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FOR PLANNING PURPOSES: June 7, 2016

**Refugee Orchestra Project Showcases Refugees' Impact Through
Music on World Refugee Day**

*Monday, 6/20 Brooklyn performance aims to give voice to refugees, build understanding
within United States*

NEW YORK – As the world grapples with the most severe global refugee crisis since World War II, musicians convened by conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya, herself a refugee who found asylum in the U.S., are coming together to provide a voice to refugees in the United States.

On World Refugee Day (Monday, June 20), Yankovskaya and other musicians whose friends and families have fled to the United States to escape violence and persecution will perform a free benefit concert at the St. Ann & The Holy Trinity Church (157 Montague Street) in Brooklyn. The 8 p.m. concert will feature soloists, including Syrian opera singer Lubana Al Quntar, who use music to showcase the impact on American culture and society by those who have come to this country seeking safety and a better life.

"I organized the Refugee Orchestra Project as a way to demonstrate, through music, the critical role that these individuals play in our cultural landscape," said **Refugee Orchestra Project Conductor and Artistic Director Lidiya Yankovskaya**. "In light of the negative rhetoric we regularly read and hear in the news today, I felt it important for all of us to once again be reminded of the essential role that refugees play in making American culture vibrant and strong."

Admission is free. All proceeds from donations will go toward the [International Rescue Committee](#) (IRC); [HIAS](#), the global Jewish nonprofit that protects refugees; and [Episcopal Migration Ministries](#) (EMM) in support of those seeking asylum in the United States and abroad.

Concert Details

The program will highlight a variety of musical styles and texts including traditional Syrian music, excerpts from Gian Carlo Menotti's *The Consul*, Sergei Rachmaninoff's *Aleko*, and Polina Nazaykinskaya's new opera, *The Magic Mirror*, and "God Bless America," written by Irving Berlin in 1918 during his service in the U.S. Army. This iconic piece will be performed by the entire orchestra and chorus as a powerful testament to the positive contribution refugees have made to the culture of the United States throughout history. The concert will also feature works by composers including Kurt Weill, Paul Hindemith, Darius Milhaud, and Irving Berlin – all of whom were themselves refugees.

Featured soloists include:

- **Mikhail Svetlov:** Russian bass praised for his rare technique in the bel canto style, winner of the prestigious Viotti International Competition, principal soloist with the Bolshoi Theater, and soloist with the Metropolitan Opera
- **Lubana Al Quntar:** Acclaimed soprano awarded the title of Syria's first Opera Singer
- **Zhanna Alkhazova:** Award winning, New York City-based soprano who has earned critical acclaim performing lyric and dramatic operatic repertoire
- **Percy Martinez:** New York-based, Peruvian-born tenor, acclaimed for his powerful and dramatic vocalism
- **Korin Kormick:** New York-based dramatic soprano skilled in opera, oratorio, and art song, praised for her unique voice and vivid theatricality
- **Ralph Iverson:** Multi-instrumentalist with two awards for composition in Bulgaria and specializing in the music of international and Eastern European folk traditions
- **Yelena Dudochkin:** Award-winning Ukrainian-American soprano acclaimed for her shimmering voice and dramatic intelligence, accomplished in both operatic work and jazz performance, principal with New Opera NYC and Commonwealth Lyric

WHO: Instrumentalists and singers whose friends and families have fled to the United States to escape violence and persecution

WHAT: Refugee Orchestra Project Refugee Day performance

WHERE: St. Ann & The Holy Trinity Church
157 Montague Street, Brooklyn, New York

WHEN: Monday, June 20, 2016, at 8 p.m.

About the Project

The Refugee Orchestra Project was conceived by conductor Lidiya Yankovskaya, herself a refugee who found asylum in the United States. In the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis Yankovskaya realized many of her own closest colleagues and friends were unaware of her own history as a refugee. In addition to raising funds for organizations supporting refugees worldwide, the Refugee Orchestra Project gives voice to refugees in the United States . The concert seeks to build support, human connections, and understanding within the larger community. More information at refugeorchestraproject.org, and on [Twitter at @RefugeeOrchProj](#) and [Facebook](#).

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