

The Kennedy Center

THE JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

Press Release



WASHINGTON
PERFORMING ARTS

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

Line-up of Four American Orchestras for Inaugural *SHIFT Festival*

**New Washington, D.C. Music Festival Beginning in 2017 Provides National
Platform to Celebrate Creativity and Build Community**

(WASHINGTON)—The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts and Washington Performing Arts today announced the four North American orchestras selected to participate in the first year of the new weeklong *SHIFT Festival*, taking place at the Kennedy Center March 27 through April 2, 2017. Chosen from a pool of exceptional submissions from orchestras across North America, the selected orchestras include: **Boulder Philharmonic** (March 28), **North Carolina Symphony** (March 29), **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** (March 31), and Brooklyn-based ensemble, **The Knights** (April 1). Collectively, the participating orchestras will offer repertoire by nine living composers, two world premieres, and numerous D.C.-area premieres during the festival, inspired by themes of nature, Americana, creation and creativity, and choral influences.

SHIFT: A Festival of American Orchestras is a weeklong spotlight on North American orchestras of all sizes that celebrates the vitality, unique identity, and extraordinary artistry of

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orchestras by creating an immersive festival experience in the nation's capital. It is the first significant collaboration between the Kennedy Center and Washington Performing Arts in their shared history. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation has awarded a \$900,000 grant for the collaboration, of which \$700,000 will be leveraged as matching funds for new gifts to support the program. Kennedy Center President Deborah Rutter and Washington Performing Arts President & CEO Jenny Bilfield made the announcement this afternoon in Cleveland at the League of American Orchestras' annual conference before an audience of nearly 1,000 orchestra administrators, musicians, trustees, and volunteers. *A full schedule of the 2017 SHIFT concert programs, artists, and repertoire appears at the end of this release.*

In addition to compelling and diverse full-orchestra concert programs performed in the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, each of the four orchestras will engage in a mini-residency, interacting with the surrounding community through educational and outreach activities, symposia, and community events in venues throughout Washington, D.C. *SHIFT* provides a national platform for today's most innovative orchestras to share a sampling of their most creative and provocative work that embodies the individual orchestra's identity, community, and artistic vision. Main stage concerts will be ticketed at \$25, alongside a combination of ticketed and free events throughout the city. Performance tickets will go on sale in the fall of 2016.

"We are thrilled to announce the orchestras chosen for our inaugural *SHIFT Festival* and to bring them to the nation's capital," said Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter. "Though not intentional, the orchestras we ultimately selected represent an almost perfect cross-section of North American orchestras in terms of geographic location, programming focus, budget size, and thematic inspiration. Their enthusiasm for showcasing music that reflects their cities, and their innovative concepts for engaging with the community outside the walls of the concert hall, to us, reflect a fundamental and positive shift in how today's orchestras view their role in the community."

"Perhaps most exciting is the breadth and diversity of the repertoire," commented Jenny Bilfield, Washington Performing Arts President and CEO. "These programs are tremendously imaginative and bold. And they were clearly designed to showcase the identity and vision of each orchestra. What makes the *SHIFT Festival* additionally special is not only the dynamic and innovative programming, but also that each orchestra's artistic vision will spill out into Washington's diverse neighborhoods. The residency component enables these orchestras and their

musicians to have a presence in the community at large, offering uncommon connectivity and access.”

“We look forward to collaborating with the Kennedy Center and Washington Performing Arts and these four orchestras to demonstrate to the public, and our nation’s policy leaders, the capacity of orchestras to strengthen communities, engage lifelong learners, and unite audiences through the transformational power of music,” said League of American Orchestras President & CEO Jesse Rosen.

Residency Activities

As part of their involvement in the *SHIFT Festival*, each participating orchestra will offer a residency program across 2 ½ days during its appearance in Washington, D.C. The Boulder Philharmonic intends to weave the orchestra’s theme of “Nature & Music” into its residency by performing in outdoor spaces near monuments and parks, including the novel experience of “Guided Hikes” involving musicians and professional nature guides. Drawing from the “Americana” focus of the orchestra’s concert program, the North Carolina Symphony will engage with local D.C. schools and perform at alternative venues. The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra’s residency activities are informed by the theme and personnel of “Creation/Creator,” including chamber concerts and choral workshops, tapping into Washington, D.C.’s rich choral tradition. Lastly, The Knights’ *SHIFT* residency focuses on mentorship of young people through participatory side-by-sides and informal career conversations with aspiring young musicians, as well as chamber performances in non-traditional venues.

2017 SHIFT Festival Concert Calendar

March 28, 2017, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall

Boulder Philharmonic “Nature & Music”

Michael Butterman, conductor

Stephen Lias, composer

John Fielder, Colorado photographer

Jeff Midkiff, mandolin and composer

Frequent Flyers® Aerial Dance

Stephen Lias

Rocky Mountain National Park Commission
World premiere commemorating the 100th

anniversary of the National Park Service; photography by Colorado's
John Fielder
Jeff Midkiff Mandolin Concerto: *From the Blue Ridge*
Steve Heitzeg *Ghosts of the Grasslands*
Copland *Appalachian Spring* (with Frequent Flyers® Aerial Dance)

“Nature & Music” is the programmatic theme, inspired by Boulder’s natural beauty and an example of how the orchestra responds to its location. The concert features a Boulder Philharmonic commission of a work by Stephen Lias, with projected photographic images of the Rocky Mountains, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. The program also includes the mandolin concerto *From the Blue Ridge*, composed by and featuring mandolinist Jeff Midkiff, and *Ghosts of the Grasslands*, composed by Steve Heitzeg. The concert finale is Copland’s *Appalachian Spring*, presented with Boulder’s Frequent Flyers® Aerial Dance.

March 29, 2017, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall
North Carolina Symphony (Raleigh, NC)

Grant Llewellyn, conductor
Caroline Shaw, violin

Robert Ward	<i>Jubilation Overture</i>
Mason Bates	<i>Rusty Air in Carolina</i>
Caroline Shaw	<i>Lo</i> (North Carolina Symphony co-commission)
Sarah Kirkland Snider	North Carolina Symphony Commission (Title TBA, with film accompaniment)
Robert Ward	<i>City of Oaks</i>

The North Carolina Symphony offers an innovative “Americana-style” program, deeply evocative of North Carolina, represented in particular by four composers with ties to the state: Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw, Sarah Kirkland Snider, Mason Bates, and Robert Ward. Snider’s work is a North Carolina Symphony commission, premiering in fall of 2015; accompanied by original film by Mark DeChiazza, the work will be a multimedia meditation on her family’s history in the state’s Piedmont region.

March 31, 2017, at 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra & Chorus

Robert Spano, conductor
Jessica Rivera, soprano
Kelley O’Connor, mezzo-soprano
Thomas Cooley, tenor
Nmon Ford, baritone
Evan Boyer, bass
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Chorus

Christopher Theofanidis *Creation/Creator*
(75-minute work)

For their mainstage concert, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) presents *Creation/Creator*, by Christopher Theofanidis. Commissioned by the ASO, it is a theatrical and multimedia oratorio with soloists, a 180-piece choir, and full orchestra. The work explores creation and the creative process using texts from philosophy, science, religion, poetry, and literature. Christopher Theofanidis is one of the ASO’s “Atlanta School of Composers,” a group of composers nurtured and commissioned by the ASO over many years.

April 1, 2017, 8 p.m., Kennedy Center Concert Hall
The Knights (Brooklyn, NY)

“The Ground Beneath Our Feet”

Colin Jacobsen and Eric Jacobsen, artistic directors
Eric Jacobsen, conductor
San Francisco Girls Chorus
Lisa Bielawa, artistic director

Brahms	Psalm 13, “Herr, wie lange,” Op. 27
Lisa Bielawa	Work for Chamber Orchestra and Children’s Chorus* (Title TBA)
Aaron Jay Kernis	Work for Chamber Orchestra and Children’s Chorus+
Vivaldi	Gloria in D major, RV 589
Collaboration~	... <i>the ground beneath our feet</i>

* Commissioned by The Knights (2016)

+ Commissioned by the San Francisco Girls Chorus (2016)

~ Collaborative composition written by Alex Sopp, Michael P. Atkinson, Zach Cohen, Shawn Conley, Colin Jacobsen, and Johnny Gandelsman; featuring “Fade Away,” music, lyrics, and vocals by Christina Courtin.

The Knights are a deeply collaborative and creative chamber orchestra, and their program includes the San Francisco Girls Chorus, led by Lisa Bielawa, who is also writing a work commissioned by The Knights. The evening is rounded out by works by Brahms, Vivaldi, Aaron Jay Kernis, and features a piece written collaboratively by members of the orchestra.

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

Since 1965, Washington Performing Arts has had a foundational role in the arts in our nation's capital, creating profound opportunities that connect community and artists, in both education and performance. Through live events in 11 venues that crisscross the D.C. metropolitan area, the careers of emerging artists are launched and nurtured, and established artists return to develop closer relationships with Washington Performing Arts' audiences and creative partners.

As one of the leading presenters in the nation, Washington Performing Arts embraces a broad spectrum of the performing arts, including classical music, jazz, gospel, contemporary dance and music, international music and art forms, and new work. Dynamic education programs in the public schools and beyond, are hallmarks of Washington Performing Arts, as are the Embassy Adoption Program and two resident gospel choirs.

In the 2012–13 season, Washington Performing Arts was twice honored for its work at the intersection of arts presenting and education: by President Barack Obama with a National Medal of Arts (becoming only the fourth D.C.-based arts group and the first arts presenter of its kind to be so honored), and the Mayor's Arts Award for Excellence in Service to the Arts.

FUNDING CREDITS

Generous support is provided through a matching grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

SHIFT FESTIVAL COLLABORATORS

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

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