



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: April 28, 2017

The Philadelphia Orchestra and Composer Tod Machover Invite Philadelphians to participate in the Launch of *Philadelphia Voices*, a Symphony by and about the City, on Thursday, May 4, at a FREE Community Event in Verizon Hall

At 6:30 PM the MIT Media Lab previews Hyperscore software and a new mobile recording app at the Kimmel Center's Commonwealth Plaza followed by an introduction to Philadelphia Voices and brief performance in Verizon Hall

Philadelphia Voices is at the nexus of The Philadelphia Orchestra's artistry, work in the community, and HEAR

Crowdsourced symphonies are a project of the MIT Media Lab, with generous support from Knight Foundation

(Philadelphia, April 28, 2017)—[The Philadelphia Orchestra](#), in collaboration with composer Tod Machover, hosts a FREE community event and performance to launch the new mobile application and project *Philadelphia Voices*. On Thursday, May 4, at 6:30 PM the MIT Media Lab, assisted by Drexel University's ExCITE Center, hosts an interactive hands-on experience in the Kimmel Center's Commonwealth Plaza for attendees to preview the application's Hyperscore software, as well as a brand new mobile app to record sounds of Philadelphia, including voices of every kind. Users of this new app will be the very first contributors to lend their voices to Machover's future composition *Philadelphia Voices*, a sonic portrait of the city made for, and with, the people who live here. The entire project is made possible by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, which funds arts projects that engage audiences in new ways, which *Philadelphia Voices* will do in radically new ways. This involves new technology, relating to voices, to be released over the coming months by Machover and the MIT Lab.

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Seating for the event in Verizon Hall is general admission, and tickets can be reserved starting at 12 PM on Monday, May 1, at philorch.org/concert/calendar. Reserving a ticket does not guarantee admittance, as attendance is first come, first served.

“This community-based commission is the artistic centerpiece of our HEAR initiative for the season,” explained Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Allison Vulgamore. “Through the Philadelphia Voices app and Hyperscore, every Philadelphian, regardless of musical ability, can contribute content for potential inclusion in the finished work. *Philadelphia Voices* is part of a multi-season commitment to commissioning important works for our community. These commissions represent the nexus of our HEAR initiative, our artistry, and our work in the community, and we are placing it squarely on our main stage, as well as performing it on our Carnegie Hall series. We are excited to see the outcome of the application and will eagerly watch as Tod’s composition comes to life through the sounds of Philadelphia from Philadelphians.”

“It’s not every day that you have the opportunity to contribute to the creation of a symphony. This project allows residents to participate in a creative experience using the tools they carry with them every day—their phones and mobile devices,” said Victoria Rogers, vice president for arts at Knight Foundation. “We’re excited to discover which sounds of Philadelphia participants are moved to record.”

Following the preview, attendees are invited into Verizon Hall at 7:30 PM for further explanation of the project and a demonstration that will highlight the sounds, textures, and methods that will be the core of this composition by Machover, who will host the event. Performance elements will feature a string quintet of members from The Philadelphia Orchestra —violinists Yiyi Li and Daniel Han; violist Marvin Moon; cellist Gloria dePasquale; and bassist David Fay—performing works by Machover, plus improvisatory experiences with the Keystone State Boychoir and the Pennsylvania Girlchoir.

“I am honored to embark on this unique musical adventure with The Philadelphia Orchestra and the community. Philadelphia was the birthplace of democracy, and this project represents a unique opportunity to explore the past, present, and future of civic life, expressed through the sounds of the city and the powerful voices of the people who live here,” said Machover. “I believe that together we can create a symphony that will not just show people around the world what Philadelphia sounds and feels like, but can provide a model of the kind of society in which we want to live.”

Since 2013 Machover has created City Symphonies for places as diverse as Toronto, Edinburgh, Perth (Australia), Lucerne (Switzerland), and Detroit, and he has developed a set of strategies and tools for large-scale community engagement through music in the process. For *Philadelphia Voices*, sound, voice collection, and community workshops will continue through the fall of 2017. The world premiere of the finished composition takes place April 5-7, 2018, in Philadelphia; its New York premiere takes place at Carnegie Hall on April 10, 2018.

Machover's work is being guided and enriched by the imaginations of a wide-range of partners, including the School District of Philadelphia, Sister Cities Girlchoir, Commonwealth Youth Choirs, and Al Bustan Seeds of Culture, among many others. This period of discovery will include in-depth discussions, workshops, interactive music sessions, recording "safaris," and vocal explorations, all of which will inform the final composition.

Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin leads the world premiere of this piece, which also features the Westminster Symphonic Choir, under the direction of Joe Miller, the choir of the Philadelphia Creative and Performing Arts High School (CAPA), and many additional Community Voices of Philadelphia, a choir especially assembled for this work.

The Philadelphia Voices mobile application will be available for download on May 4 in iTunes and Google App stores.

HEAR

The Philadelphia Orchestra's **HEAR** is a portfolio of integrated initiatives that connects musicians and music with neighbors and neighborhoods and audiences of all ages and backgrounds. HEAR promotes **H**ealth and wellness, champions music **E**ducation, eliminates barriers to **A**ccessing the Orchestra, and maximizes impact in the community through **R**esearch, all throughout the Philadelphia region. The award-winning Collaborative Learning Department serves over 50,000 students, families, young people, and citizens each year. The various programs of HEAR have garnered support from the William Penn Foundation, the Neubauer Family Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the Mellon Foundation, and numerous other supporters from around the country.

Knight Foundation's Support of Crowdsourced Symphonies in the United States

One of the priorities of Knight Foundation's arts program is to seek out projects that engage audiences in new ways, which this project does by asking residents to contribute the sounds of their city for the piece. Knight Foundation discovered Tod Machover's work at MIT, traveled to Scotland to hear that city's collaborative symphony, and immediately wanted to bring the project to communities where Knight invests, including Philadelphia. Ambitious projects take ambitious partners, which is why Knight Foundation chose Philadelphia as a site for a crowdsourced symphony.

Tod Machover

Tod Machover has been called "a musical visionary" by the *New York Times*, as well as "America's most wired composer" by the *Los Angeles Times*. Machover is professor of music and media at the MIT Media Lab, where he also directs the Opera of the Future Group. Machover's compositions have been commissioned and performed by many of the world's most prestigious ensembles and soloists, and his work has been awarded numerous prizes and honors. He is also recognized for designing new technologies for music, such as Hyperinstruments, and for his visionary operas like the "robotic" *Death and the Powers*. In addition to *Philadelphia Voices*, Machover is currently working on his next opera, *Schoenberg in Hollywood*, to be premiered by Boston Lyric Opera in fall 2018, as well as on commissions from the Kronos Quartet and the Montreal Symphony.

The MIT Media Lab

At the MIT Media Lab, the future is lived, not imagined. In a world where radical technology advances are taken for granted, Media Lab researchers design technologies for people to create a better future. Now, as it looks beyond its 30th anniversary, the MIT Media Lab focuses on "human adaptability." Its work ranges from initiatives to treat conditions such as Alzheimer's disease and depression, to sociable robots that can monitor the health of children or the elderly, to the development of smart prostheses that can mimic—or even exceed—the capabilities of our biological limbs, to music that can radically shape community or reshape the mind. The idea for the Media Lab began in 1980 with Professor Nicholas Negroponte and former MIT President and Science Advisor to President John F. Kennedy Jerome Wiesner. The Lab grew out of the work of MIT's Architecture Machine Group, and remains within MIT's School of Architecture and Planning. The Media Lab opened its I.M. Pei-designed Wiesner Building in 1985, and in its first decade was at the vanguard of the technology that enabled the "digital revolution" and enhanced human expression: innovative research ranging from cognition and learning, to electronic music, to holography. In its second decade, the Lab literally took computing out of the box, embedding the bits of the digital realm with the atoms of our physical world. This led to expanded research in wearable computing, wireless "viral"

communications, machines with common sense, new forms of artistic expression, and innovative approaches to how children learn. Now, in its third decade, the Media Lab continues to check traditional disciplines at the door. Future-obsessed artist-designers, nanotechnologists, biologists, neuroscientists, data-visualization experts, industry researchers, pioneers of computer interfaces, and social activists work side by side to tirelessly invent—and reinvent—how humans experience, and can be aided by, technology, and to make sure that developments are deployed throughout the world for maximum benefit to individuals and societies.

Hyperscore

Hyperscore is a software program that lets users compose music by manipulating shapes and colors on a canvas. Invented by a group of highly skilled musicians, designers, and engineers from the Opera of the Future Group at the MIT Media Lab, Hyperscore offers an intuitive and engaging visual language that enables everyone—with all levels of musical training—to dive into the world of musical composition and experience the joy of creating their own pieces. Starting with small melodic and rhythmic motives represented by simple shapes on the Hyperscore canvas, users gradually expand their musical ideas by adding, stretching, and changing the color of those shapes to create full-blown, beautifully organized musical compositions. While traditional music notations require years of study to master, Hyperscore takes care of the complex music theory behind the scenes and empowers users to focus on sketching out their creative thoughts in musically meaningful ways. Hyperscore has been used in schools around the world to teach kids and teenagers of all ages to write their own music. Many of the Hyperscore pieces written by kids have become a part of large-scale symphonies composed by Tod Machover from the MIT Media Lab and performed by distinguished orchestras such as the Toronto Symphony and the Detroit Symphony.

About [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

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