what we now call the greenhouse effect. This music weaves a single melodic thread from Vivaldi's Autumn concerto into a polymetric

scherzo of nervous and glittering character; it's interrupted, twice, by a tolling procession of chords in the percussion choir - too slow and separated in register, just now, to comprise a recognizable theme. Ignoring those interruptions, the scherzo barrels headlong to an ambiguous conclusion.

"In January of 1998, a once-in-a-lifetime ice storm struck North America, causing so much havoc that Canada had to deploy more military personnel than the country had sent during the entire Korean War to address the damage. Because the available images of that storm remain stunningly beautiful - the Canadian terrain seems rendered an eerily silent ice sculpture of itself - one could forget that the area south of Montreal was without power for so many weeks that English media nicknamed it "The Triangle of Darkness." Remembering this, my second movement, *Winter: Le Triangle Noir* introduces an original theme of hushed, awed character as more rumours of Vivaldi murmur in the background: when the percussion choir interrupts again as it had before, its material accelerates and condenses until we can identify it as one of our oldest musical tropes of warning.

"The text which gives that trope its name can be read in the title of the next movement. Two solo cadenzas - one stunned, one vehement - frame *Spring: Zephaniah 1:14-15*, in which the motto from the Vivaldi's Spring alternately outruns itself at breakneck speed or slows to a crawl in the lowest registers of both cello and orchestra: spurred by the racing soloist, the ensemble attempts a final time to retrieve the feeling, the faith of that baroque theme. It cannot: and the orchestra refracts into, almost literally, a thundercloud of sound - a cluster which begins in noise, little by little acquires pitch, and just as gradually loses pitch, evanescent until only the soloist, serenely maintaining a low B-natural, can be heard.

"Now begins, without pause, the finale: *Summer: For Julia, born 2045*, in which the cello, in a harmonic landscape emptied of everything but sustained bass tones and the cries of seagulls, attempts to speak a promise into the future. But - even as the orchestra takes up and develops, harmonically, that determined theme - the solo cello cannot help, for a moment, but lose itself in recrimination. Memories of chaos, and that opening premonition, return to haunt the final moments: but the cello maintains the last word."

■ **Further Listening:** Make some time to listen to Adamo's best known piece, the chamber opera *Little Women*.

III. Jonathan Peters: *Arthropod Suite*

■ **Quick Intro:** Written in 2016. This performance is accompanied by images from the Houston Museum of Natural Science and the Houston Arboretum.

■ **Movements:**

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| I. Balletic Butterflies | II. Gambading Grasshoppers |
| III. Assiduous Ants | IV. Spine-Tingling Spiders |
| V. Circumambulating Centipedes | VI. Dexterous Dragonflies |
| VII. Bellicose Beetles | |

■ **About the composer:** Peters is a Colorado-based composer working in a wide array of genres, from opera and symphonic music to choral and piano works. His books for children, with accompanying music, have gained him special attention.

■ **Guide to Bugs:** Listen to how deftly Peters depicts the idiosyncrasies of these little animals. Butterflies are heard in oscillating winds and string *glissandi*; grasshoppers with jumping grace notes; and ants in an ever-tudging line.

■ **Further Listening:**

More music about bugs: Grieg, "The Butterfly" from *Lyric Pieces*, op. 43; Josquin, *El Grillo* ('The Cricket'); Mussorgsky, "Song of the Flea."

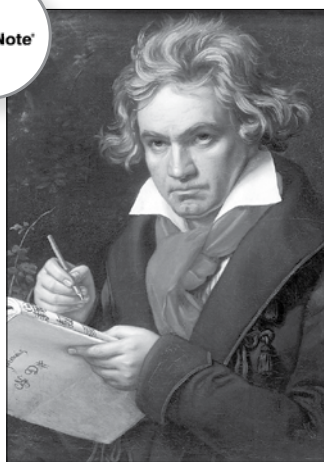
IV. Ludwig van Beethoven:

Symphony 8 in F Major, Op. 93



■ **Quick Intro:** Written in 1812; premiered, with Beethoven conducting, at the Vienna Redoutensaal, a concert hall in the Hofburg, the imperial palace of the Habsburg Dynasty.

■ **In a sunny mood:** Beethoven seems to have preferred to write some of his symphonies in pairs, and the 7th and 8th are no exception. Much as the creation and premieres of the Fifth and Sixth overlapped, so did these two, with premieres just three months apart. By this time



Beethoven's hearing loss was becoming ever-more alarmingly acute, and he was plagued by family, health, and financial woes – and yet the piece seems almost to look backwards to the sunny final movement of the Sixth "Pastoral" symphony. You hear the influence of Haydn here, certainly, but there are all the usual Beethoven-isms as well.

■ **Famous for . . .** It's kind of ironic that the piece for which Beethoven was best known in the years following the premiere of the Eighth was the slight – and frankly, terrible – *Wellington's Victory*, written for a novelty music-machine called a panharmonicon and adapted for actual, live musicians. The piece was a sensation and swept across Europe, baffling the composer and us alike. Speaking of popularity, the Eighth, while lauded as a masterpiece in contemporary reviews, never quite caught on in Beethoven's lifetime (just as it lags behind the Third, Fifth, Sixth, and Ninth today). Asked why he thought this was, Beethoven replied, "because the Eighth is so much better."

■ **Too fast, or not fast enough?** In 1815, Johann Nepomuk Maelzel, the inventor of the panharmonicon, patented a metronome, and Beethoven was enraptured. He immediately added specific tempo markings even to pieces already published, and to the Eighth Symphony. But here's the problem: some of his markings seem almost impossibly fast; the last movement in particular requires, I would imagine, a good deal of (let's say) caffeine to play as marked. This has led to an interesting argument in the field of Beethoven interpretation: is the tempo marking correct, as some claim? Did the late-Romantic penchant for slowing down Beethoven just acclimate us to lumbering symphonies? Or is the marking wrong? Evidence for the latter is provided by documentation that Beethoven took his metronome – one of the first to be manufactured by Maelzel – to a watchmaker twice to correct its unsteadiness. The problem could be solved once and for all if we could just test Beethoven's own metronome, but unfortunately it was lost after being displayed in Vienna in 1921. Should you happen to find it, kindly set it to 84 bpm and see if it really ticks 84 times in a minute.

■ **Further Listening:** You know you want to go hear *Wellington's Victory* now. Go ahead. Then as a palate cleanser, compare this to the Seventh Symphony, and take a listen to the op. 95 string quartet in F minor and the op. 90 piano sonata in E minor, both completed in 1814.



- We launched ROCO On The Go, planting QR codes all over Houston for free access to our music (also coming soon to more locations)

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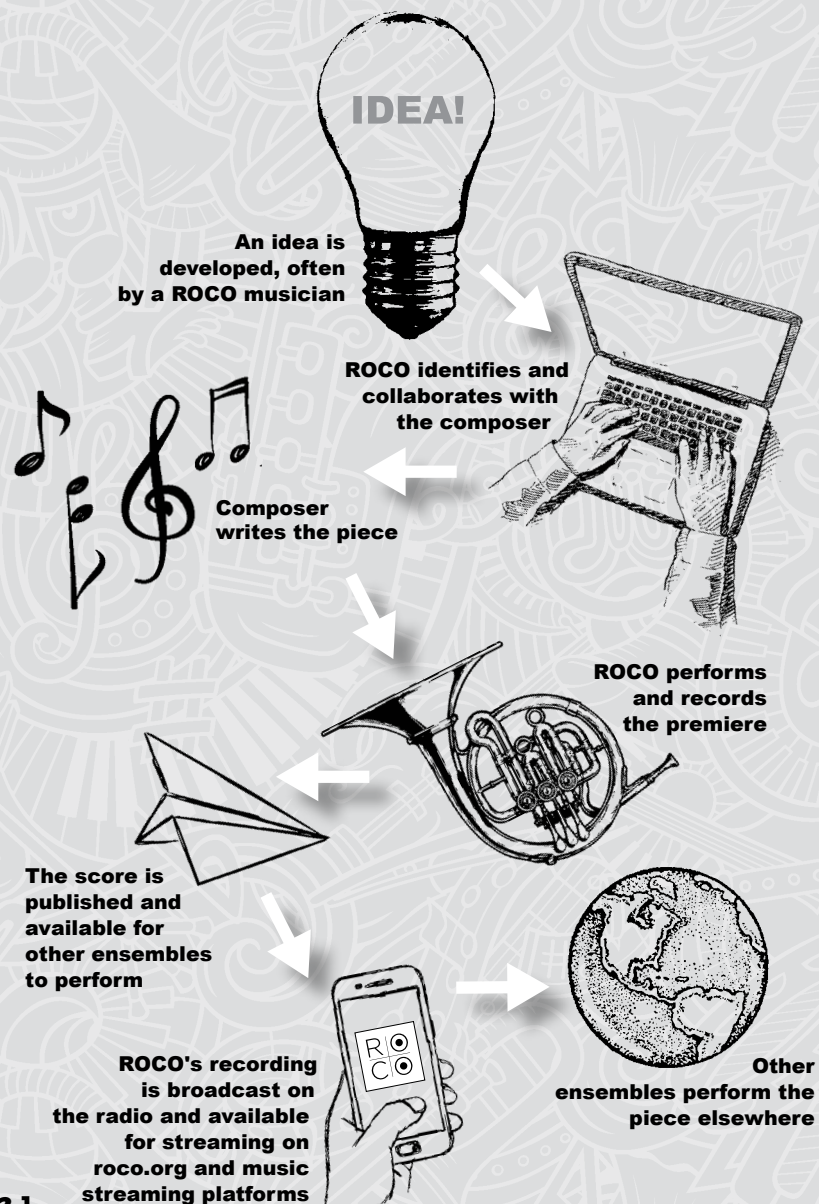
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**Every commission has a unique story,
but they all have a similar path...**



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re•sound:

verb, 1. fill a place with sound; be loud enough to echo

Every new piece of music starts quietly with an idea, which grows louder when it is premiered, and eventually reverberates through audiences and the world as it is performed again and again. ROC O has commissioned and performed the world premiere of over 100 new works over our history, making us the 3rd highest commissioner of new music in the United States.

re•sound:

verb, 2. sing the praises of

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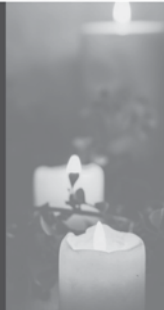
VIRTUAL: **NOV 21**
2:00 PM CT
Houston Chamber Choir
Digital Stage



Candlelight Christmas

IN-PERSON: **DEC 10** | 7:30 PM CT
DEC 11 | 3:30 & 7:30 PM CT
Christ Church Cathedral,
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VIRTUAL: **DEC 26**
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Houston Chamber Choir
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A Dust in Time

November 19 • 7:00 PM

Asia Society Texas Center

Yuletide Brunch & Brass

December 11 • 11:00 AM

Czech Center Museum Houston

Beer & Brass

January 13 • 6:00 PM

Saint Arnold Brewing Co.

A House of My Own

January 22 • 7:00 PM

Rienzi

Ties That Bind

February 5 • 5:00 PM

MATCH

Canvassing the Earth

February 26 • 5:00 PM

The Church of St. John the Divine

Tapestry

March 12 • 5:00 PM

MATCH

Pulling at Strings

March 26 • 5:30 PM

Holocaust Museum Houston

Spinning Tales

April 2 • 5:00 PM

MATCH

Tying Up Loose Ends

April 23 • 5:00 PM

The Church of St. John the Divine

Interwoven

May 7 • 10:00 AM, 12:00, 2:00,

4:00 & 6:00 PM

Buffalo Bayou Park Cistern

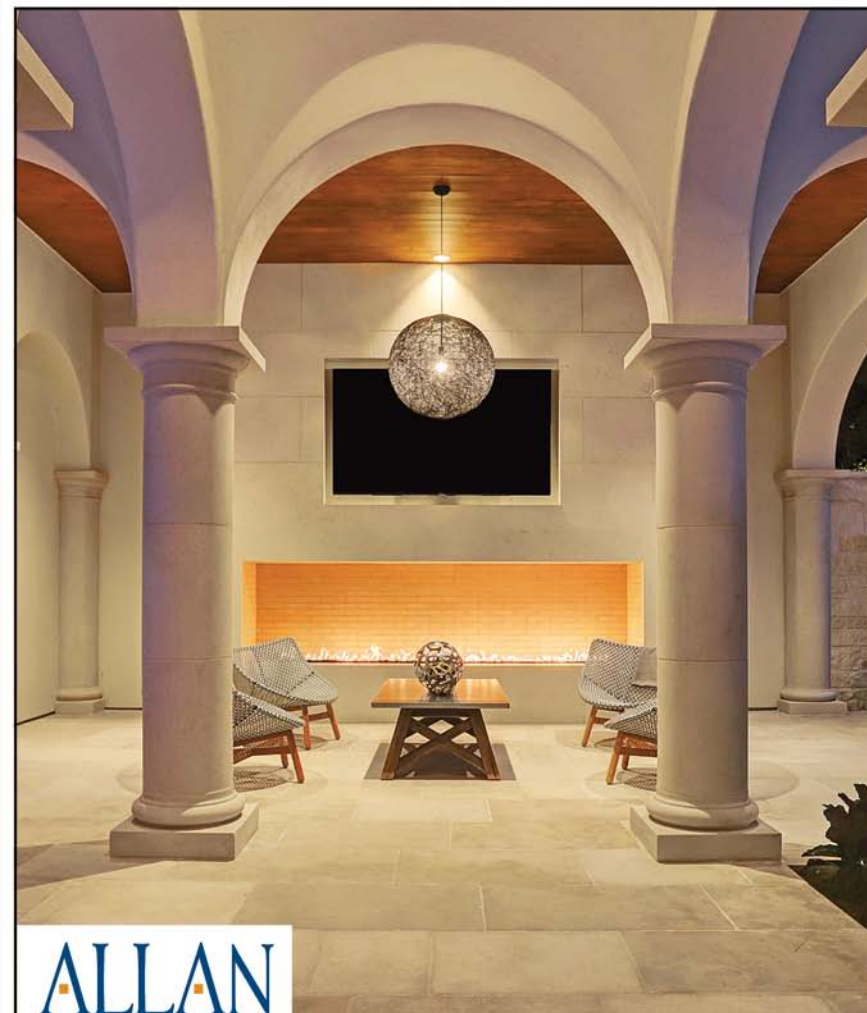
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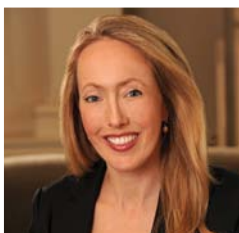
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