

Request for Proposals:
Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program Consultant

Deadline:
Monday, August 9

Contact to Submit and for Questions:
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AIM OF THE WORK:

The League of American Orchestras seeks an experienced project manager to lead a new Orchestral Commissions Program for women composers in partnership with the American Composers Orchestra and funded by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

Description of Program

The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation's investment in the League's work with women composers is playing a vital role in a notable fieldwide change in the inclusion of female, trans, and non-binary composers being presented on the mainstage. However, need remains—during the 2018-19 season, women composers made up only 12.8% of the total composers programmed, with performances of their works representing 3.4% of the total (source [Women's Philharmonic Advocacy](#)).

To increase orchestral performance opportunities for emerging female, trans, and non-binary composers, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program has four goals:

- 1) Commissioning six women composers to be performed by a national consortium including a lead orchestra and performances by an additional four orchestras for a total of 30 orchestras engaged
- 2) Increasing national visibility for the commissions,
- 3) Focusing on relationship building between the composer and orchestra, and
- 4) Continuing professional development.

Consortium-Based Commission Model and National Visibility

Six composers will be identified to write a new 5- to 8-minute orchestral work. The EarShot Orchestral Reading Sessions – 4 sessions per year, administered by the American Composers Orchestra (ACO) – will continue to serve as the pipeline for the commissions. In

place of doing a call for scores from all eligible composers, the League and ACO will focus on EarShot composer/orchestra relationships to identify and select the composers and the lead consortium orchestras. This process will help to build and develop an authentic career path for the composers.

A national announcement will introduce the commissioned composers and lead orchestras and serve as the invitation for League member orchestras to apply to join the consortium. In their applications, orchestras will make the case as to why their organization wants to participate in the consortium, give a proposed performance date, and demonstrate a commitment to engaging the composer in rehearsals, networking opportunities, community engagement activities, and beyond.

Once the consortiums are finalized, a large-scale national announcement will be made sharing news of all consortium members and premiere dates. All premieres and performances will be marketed nationally through the League and ACO's communications channels, including the League's new website, Symphony magazine, and social media channels. The League will work with consortium orchestras to secure stories in the national and local press.

Each composer will receive a commission fee of \$10,000, which is inclusive of the additional score and part preparation. An additional \$500 stipend will be available to the composers for participation in community engagement activities associated with the performances. Lead consortium orchestras will receive a \$2,500 fee with other consortium orchestras receiving \$1,500 to support composer attendance at performances and marketing efforts.

Composer Engagement and Professional Development

Professional development, relationship building, mentoring, and opportunities for networking within the field are critical to career advancement for emerging composers. This work will include:

- EarShot Readings participants continuing to receive coaching by mentor composers and career/professional advice with a new focus on public speaking/presentation in educational and community settings.
- New commissionees participating in networking opportunities with consortium orchestra music directors, conducting and artistic staff, executive directors, musicians, orchestra librarians, and other arts organizations and universities in the performance cities. Additionally, composers and consortium orchestras will be supported in developing educational and/or community-focused activities (led by the composer) in connection with the performances.
- All commissionees having access to mentoring with proven and established artistic consultants with experience in navigating and creating orchestral opportunities for the composer cohort, as well as attendance at the League's Conference.

SCOPE OF WORK:

The work will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following tasks, undertaken in furtherance of the above aims.

In partnership with the League,

- Contract lead and consortium orchestras; negotiate premiere dates.
- Coordinate national public relations, including national announcements of composer/lead orchestra pairings, consortium opportunity, full consortium, and performance dates, the 30 premieres and performances dates.
- Manage accounting/payments to composers and orchestras.
- Organize cohort attendance at League National conference, including annual meeting for the cohort, with ACO support.
- Organize mentoring support for composers.
- Announce EarShot Readings call for scores.
- Facilitate alumni communication for career announcements.
- Share learnings via online resources and League conference.
- Report on general trends in orchestral programming.
- Contribute to reporting on program activities and results.

In partnership with the League and the ACO,

- Select/match lead consortium orchestra and composer.
- Develop application guidelines and review/selection of consortium orchestras.
- Create networking opportunities for composers.
- Introductions and relationship building for composers.

Additional ACO responsibilities (for information - not covered by this RFP)

- Administer EarShot Readings, including
 - Selection of EarShot partner orchestra.
 - Conduct listening conversations with partner orchestras to determine programmatic priorities prior to EarShot readings.
 - Create EarShot call for scores language and materials.
 - Administering EarShot score review and composer selection.
 - Lead professional development workshops for participants and alumni.
- Support consortium orchestras and composers in design and implementation of educational and/or community-focused activities in connection with consortium performances.

TIMELINE:

Summer 2021: Selection of composers and lead consortium orchestras.

September 2021: National announcement and call for consortium members; EarShot Reading Sessions/Professional Development Workshops begin (four readings to be held through June 2022); Two mentors available to the commissionees throughout the year.

October/November 2021: Consortium requests submitted to League.

December 2021: Consortium orchestras selected.

January 2022: Announcement of consortiums and performance dates during the 2022-23 or 2023-24 concert season.

Winter/Spring 2022: Support work with consortium orchestras and composers, facilitating the development of the relationship between the composers and orchestras as well as development of education and community engagement activities (support work continues until performances).

June 2022: Toulmin Composers at League National Conference in Los Angeles.

DELIVERABLES:

The challenge to increase the diversity among composers receiving commissions and performances from America's orchestras continues. While the frequency of performance of American orchestral music in the U.S. has improved over the last generation, work to support emerging composers—particularly women who are still underrepresented in American concert halls—and to disseminate information about their music in the field, encourage commissioning and performance, and create more opportunities for women and other gender marginalized composers to work with symphony orchestras. The goal is to achieve gender equity in the programming of new orchestral music on the mainstage.

The League and the ACO's work with the Toulmin Composers and gender-marginalized composers, in general, aims to:

1. Continue to raise awareness of the Toulmin Composers and their repertoire in the orchestra field. While many of the women composers have stated that their Toulmin commissions have been catalytic in creating new opportunities, it is important to continue to spotlight these women and their works.
2. Create a community between the Toulmin Composers to share experiences, learn from each other, and have frank discussions of how they as individuals navigate and overcome the challenges of their field – all with an eye toward widening the range of inclusion for all composers.

3. Provide support and assistance that help the Toulmin Composers and other gender-marginalized composers in the development of their careers.
4. Provide opportunities for emerging composers to have their works read by a professional orchestra. Writing for symphony orchestra remains one of the supreme challenges for all emerging composers. The subtleties of instrumental balance, timbre, and communication with the conductor and musicians are critical skills, but opportunities for composers to gain hands-on experience working with professional orchestras are few.
5. Encourage composer / orchestra collaboration beyond the performance of the commission, creating educational and community engagement activities that provide robust experiences for the composers and the communities experiencing the new works and that help foster continuing relationships.

The League's Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program, in partnership with the ACO, is having an impact on the career development of emerging female, trans, and non-binary composers. It is providing a platform for these composers to shine, supporting the development of their careers, and building an awareness of diversity and excellence.

FEE FOR SERVICE:

The League will provide a fixed fee of \$30,000-\$45,000 to fulfill the above scope of work. In addition, reasonable expenses directly related to the project will be billed at cost.

APPLICANTS:

The League of American Orchestras values a diverse workplace and strongly encourages women, people of color, LGBTQI+ individuals, people with disabilities, members of ethnic minorities, foreign-born residents, and veterans to apply.

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND:

Consortium Commissions

- Commissions - 6 Commissions @ \$10,000 (half to be paid when commissioned and half to be paid at time of premiere)
- Lead Orchestra Administrative Fee - 6 Orchestras @ \$2,500 (paid at time of premiere)

- Consortium Orchestra Administrative Fee – Up to 24 orchestras (4 per commission) at \$1,500 (paid at time of performance)
- Composer Honoria - \$500 for educational/community engagement activities per orchestra at up to 30 orchestras
- Travel, meals and lodging to attend premieres – Estimated at 6 per year at \$1,000 each for 2 staff members, one from the League and one from ACO. Includes travel to premieres from previous commissions and for travel to the six new premieres.

Composer Support

- Conference session – Includes facilitator fee of \$1,000 and meeting expenses of \$1,500.
- Travel and lodging – For 10 Toulmin commissionees at \$1,500 each to attend the League's 2022 National Conference in Los Angeles.
- Conference Registration Waivers – Registration waivers for the 10 composers to attend the League's 2022 at \$695 per person.
- Mentors - \$5,000 (2 mentors at \$2,500 each, providing up to 36 hours of support each during the year)
- League Membership – Annual membership to the League for all Toulmin commissionees – 22 composers at \$55 each.

ABOUT THE LEAGUE:

The **League of American Orchestras** leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning Symphony magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit americanorchestras.org.