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Refugee Orchestra Project's New Commissions Are Up and Running Quarantine Commission Challenge Help Artists and Creates Original Works

BOSTON, MA – October 12, 2020 -- Three new original works are now being created, with one already completed as the Refugee Orchestra Project's Quarantine Commission Challenge kicks into gear. The initiative, conceived to help vulnerable artists during the pandemic, pairs accomplished composer with supporters, who agree to become commissioners of new works. The challenge is an ongoing effort to provide a platform for new work at a time when musicians and composers are cut off from making an income. All proceeds from the challenge go directly to the artists, and are tax deductible.

"We've been humbled by generous support for our composers and performers during these unsettling times. These financial and artistic contributions are critical, and we are thrilled to be creating original work that speaks to the current moment," said Lidiya Yankovskaya, Artistic Director who also works as Music Director of Chicago Opera Theater.

The Refugee Orchestra Project was founded by Yankovskaya as a way to give a stage for instrumentalists and singers to celebrate the immense contributions that refugees make to society. The orchestra has performed in Boston, New York, Chicago, Washington D.C. and made its London debut in September 2019. Unfortunately the orchestra's 2020 annual concert in Cambridge, MA was postponed due to the pandemic.

Russian-born Israeli composer Moshe Shulman is the first composer to complete the commission, which was premiered live by his commissioner, Julia Scott Carey on August 16 at Juventas Summer Series, co-produced by The Cultural Center of Cape Cod. Iranian composer Niloufar Nourbakhsh, described as "darkly lyrical" by the New York Times, has been commissioned to create a piece to be performed by soprano Zhanna Alkhazova, with the work anticipated to be completed in the fall. Russian-born award-winning composer Lev Zhurbin will team up with soprano Amal El-Shrafi for another commission, also in the fall. Milad Yousufi, originally from Afghanistan, has composed Afghan-influenced music for The New York Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra and his commissioned work is slated to be completed and performed by Yankovskaya in October. "I'm working on a commission for solo piano, which is inspired by one of my paintings and a poem, which I've just finished," said Yousufi "It's very important at this time to stay motivated in order to create art and music."

"The Refugee Orchestra Project is nothing without its musicians and composers, which is why funds go to our artists in their entirety," said Yankovskaya who works in pairing the commissioners with composers. "The financial aspect is so important to artists right now, but creating art is itself critical. This is an opportunity to commission an original solo work from one of our immensely talented composers--performed, recorded, and dedicated to you. Commissioners are playing a part in keeping the flame of creativity alive, at a time when art and artists are fighting for survival."

There are many levels to get involved in the Quarantine Commission and to activate a musical adventure that will live forever. Visit www.refugeeorchestraproject.org for more details.

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ABOUT REFUGEE ORCHESTRA PROJECT

The Refugee Orchestra Project intends – through music – to demonstrate the vitally important role that refugees from across the globe have played in our culture and society.

The project was conceived by conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya, who realized in the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis that many of her own closest colleagues and friends were not aware that she – and many others like her – had come to the U.S. as refugees to seek asylum from violence and persecution abroad. Due to the traumatic nature of their experience, refugees are often hesitant to speak openly about their history, and it is common for people to be unaware that their neighbors, coworkers, and friends have been taken in by the United States as refugees at a time of crisis.

The Refugee Orchestra Project brings together musicians whose friends and families have fled to this country to escape violence and persecution, in performances that loudly proclaim these individuals' importance to our cultural wealth. Performances have included appearances at the United Nations, National Sawdust, and venues across New York City, London, Boston, Chicago, Washington, D.C. and London, England.

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