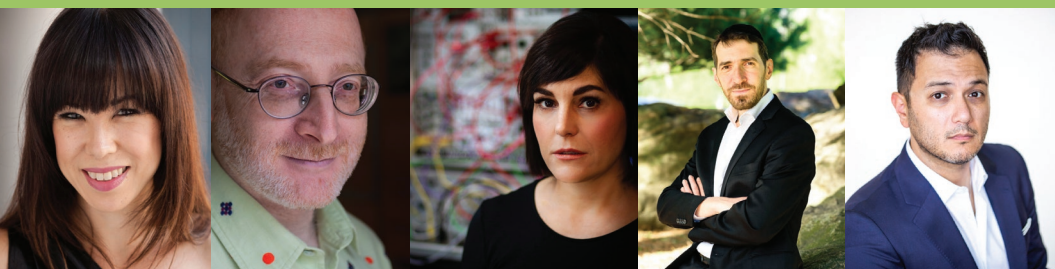


Canvasing THE EARTH



ROCO In Concert · *Canvasing the Earth*

February 26 • 5:00 PM • The Church of St. John the Divine

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– Arts + Culture Texas

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---IN CONCERT SERIES---



Saturday, February 26, 2022 • 5:00 PM

Live from The Church of St. John the Divine

Canvasing THE EARTH

Sarah Hicks,
conductor

Nicholas Phan,
tenor

Aaron Jay Kernis,
composer

Leanna Primiani,
composer

Jonathan Leshnoff,
composer



Aaron Jay Kernis

Earth

I. Seasons — 19 minutes — • II. Farewell — 10 minutes —

-----29 minutes total-----

ROCO CO-COMMISSIONED WORLD PREMIERE

Jonathan Leshnoff

Score

-----5 minutes-----

ROCO CO-COMMISSIONED WORLD PREMIERE

-----Take 5 - Intermission-----

Leanna Primiani (Prih-mee-AH-nee)

Neither men nor money validate my worth

ROCO World Premiere commissioned by the League of American Orchestras
with the generous support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

Images courtesy of The New Abolitionists

-----8 minutes-----

Modest Mussorgsky (Muh-ZORG-ski)

Pictures at an Exhibition arr. Alan Gout (GOWT)

-----30 minutes-----

Images courtesy of The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

Please see page 13 for instructions on how to access *LiveNote*.

Unusually, this evening's program is listed in concert order.

Media Sponsor:

TexasMonthly



Gavin Reed
*Beverly & Bill Coit
Chair*

Julie Thayer*
*Principal
Musician Consortium
Chair*

Horn

Saxophone

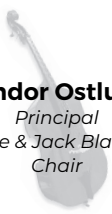
Nathan Williams
*Principal
Jeanie Flowers
in loving memory of
Dan Flowers
Chair*

Woody Witt*



Maiko Sasaki
*Founding Consortium
Chair*

Clarinet



Sandor Ostlund
*Principal
Leslie & Jack Blanton
Chair*



Erik Gronfor
*Founding Consortium
Chair*

Bass



Garrett Hudson*

Brook Ferguson
*Principal
Mary Margaret &
Russell Schulze II
Chair*

Flute/Piccolo



Andrea Muş
*Jim Cross
Chair*

Piano



**Courtenay Vandiver
Pereira**
*Musician Consortium
Chair*

Philip Borter*



Richard Belcher
*Principal
Denman/Newman
Foundation
Chair*

Cello



Shino Hayashi
*The Deshpande-Helmer Family
Chair*



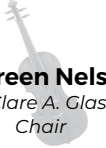
Mary Reed
*Musician Consortium
Chair*



Min-Jeong Koh
*Musician Consortium
Chair*



Pasha Sabouri
*John Bradshaw Jr.
Chair*



Maureen Nelson
*Mrs. Clare A. Glassell
Chair*

Violin I



Aloysia Friedmann
*Musician Consortium
Chair*



Scott St. John
*Concertmaster Consortium
Chair*

* ROCO guest musicians



Kristin Wolfe Jensen

Principal

*Sarah & Jeffrey McParland
in memory of Angeleen McParland
Chair*

**Bassoon/
Contrabassoon**

Daniel Chrisman

*Jo Ann & Bob Fry
Chair*

Alecia Lawyer

*Principal
Mike Stude
Chair*

Spring Hill

*Musician Consortium
Chair*

Oboe/English Horn

Meredith Harris

*Kit Gwin
Chair*

Melissa Reardon*

*Principal
Susanne & Randall Evans
Chair*

Viola

Lizzy Charles*

*Musician Consortium
Chair*

Lorento Golofeev

*Leslie & Jim Loftis
Chair*

George Chase

*Musician Consortium
Chair*

Trumpet

Travis Peterson*

*Principal
Lori and Joseph Flowers
Chair*

Trombone



Thomas Hytén
*Musician Consortium
Chair*

Christina Carroll

*Susan Whitfield
Chair*

**Timpani &
Percussion**

Matt McClung

*Principal
Gretchen & Andrew McFarland
Chair*

Craig Hauschildt

Laurie Meister

*Founding Consortium
Chair*

Harp

Tammy Linn Dawe

*Founding Consortium
Chair*

Ben Grube

*Amanda McMillian & Benjamin
Holloway
Chair*

Kana Kimura

*Ann & Randy Fowler
Chair*

Anabel Detrick*

Musician Consortium

Andrés González

*Ali & Frank Donnelly, III
Chair*

Violin II

Rasa Kalesnykaite

*Principal
Clark and Charlene
Thompson Foundation
Chair*

**Sarah
Hicks**

*Conductor
Consortium*

Sarah **Hicks** *Guest Conductor*

Conductor Consortium



Sarah Hicks's versatile and vibrant musicianship has secured her place as an in-demand conductor across an array of genres, and as an educator, arranger, producer, writer and speaker committed to creating connections through music. Her career has seen collaborations with diverse artists, from Hilary Hahn and Dmitiri Hvorostovsky to Rufus Wainwright, Jennifer Hudson and Smokey Robinson; during the summer of

2011 she toured with Sting as conductor of his Symphonycities Tour. Her passion for cross-genre partnerships led to a 2019 album with rap artist Dessa and the Minnesota Orchestra, with whom she holds a titled position.

A specialist in film music and the film in concert genre, she is thrilled to create concert experiences which combine sight and sound, and that welcome new audiences to the orchestral genre. She has premiered "Pixar in Concert" and Disney-Pixar's "Coco"; her live concert recordings can be seen on Disney+ (A Celebration of the Music from Coco) and heard on broadcast for ABC (The Little Mermaid). Her concerts with the Danish National Symphony Orchestra of film music, "The Morricone Duel" was released as an album in 2018, has been broadcast around the world and has garnered over 80 million view on YouTube.

A highly sought-after guest conductor, Ms. Hicks has worked extensively both in the States and abroad. Notable ensembles

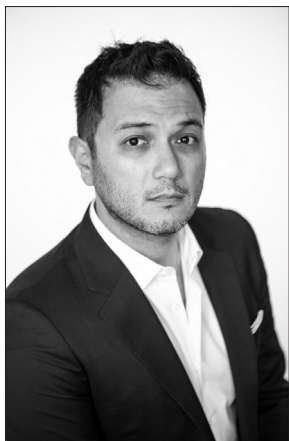
include the Philadelphia Orchestra, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Boston Pops, Cincinnati Pops, Dallas Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Melbourne Symphony, RTE (Dublin) Orchestra, Czech National Symphony Orchestra, St. Petersburg Philharmonic, Tokyo Philharmonic, and Malaysian Philharmonic, among others. Her opera appearances include the East Slovak State Opera Theater and the Curtis Opera Theater, as well as operas in concert with the Minnesota Orchestra and RTE Orchestra. Her commitment to new music led to the creation of an innovative micro-commission project which led to the premier of a major work by Judd Greenstein, and her recording of new concertos, "Triple Doubles" has been released by the Bridge label.

Dedicated to passing on to young musicians her passion for connecting to audiences, Ms. Hicks is a frequent guest lecturer and panelist and was on faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music from 2000 to 2005 and Staff Conductor until 2012. Her presentation, "The Art of Conducting", has illustrated the idea of collaborative leadership to numerous organizations, civic groups and corporations. Her interest in the intersection of mental health and music led to the production of a concert titled "Music and the Mind" and her commitment to open conversation about mental health issues continues through her blogs, online advocacy and development of a Musical Mindfulness course.

Sarah Hicks was born in Tokyo, Japan and raised in Honolulu, HI. Trained on both the piano and the viola, she was a prizewinning pianist by her early teens. She received her BA magna cum laude from Harvard University in composition. She holds an Artists' Degree in conducting from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with the late renowned pedagogue Otto-Werner Mueller. In her spare time, Ms. Hicks enjoys running, hiking, her Papillon, cooking (and eating) with her husband, traveling and blogging.

Nicholas **Phan**

Tenor



Described by the Boston Globe as “one of the world’s most remarkable singers,” American tenor **Nicholas Phan** is increasingly recognized as an artist of distinction. An artist with an incredibly diverse repertoire that spans nearly 500 years of music, he performs regularly with the world’s leading orchestras and opera companies. Phan is also an avid recitalist and a passionate advocate for art song and vocal chamber music; in 2010, Phan co-founded Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago, an organization devoted to promoting this underserved repertoire.

Phan begins the 2021-22 season with both live and virtual chamber performances focusing on themes of immigration and migration. Highlighting his exploration of these themes is a tour of the United States with the string quartet Brooklyn Rider for performances of Nico Muhly’s new song cycle, *Stranger*, and the tenth Collaborative Works Festival of the Collaborative Arts Institute of Chicago (CAIC), where he serves as curator and performer for three concerts in the festival’s 2021 iteration, *Strangers in a Strange Land*. Soon thereafter he celebrates his first musical holiday season in two years with performances of George Frideric Handel’s *Messiah* with the University Musical Society in Ann Arbor, the San Francisco Symphony, the New York Philharmonic and the Philadelphia Orchestra. He caps his calendar year making his debut with the Seattle Symphony for their New Year’s Eve concerts. Highlights of the second half of the season in 2022 include the curation of a series of salon concerts for San Francisco Performances in which he will also perform, as well as the world premiere performances of Aaron Jay Kernis’ new song cycle, *Earth*, with the Seattle Chamber Music Society, as well as returns to the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, Nashville Symphony, and Los Angeles Master Chorale. He will also release a new album on the Avie label, entirely devoted to the music of Nico Muhly, in the spring of 2022.

A celebrated recording artist, Phan’s most recent album, *Clairières*, a recording of songs by Lili and Nadia Boulanger, was nominated for the 2020 Grammy Award for Best Classical Solo Vocal Album. His album, *Gods and Monsters*,

was nominated for the same award in 2017. He remains the first and only singer of Asian descent to be nominated in the history of the category, which has been awarded by the Recording Academy since 1959. His other previous solo albums *Illuminations*, *A Painted Tale*, *Still Fall the Rain*, and *Winter Words* made many “best of” lists, including those of the *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, *Chicago Tribune*, and the *Boston Globe*.

Sought after as a curator and programmer, in addition to his work as artistic director of CAIC, Phan has also created programs for broadcast on WFMT and WQXR, and served as guest curator for projects with the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Laguna Beach Music Festival, Merola Opera Program, and San Francisco Performances, where he served as the vocal artist-in-residence from 2014-2018. Praised by the *Chicago Classical Review* as “the kind of thoughtful, intelligent programming that should be a model,” Phan’s programs often examine themes of identity, highlight unfairly underrepresented voices from history, and strive to underline the relevance of music from all periods to the currents of the present day.

Aaron Jay **Kernis**

Commissioned Composer



Pulitzer Prize and Grammy-Award winning composer **Aaron Jay Kernis** draws artistic inspiration from a vast and often surprising palette of sources, among them the limitless color spectrum and immense emotional tangle of the orchestra, cantorial music in its beauty and dark intensity, the roiling drama of world events, and the energy and drive of jazz and popular music. All are woven into the tapestry of a musical language of rich lyric splendor, vivid poetic imagery, and fierce instrumental

brilliance, and he has been praised for his “fearless originality [and] powerful voice” (*The New York Times*).

Leanna **Primiani**

Commissioned Composer



Leanna Primiani

is an award-winning composer who aims to bring together the collective experiences of the many for greater understanding. Her music asks listeners to consider deep issues and ideas related to the

female experience, as she believes that connection and thoughtful participation can catalyze powerful change. Leanna writes music that changes how listeners see themselves and the world around them. Using electronics as well as orchestral instrumentation, she explores the limits of musical form, sound, and time.

Starting out as a conductor, with credits including the National Symphony and LA Opera, she never imagined that composition would take over her life. Leanna channeled her kinesthetic experience of music-making as a conductor into her writing, with her music being championed by Bang On A Can, the Nashville Symphony, the Cabrillo Music Festival, and the Imani Chamber Music Festival in NYC.

Leanna recently won the 2020 Toulmin Commission from the League of American Orchestra and The American Composers Orchestra to compose a work for ROCO in Houston to be premiered in February 2022. Performances of her catalog include the Rochester Philharmonic, Nashville Symphony, Wheeling Symphony, American Composers Orchestra, Aspen Music Festival, United Nations 50 for Freedom campaign, International Clarinet Association (Belgium and the USA), National Flute Association, Imani Wind Festival (NYC), June In Buffalo, Left Coast Chamber

Ensemble, Harvard Women's Choral Festival, Atlanta Chamber Players, and the Hear/Now Festival in LA. Most recently, Leanna was a featured composer at the 2021 Taiwan International Flute Festival and a composer-in-residence at The Millay Colony for the Arts in Upstate NY.

A native Californian, Leanna earned a doctorate in composition from USC and has studied with such noted composers and conductors as Leonard Slatkin, Peter Eotvos, Christopher Rouse, Steven Stucky, Morten Lauridsen, and Howard Shore. She is a member of BMI and the Recording Arts and Television Academies.

Jonathan **Leshnoff**

Commissioned Composer



Grammy-nominated composer **Jonathan Leshnoff** is renowned for his music's striking harmonies, structural complexity, and powerful themes. Ranked among the most performed living composers by American orchestras in recent seasons, the Baltimore-based composer's works have been performed by over a hundred orchestras worldwide. He has received recent commissions from Carnegie Hall, the Philadelphia Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Kansas City, Nashville, and Pittsburgh. His works have been premiered by classical music's most celebrated artists, including Gil Shaham, Johannes Moser, Manuel Barrueco, Ricardo Morales, and Joyce Yang. Seven all-Leshnoff albums are commercially recorded. Leshnoff is a Professor of Music at Towson University.

About The New Abolitionists

Lynn **Savarese**, *Photographer*



For Lynn Savarese, the greatest joy of photography is the experience of intimate observation of elements from the natural world. Originally from a small town in Texas, she lived and traveled throughout the world before making New York City her home in the early '80s following her graduation from Harvard Law School. Her work having appeared in numerous exhibitions and publications worldwide, she has also received prestigious international recognition,

including being named a Finalist in the Magnum Photography Awards 2016 international competition and named a Finalist in the 11th Edition of the Julia Cameron Award for Women Photographers in each of five categories--Nature, Landscape, Children, and Open Theme.

Water is one of Savarese's favorite subjects to photograph, and to capture it, she has traveled far and wide--from the Hamptons, the Adirondacks, and Martha's Vineyard, to Iceland, Australia, the Caribbean, Patagonia, Europe, and Japan. Special recognition for her water images includes winning the Director's Award in PhotoPlace Gallery's Water 2019 Exhibition juried by Elizabeth Avedon and the Visitor's Award and Honorable Mention in the A. Smith Gallery's 2015 Water Exhibition.

Savarese's work appears in numerous private collections as well as public spaces, including The Nature Conservancy's New York office and the Auburn Theological Seminary.

Savarese also frequently works with not-for-profit organizations to help further their missions through strategic photography projects, and accepts commissions for commercial projects from time to time.

To learn more about The New Abolitionists, please visit thenewabolitionists.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!





Buller Points

by Mark Buller

I. Aaron Jay Kernis:

Earth

■ **Quick Intro:** Co-Commissioned by ROCO and Santa Fe Pro Musica. Chamber version premiered January 2022 in Seattle.

■ **In his own words:** "*Earth* is a work about what is likely the most important issue of our time.

"The two movements are a story, and a song. The first, Seasons, is a story of a farmer and the land that he lives on, works and raises his family - a microcosm of our own lives on this ground we call home. This text is by poet, sustainable farmer and researcher Kai Hoffman-Krull, who lives and farms near Seattle. I came to know him first as a Yale poet (I teach at Yale School of Music) and followed his work with composer Michael Gilbertson before suggesting we collaborate together.

"The second movement, Farewell, is a song on an excerpt of Tintern Abbey (from 1798), a poem by William Wordsworth, who wrote passionately and powerfully about his love of nature.

"Writing the work began as a homage to Gustav Mahler's late song cycle, *Das Lied von Der Erde* (The Song of the Earth), a work I love deeply. Its last movement is titled The Farewell (Der Abschied), and is a rhapsodic, pensive and deeply spiritual



Buller *Paints* by Mark Buller

farewell to earthly life. The instrumentation of *Earth* particularly highlights instruments that Mahler himself featured prominently in this work - flute, oboe and horn, along with extensive string solos.

"This work is additionally inspired by the rare artistry of tenor Nicholas Phan, for whom it was written, and by the artistic venue Tippet Rise. Tippet Rise is on hundreds of acres of protected, exquisite, ruggedly beautiful land in Montana, founded by Peter, and Cathy Halstead. The original chamber version of this work was commissioned by them as part of a three-work project that they, with great generosity, commissioned from me in recent years. I want to warmly thank Alecia Lawyer, ROCO and Santa Fe Pro Musica for supporting this expanded orchestral version of *Earth* which was created especially for them."

■ **A Percussion Menagerie:** Send good thoughts to the two percussionists, who together play quite a wide variety of instruments - among them, three different-sized triangles, three sizes of suspended cymbals, 3 woodblocks and a "high spring coil."

■ **About the composer:** Kernis teaches at the Yale School of Music and makes time in his busy schedule to mentor young composers. He's director of the Minnesota Orchestra's Composers' Institute and the Nashville Symphony Composer Lab.

■ **Further Listening:** In ROCO's Listening Room you'll find Kernis' *Too Hot Toccata*, from way back in our seventh season! Then, do a deep dive into his wonderful music, and end with a marvelous piece that ROCO will perform in march that is guaranteed to make you smile: *100 Greatest Dance Hits*.

Lyrics for *Earth*

Music – Aaron Jay Kernis

Text – Kai Hoffman-Krull, William Wordsworth

Seasons

Kai Hoffman-Krull

1

Why are seasons
no longer the
seasons
of before?

∞

The farmer bent low
to find obsidian
shaped to tip of
arrow.

He wondered if it
happened here
when these fields
were forest before
his grandfather
grasped the saw
from across his
brother
the day spent
making rhythm and
shavings
until the sound of
gravity taking
the tree's weight,
life, more.

He wondered if
death
happened here
hand holding arrow
still

hunter funding
breath of doe until
he knows himself in
her and lets her go
like sun kneeling
to horizon, its daily
bow.

∞

Frost from the night
before coats pasture
each crystal's
edge holding the
morning.

Sheep come in
ushered with a
gesture
a young cutting of
willow
while grasses bow
low
in wind and light
showers
like monks praying
the hours

giving to the weight
of the unseen.

∞

There is air
we can taste
soot in our mouths
and the throat
of this world.

∞

Steam in the field
after plowing.

∞

Branch of apple,
Gravenstein
still holding
morning spring rain
dappled with new
shoots of green
becomes a part
of what roots held
through the dark
like a piece of
ourselves hidden
until it is safe again.

∞	caught looking for a fallen grain or the feeling of being seen at dusk after coming in the farmer looking as though for his shadow's shadow.	germinated a day ago and last night a late frost came. Maybe you too have had something grow cold.
∞		∞

Branches bow with fruit's weight apple skins carrying dusk light like a bird whose feathers have taken shapes and colors of the forest they live within.	∞ Just as a bird makes a nest lacing one strand into another so too do seasons fold into seasons and years into years.	The crops that survived winter wheat, brassicas, lettuce, onions, garlic, radishes grow as they know how.
--	---	--

∞	2	∞
Why are the seasons no longer the seasons of before?	Why are seasons no longer the seasons of before?	Heat can feel like water dripping into the crevasses of the mind eyes blurred by the rain of heat waves pouring upwards.
∞	∞	

The bard owl lives beyond the farmer's sight unknown but for the long pulse in the fall night or the sound of a field mouse	The air speaks back to us with words of change ∞ Seedlings	∞ Dust becomes confused for air. ∞
--	---	---

In spring the fir trees
grow cones, not
branches
seed for the coming
generation.
The tops of maples
do not bud green
branches like fingers
of bone
grasping for the sky.

∞

Why are seasons
no longer the
seasons
of before?

∞

In every farmer there
is a parched space.

Fourth year of
drought
and the well runs
dry.
Plants in the field
sag
edges of leaves
becoming
the colors of sun.

∞

One morning a thick

mist on pasture
grasses now like
pages of an old
book.
Rain comes in with
the evening
does not stop for
nine days
land carved by
streams as though
stone
to sculpture. Wheat
in the barn begins
to grow colors —
black, dust gray,
green.

∞

The farmer spends
his days
sorting through
rotten grains
washing those still
firm.
Each night he
makes his family
bread.
They eat without
looking
each other in the
eye.

∞

What are seasons
when patterns

brake
heat when once
frost
frost when once
heat
thirst then
drowning.
Disturbance is an
echo
carried through the
valleys
of time repeating
each moment
we forgot our life
is made from the
living

3

Even the falling light
rises
along the edge of
branches
waiting at the end
with fullness
as though trying to
return
back to the sun.

∞

Once all was
wilderness
when humans
did not forget
our bodies
are made of soil.

We lose the
structure of our own
wilderness
that sows seeds to
the wind
rather than the row.

Yet the rains will still
come
the land will turn
green
and lupin under
trees
will open
themselves

to the movers of
essence
coming to the tip of
each curled bloom
cups curling into the
stem to hold water
for the dry times.

∞

The sun comes
closer.
May we be like
leaves
forming matter from
light.

Farewell **William** **Wordsworth**

For I have learned
To look on nature,
not as in the hour
Of thoughtless
youth; but hearing
oftentimes
The still, sad music
of humanity,
Nor harsh nor
grating, though of
ample power
To chasten and
subdue. And I have
felt

A presence that
disturbs me with
the joy
Of elevated
thoughts; a sense
sublime
Of something
far more deeply
interfused,
Whose dwelling is
the light of setting
suns,
And the round
ocean and the living
air,
And the blue sky,
and in the mind of
man;
A motion and a

spirit, that impels
All thinking things,
all objects of all
thought,
And rolls through all
things. Therefore I
am still
A lover of the
meadows and the
woods,
And mountains; and
of all that we behold
From this green
earth; of all the
mighty world
Of eye, and ears, –
both what they half
create,
And what perceive;
well pleased to
recognise
In nature and the
language of the
sense,
The anchor of my
purest thoughts, the
nurse,
The guide, the
guardian of my
heart, and soul
Of all my moral
being.

II. Jonathan Leshnoff:

Score

■ **Quick Intro:** A co-commission by ROCO and IRIS Orchestra (Memphis). This is the world premiere, with further performances planned this spring in Memphis and Baltimore.

■ **In his own words:** "The title of this work, *Score*, is an intentional play on words. 'Score' is the term that describes the sheet music that the conductor reads as they conduct the orchestra. In non-musical terms, it can also mean an amount of 20. The initial impetus of this commission was for [me] to compose a work in honor of the IRIS Orchestra's 20th anniversary, hence, the double meaning of the title for '20' and 'sheet music.' ROCO Founder and Artistic Director Alecia Lawyer's endless enthusiasm and passion for new music brought the ROCO's welcome participation as a co-commissioner of this work. All said and done, the title of this new work brings mischievous chaos to orchestral librarians and conductors alike as they ask for the 'score of Score' or 'parts for Score,' all of which brings a devilish smile to the composer's face. [Shout-out to ROCO librarian Jason Stephens!]

"This short, whirlwind concert-opener is based on two ideas. The first is rapid arpeggios that relay from one woodwind instrument to another. After several such cascades, the music cadences and then commences the second idea, a jovial melody in neo-Classical style. For the remainder of the composition, both ideas compete for attention until they both merge as one in the final minute."

■ **Handing off:** One thing to listen for: keep an ear out for how melodic ideas and rhythmic motifs are traded from one instrument or section to another, sometimes during what seems like mid-phrase! This allows Leshnoff to maintain a vibrant, kinetic texture.

■ **Further Listening:** Head over to the ROCO Listening Room to hear our performance of Leshnoff's Concerto for Orchestra and Two Percussionists, the finale of our 2012-13 season.



III. Leanna Primiani:

*Neither men nor money
justify my worth :*

■ **Quick Intro:** Commissioned by the League of American Orchestras with the generous support from the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. This is the world premiere.

■ **In her own words:** “Through *Neither Men Nor Money Justify My Worth*, I musically explore the life of a child victim of human trafficking. It is intended to be a musical commentary based on Mussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition* programmed concurrently. The motivic material of the work is based on the harmonic and motivic elements from Mussorgsky original. The imagery inspiration for the work is taken from the portraiture of *The New Abolitionists* – people who are working to end modern slavery and human trafficking.

“I first heard the term ‘human trafficking’ when working for the United Nations on their 50 for Freedom campaign, and later when working with the Los Angeles-based charity Everychild. I was shocked to discover just how prevalent and close to home this issue is in our current society. According to UNICEF, in 2021 over 160 million children around the world are in some kind of forced labor, up from 40 million in 2017. Children between the ages of five to 11 now account for just over half of the total global figure. This means 1 in 10 children worldwide are trafficked.

“The United States is not immune from this tragedy. In Texas, for example, there were over 300,000 human trafficking cases in 2016, with 80,000 of those being minors. When taken into account with



the numbers from UNICEF, it is difficult to fathom how trafficking has increased. I'm glad Texas had the courage to publish these statistics. My home state of California does not make its numbers public.

"My background as a conductor informs my creative process, which is centered around the perception of how time unfolds. I'm particularly drawn to the concept of the Fibonacci sequence and the Golden Ratio (ϕ) - building the overarching musical structure on the scaffold of time rather than on the number of notes or measures, which parallels to our heroine's experience, measuring her existence in weeks and years.

"The music in the first part of the piece is low and foreboding, shadowing the desperation of our heroine's journey. As the music inches towards the climatic point at the Golden Ratio, a ray of hope bursts through and propels towards a brilliant conclusion when our heroine breaks free from the chains that have been constricting her since childhood.

"In many ways, humans have an intense vulnerability, and that vulnerability is available for exploitation, especially in the young. When we think of ourselves as Americans, living in an informed, advanced, culturally enlightened society where there is hope for equality, to know that this type of unspeakable cruelty can persist is mind-boggling. The idea that people can partake, and be subjected to, practices of slavery can only be described as barbaric. It is my most sincere hope, and the hope of ROCO, that Men Nor Money will shed the tiniest bit of light on the hidden epidemic of human trafficking in the US. It is the ultimate injustice."

■ **Further Listening:** Visit Primiani's website for a performance of her very interesting piece 1001, scored for orchestra and pre-recorded electronics.

III. Modest Mussorgsky, orch. Alan Gout:

Pictures at an Exhibition

■ **Quick Intro:** Original version, for piano, written in 1874. This version was commissioned by the Northern Sinfonia of England, with a premiere in 1990.

■ **“Fixing” Mussorgsky:** There’s just something about Mussorgsky, a uniquely gifted composer who faced a number of challenges throughout his too-short life. Many of his pieces were left unfinished, despite the promise they showed early on, and despite support and encouragement he received from fellow composers. For context: in the mid-19th century, a group of Russian composers known as “The Five” or “The Mighty Handful” embarked on an effort to create a uniquely Russian style of music. While Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov, Borodin, and Cui found success in this style, Mussorgsky takes things even further, and in much of his music the absence of traditionally European gestures and indicators really sets his music apart. ...Too much so, for some people, so other composers stepped in, sometimes completing unfinished pieces and at other times (such as in *St. John’s Night on Bald Mountain*) completely overhauling whole works. This has led to an understanding of Mussorgsky *through the lens* of these more mainstream composers – especially Rimsky – which sometimes can do a disservice to such an iconoclastic individual.

■ **Rethinking a Classic:** Given the apparent grandeur of the original piece, many arrangers and orchestrators are tempted to “go big” and score this piece for large orchestra with all the bells and whistles. But, as Gout writes, he had a different idea. “I closed my score of Ravel’s version and played the piano pieces through, listening carefully and having these miniature pictures in mind. That gave me the key, that much of the music and several entire pieces, for instance ‘Tuileries,’ ‘Ballet of the Unhatched Chicks’ and several of the promenades, were indeed miniatures, chamber music, and that the full force of trumpets and horns should, for the most part, be reserved for the bigger images, ‘Bydlo,’ the end of ‘Limoges’ leading into ‘Catacombs,’ ‘Baba-Yaga’ and, naturally, the apotheosis, ‘The Bogatyr Gate at Kiev.’”

■ **Further Listening:** For context, listen to the original piano version, and you’ll likely be surprised by the rawness of some of Mussorgsky’s writing. Maurice Ravel’s orchestration is the best-known and most often performed, but there have been many orchestrations. Check out the Naxos album of different orchestrations compiled into a suite by Leonard Slatkin.

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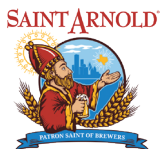
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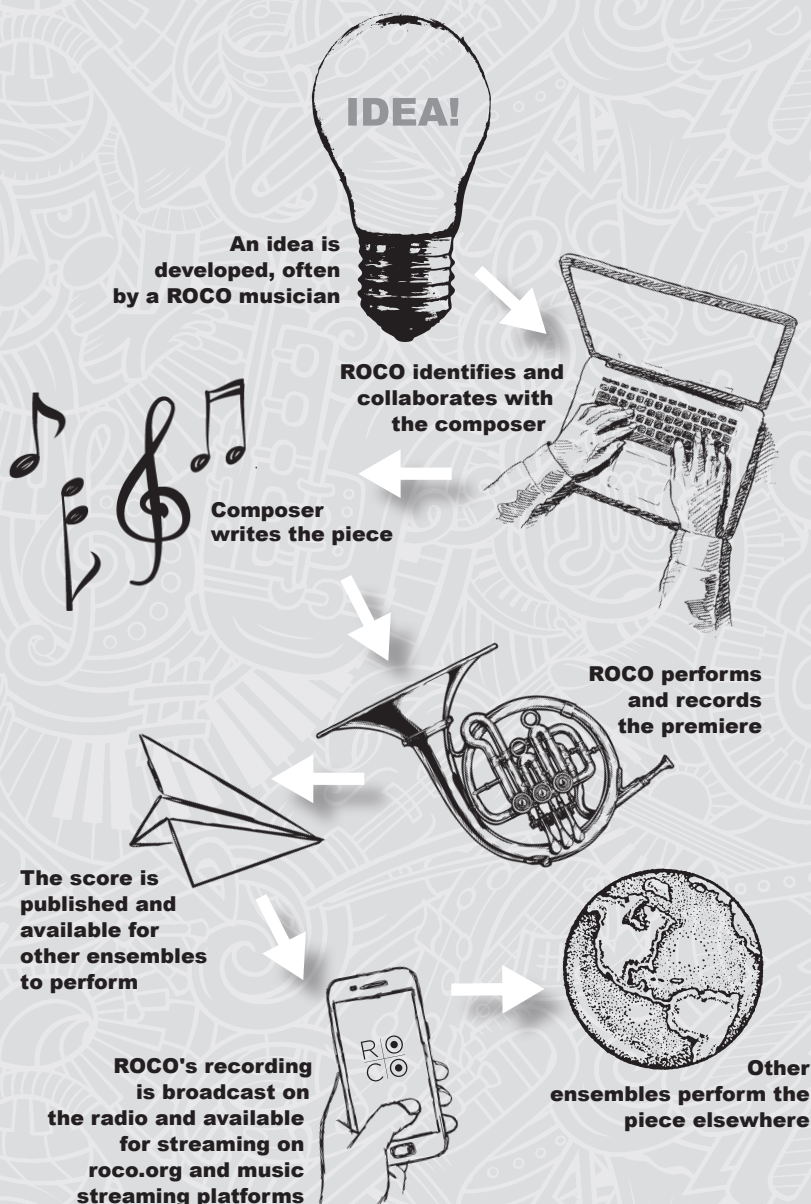


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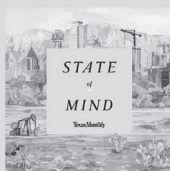
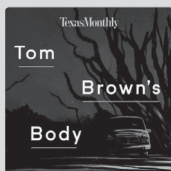
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