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## **Lembit Beecher Selected for *Music Alive* Residency with The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra**

### **Program Embeds Composers Deeply into Orchestras and Communities for Three-Year Period, Beginning in 2016.17 Season**

**Saint Paul, MN, December 21, 2016** – Lembit Beecher and The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra are one of only five composer and orchestra pairs selected through a peer review panel process to participate in *Music Alive*, a national three-year composer-orchestra residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA.

Beginning in the 2016.17 season, this new iteration of the *Music Alive* program prioritizes collaborative work and immersive experiences for composers, orchestra musicians, artistic leaders, and community members. *Music Alive* hopes to demonstrate—through active partnership with the participating residency pairings—the power and value of living composers working at the center of American orchestras.

The newly configured *Music Alive* program was reimagined as a result of an extensive survey of leading professionals deeply experienced in relationships between composers and orchestras. The survey culminated in a 2015 convening by New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras hosted by

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The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Colleagues in the new music and orchestra worlds met to identify and discuss critical challenges that the program could address directly. This iteration of *Music Alive* and its residency priorities directly emerged from these conversations.

More than visiting artists, the composers in residence will be centrally embedded within their orchestras, and their roles will be incorporated directly into the orchestras' operations, programming and curatorial decisions, and activities in their communities. Dedicated funding will be attached to the residency priorities, including workshopping, rehearsing, and developing new works or performing existing works by living composers; mentoring emerging composers through readings, shadowing, and other mentoring opportunities; and creating public access to the artistic process through open rehearsals, access to various media, and other points of entry. The composers, orchestra leadership teams, and program staff are also committed to engaging in a cohort-based planning process around the residency priorities, which will include virtual convenings as a group several times per year, as well as an annual in-person convening at the League's National Conference.

SPCO Artistic Director and Principal Violin Kyu-Young Kim said of the residency, "We are so thrilled to have been selected to participate in the *Music Alive* residency with Lembit Beecher. It was my privilege to lead a deeply collaborative process with my fellow musicians and SPCO President Jon Limbacher that led to Lembit's selection from a diverse slate of composers. The SPCO's Artistic Vision Committee felt a strong emotional connection to Lembit's music and his ability to weave stories and larger themes into his compositions in an authentic and meaningful way. His recent work shows an incredible range of expression, imagination, and instrumental color. His deep understanding of the chamber music sensibility and his gift for getting straight to the heart of the stories that he tells with his music makes him the perfect candidate for a composer residency with the SPCO, a residency which we believe will enable the SPCO to tell the stories of the Twin Cities community in distinctive and transformational ways."

"We live in an era of unsurpassed compositional invention, as composers break musical barriers and redefine the rules," said League of American Orchestras President and CEO Jesse Rosen. "This new iteration of *Music Alive* takes engagement several steps further, building opportunities for cohorts of composers to learn from each other, and for entire orchestra staffs and musicians, as well as their communities, to interact closely with these talented composers-in-residence."

"*Music Alive* is driven by a belief in the power of new work," said New Music USA President and CEO Ed Harsh. "These new residencies will demonstrate even more powerfully than ever before the role that collaboration with living artists can play in vitalizing orchestras' connections to their communities."

Praised by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as "hauntingly lovely and deeply personal," Lembit Beecher's music combines "alluring" textures (*The New York Times*) and vividly imaginative colors with striking emotional immediacy. Born to Estonian and American parents, Lembit grew up under the redwoods in Santa Cruz, California, a few miles from the wild Pacific. Since then he has lived in Boston, Houston, Ann Arbor, Berlin, New York and Philadelphia, earning degrees from Harvard, Rice and the University of Michigan. This varied background has made him particularly sensitive to place, ecology, memory, and the multitude of ways in which people tell stories. Recent and upcoming premieres include *The Conference of the Birds* for the chamber orchestra A Far Cry, as well as new works for the Diderot Quartet, Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Opera Philadelphia and the Juilliard Quartet. Many of Lembit's latest

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projects involve the incorporation of untraditional elements into operatic form, working with Baroque instruments, electronic sounds, animation, new technologies, and devised theatre actors.

The five new *Music Alive* composer-orchestra pairings are:

[Lembit Beecher](#) and [The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra](#)

[Anna Clyne](#) and [Berkeley Symphony](#)

[Stacy Garrop](#) and [Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra](#)

[Hannibal Lokumbe](#) and [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

[Jerod Tate](#) and [South Dakota Symphony Orchestra](#)

Panelists for the residencies were:

Jenny Bilfield, President and CEO, Washington Performing Arts  
Avner Dorman, composer and Music Director, CityMusic Cleveland Chamber Orchestra  
Sarah Lutman, Founder, Lutman & Associates  
Shulamit Ran, composer  
Kathleen van Bergen, CEO and President, Artis—Naples

Review criteria for the residencies were:

Artistry: the artistic merit of the composer's work and orchestra's performances

Opportunity: the partnership's potential for depth and innovation in residency work and in tackling the thematic priorities.

Capacity and commitment: the ability of the orchestra and composer to make the residency a success and to adhere to two core commitments -- having a centrally embedded composer and a cohort-based planning process.

## **About *Music Alive***

Launched in 1999 as a joint program between Meet The Composer (now New Music USA) and the League of American Orchestras, *Music Alive* has been a steward and partner in a multitude of projects that foster strong working relationships between American orchestras and accomplished composers across the country. In its 17 years, the program has supported 115 composers, 77 orchestras, and 119 distinct residencies.

*Music Alive* is made possible by a \$1.5 million lead grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, The Amphion Foundation, and The ASCAP Foundation Bart Howard Fund.

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# League of American Orchestras

Renowned for its artistic excellence, remarkable versatility of musical styles and adventurous programming, **The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra (SPCO)** is widely regarded as one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world. Now in its 58th season, the SPCO has recently undergone transformational change with the opening of its new home, the Ordway Concert Hall, the addition of a new generation of players, and significant changes in its artistic vision. The SPCO is primarily an uncondacted ensemble that performs a broad range of repertoire from Baroque to new music and works in close collaboration with a diverse series of artistic partners, including British Baroque specialist Jonathan Cohen, American pianist Jeremy Denk, Swedish clarinetist Martin Fröst, Moldovan violinist Patricia Kopatchinskaja, Finnish violinist Pekka Kuusisto and Austrian conductor/violinist Thomas Zehetmair.. Past Artistic Partners include Roberto Abbado, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Joshua Bell, Douglas Boyd, Nicholas McGegan, Stephen Prutsman, Dawn Upshaw and Christian Zacharias.

The virtuoso musicians of the SPCO present more than 130 concerts and educational programs each year, and are regularly heard on public radio programs that reach more than 2 million listeners each week on over 300 stations. Additionally, the SPCO reaches more than 250,000 listeners annually through its free online Listening Library. The SPCO has released 67 recordings, commissioned 148 new works, and tours nationally and internationally, including performances in premier venues in Europe, Asia and South America.

The SPCO is nationally recognized for its commitment to broad community accessibility, its innovative audience outreach efforts, and its educational and family programming. Regular subscription series are performed in a variety of different venues across the Twin Cities metropolitan area each season, a unique commitment to geographic accessibility for a major orchestra. The SPCO offers the most affordable tickets of any major orchestra in the United States, with over 50 percent of tickets available for \$12 or less, and has expanded accessibility even further by offering free tickets for children and students starting in the 2016.17 season as a part of the New Generation Initiative. The orchestra also offers an innovative ticket membership model in which members pay \$5 per month to attend unlimited concerts. The SPCO's award-winning CONNECT education program reaches over 5,000 students and teachers annually in 12 Minneapolis and Saint Paul public schools, and its Target® Free Family Music program provides engaging and educational experiences for thousands of Twin Cities children and families each year. The SPCO's Liquid Music Series (named "Best of Classical" by *The New York Times*) develops innovative new projects in collaboration with iconoclastic artists and invites adventurous audiences to discover the new and the fascinating within the flourishing landscape of contemporary chamber music.

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 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies 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

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*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](http://americanorchestras.org).

**New Music USA** is devoted to fostering the creation, dissemination, and enjoyment of new American music. New Music USA places special emphasis on broadening the public community for the music and musicians whom we serve. Advocacy in the broadest sense is at the heart of all of New Music USA's work. It is inherent in the work of the online magazine NewMusicBox and radio station Counterstream, in all of New Music USA's grantmaking activity—which distributes more than one million dollars each year to the field—and in New Music USA's role as a key voice in the national and international scenes. [NewMusicUSA.org](http://NewMusicUSA.org)

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