Press Release
June 13, 2018

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Washington Performing Arts announce

Four Orchestras Selected for Third SHIFT Festival of American Orchestras in 2020

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra Chosen to Participate

SHIFT Provides National Platform for Celebrating Creativity and Building Community

(WASHINGTON, D.C.)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Washington Performing Arts announce the four orchestras selected to participate in the third SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras, taking place at the Kennedy Center and numerous other locations around D.C., March 23–29, 2020. As in past years, the 2020 SHIFT will be a weeklong celebration of the vitality, identity, and extraordinary artistry of North American orchestras through an immersive festival experience in the nation’s capital.

Chosen from a pool of applicants from across the country, the selected orchestras—each of which offer a Kennedy Center Concert Hall performance with all tickets priced at $25, as well as city-wide residency activities—are Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra, Jacksonville Symphony, and Orpheus Chamber Orchestra (NY). Following in
the spirit of creativity that made past SHIFT Festivals unmissable events, the four orchestras participating in 2020 will spotlight diverse repertoire that goes beyond traditional orchestral fare in multi-genre thematic collaborations—explorations of geography and community, meditations on “bridges” both literal and metaphorical, new takes on Shakespeare, and more. Performances will also feature commissioned works, dialogue and other vocal elements, and projections.

The residency component is integral to SHIFT, as each orchestra shares a D.C.-specific version of the education and community engagement programming it produces in its home community. Details of the residency events, which are expected to include work with students, amateur musicians, patients, and actors, will be announced closer to the festival.

The festival’s title, SHIFT, recognizes the dynamic, evolving work of orchestras in the 21st century and expresses a commitment to shifting pre-conceived notions about orchestras. Both the Kennedy Center and Washington Performing Arts believe that American orchestras offer a breadth of innovative and creative ideas that create powerful connections with audiences in their local communities, both on stage and off. Accordingly, SHIFT provides a platform for orchestras to share a sampling of their best work—to be creative, interesting, and provocative, and to present work that embodies each orchestra's identity, heritage, standards, and artistic vision.

Beyond the wealth of public performances and activities, the festival’s presence in the nation’s capital provides an opportunity for orchestras to interact with their respective elected officials in order to educate members of Congress about the value of the arts, and of orchestras in particular. As in past years, the League of American Orchestras will partner with SHIFT in 2020 to facilitate engagements on Capitol Hill and conversations about the impact and value that the arts and orchestras can provide to their communities.
The orchestras selected for 2020 join an illustrious group of eight American orchestras that have participated in *SHIFT* in its first two seasons: Albany Symphony Orchestra, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Boulder Philharmonic, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, North Carolina Symphony, and The Knights.

Generous support of the *SHIFT* Festival is provided through a matching grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and by Michael F. and Noémi K. Neidorff and The Centene Charitable Foundation.

**2020 *SHIFT* Concert Calendar**

March 24, 2020, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall

**Jacksonville Symphony**

*Courtney Lewis, conductor*

*Anthony McGill, clarinet*

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The Jacksonville Symphony’s program explores the many influences that jazz artists and composers have had on traditional classical composers. Their theme for the *SHIFT* festival is “Bridges,” and their Composer-in-Residence, Courtney Bryan, will have a significant presence in the mainstage concert as well as in the Symphony’s residency activities.

March 25, 2020, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall

**Baltimore Symphony Orchestra**

*Marin Alsop, conductor*

*Cristina Pato, bagpipes*

*Kayhan Kalhor, kamancheh*

*David Krakauer, klezmer clarinet*

*Michael Ward-Bergeman, hyper accordion*

**Washington Performing Arts Men & Women of the Gospel Choir**
The Baltimore Symphony presents a program celebrating the changing faces of America, from Dvorak’s grand vision for American music, to a forgotten treasure by the first African American woman recognized as a symphonic composer, to a tour de force concerto that draws influence from all over the world.

March 27, 2020, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra
Aram Demirjian, conductor
Julia Bullock, soprano
The University of Tennessee Symphony Brass
R.B. Morris, Knoxville Poet Laureate, Speaker
“Knoxville: Artists at Home”

MICHAEL SCHACHTER
JAMES AGEE
BARBER
JAMES AGEE
COPLAND
RACHMANINOFF

“Overture to Knoxville”
Excerpt from “A Death in the Family”
Knoxville: Summer of 1915
Excerpt from “Let Us Now Praise Famous Men”
“The Tender Land,” Orchestral Suite from the Opera
Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

Every good journey begins and ends at home and this program represents an homage to the classical music legacy of Knoxville—not necessarily the music that comes to mind when thinking of music from Tennessee. The program is about history, how we perceive it in the present and how we will perceive it in the future. It is about authors and composers and is by no means a complete representation of the city. The program highlights the collaborative process that is so important on the concert stage, with the KSO’s community partners, by featuring both an ensemble from the Knoxville community, home to The University of Tennessee, and potential collaborators from Washington D.C.’s community as well.

March 28, 2020, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall
Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
Classical Theater of Harlem
Peter Francis James, director
“A Meditation on Harlem Midsummer”
Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Classical Theatre of Harlem will offer a collaborative portrait of the cultural diversity and vitality of New York City through a musical and theatrical performance of Shakespeare’s classic tale A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The performance will include Mendelssohn’s timeless incidental music, arranged for chamber orchestra, in its rightful place within Shakespeare’s timeless play (with some modern adaptations), combining all into a singular theatrical event. Drawing on the universal theme of love’s many caprices, this meditation will offer a specific portrait of Harlem’s rich culture and celebrate this space through a blend of music, theatre, and dance.

Residency Activities

As part of its involvement in SHIFT, each participating orchestra will offer a residency program across two and a half days during its appearance in Washington, D.C. Full residency plans will be announced closer to the festival.

- **Jacksonville Symphony’s** activities will include “Compose Yourself” with composer-in-residence Courtney Bryan & Symphony musicians. Together, they have developed a lesson plan for middle school students with no prior musical training to compose a personal theme song! Demonstrations, explanation of compositional techniques and instruments are part of the program.

- **Baltimore Symphony Orchestra** activities will focus on musicians of all ages. The BSO will present the cornerstone of its community engagement efforts, an interactive session with the teaching artists and young musicians of “OrchKids,” a nationally recognized year-round music program designed to create social change and nurture promising futures for youth in Baltimore City schools and neighborhoods. The “BSO Rusty Musicians” session on the Millennium Stage will invite amateur adult musicians from the D.C. area to play side-by-side with Baltimore Symphony musicians in an informal orchestral setting.

- **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**’s activities will focus on its “Music & Wellness” program (one of the first in the country) built over the last 15 years, and most successful in neo-natal intensive care units (NICUs). They’ll work with local nursing staffs and the head of a local neo-natal unit. KSO will also bring their “UnStaged” program, which pairs interesting music in unconventional spaces, such as a local brewery or distillery, with thematic ideas.
• Orpheus Chamber Orchestra’s engagement activities will center around the Orpheus Process®, the orchestra’s signature collaborative method. Working with Classical Theatre of Harlem, the orchestra will share with audiences how cooperation can fuel the creative process in any endeavor. An Orpheus Reflections residency will serve D.C.–area people living with Alzheimer’s disease and dementia and their caregivers.

About The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts
The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts is America’s living memorial to President Kennedy. Under the leadership of Chairman David M. Rubenstein and President Deborah F. Rutter, the nine theaters and stages of the nation’s busiest performing arts facility attract audiences and visitors totaling 3 million people annually; Center-related touring productions, television, and radio broadcasts welcome 40 million more.

Opening its doors on September 8, 1971, the Center presents the greatest performances of music, dance, and theater; supports artists in the creation of new work; and serves the nation as a leader in arts education. With its artistic affiliates, the National Symphony Orchestra and Washington National Opera, the Center’s achievements as a commissioner, producer, and nurturer of developing artists have resulted in more than 300 theatrical productions and dozens of new ballets, operas, and musical works.

Each year, millions of people nationwide take part in innovative, inclusive, and effective education programs initiated by the Center, including school- and community-based residencies and consultancies; age-appropriate performances and events for young people; career development for young actors, dancers, singers, and instrumentalists; and professional learning opportunities for teachers, teaching artists, and school administrators. These programs have become models for communities across the country. The Center’s Ensuring the Arts for Any Given Child program works with selected local school districts and seeks to provide a comprehensive arts education to children K-8. The Center also has been at the forefront of making the performing arts accessible to persons with disabilities, highlighted by the work accomplished with its affiliate, VSA.

As part of the Kennedy Center’s Performing Arts for Everyone outreach program, the Center stages more than 400 free performances of music, dance, and theater by artists from throughout the world each year on the Center’s main stages, and every evening at 6 p.m. on the Millennium Stage. The Rubenstein Arts Access Program expands the Center’s efforts to make the arts accessible to children, young adults, and to people who have little or limited ability to attend and enjoy the performing arts, enabling audiences to engage in more ways, at more times, and in more places than ever before.

About Washington Performing Arts
One of the most established and honored performing arts institutions in America, Washington Performing Arts has more than a half-century history of serving artists, audiences, students, and civic life. The city is truly our stage: in venues ranging from
concert halls and clubs to public parks, we present a tremendous range of artists and art forms, from the most distinguished symphony orchestras to both renowned and emerging artists in classical music, jazz, international genres, and dance.

Washington Performing Arts nourishes communities throughout the region by partnering with local organizations and other arts institutions, staging concerts and arts activities in the neighborhoods, involving internationally known main-stage performers in community programs, and presenting locally based artists to a wider audience. We place a premium on establishing artists as a continuing presence in the lives of both young people and adults through sustained residencies and educational programs.

Our achievements have been recognized with a National Medal of Arts and with two Mayor’s Arts Awards from the D.C. Government. We embark upon our next half-century with the goals of expanding our commitment to excellence and rededicating ourselves to the motto of our founder, Patrick Hayes: “Everybody in, nobody out.”

**Funding Credits**
Generous support of *SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras* is provided through a matching grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Additional support is provided by Daniel R. Lewis.

**SHIFT Collaborators**
*SHIFT* is presented in cooperation with the League of American Orchestras.

**Social Media**
Use #SHIFTmusic for social media related to *SHIFT*.

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