



# PRESS RELEASE

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## The Louisville Orchestra Announces the 2016-17 Season

### Its Third Under Galvanizing Young Music Director Teddy Abrams

Louisville, KY (April 19, 2016)—The [Louisville Orchestra](#) and its galvanizing young Music Director **Teddy Abrams** announced today an **ambitious 2016-17 season** of commissions, premieres, grandly scaled productions, favorite masterworks, cross-genre collaborations, and more. Highlights include a season-opening account of Mahler's mighty **"Resurrection" Symphony**; concerto collaborations with such eminent artists as **Yo-Yo Ma** and **Augustin Hadelich**; a celebration of **"Shakespeare In Music"** to accompany Louisville's upcoming First Folio exhibition; the Louisville premiere of a **new commission from Lev Zhurbin**; and the **world premiere of Abrams' own new composition, *Muhammad Ali Portrait***, part of a two-program Festival of American Music that will also feature guest conductor **Michael Tilson Thomas**. This diverse and stimulating lineup continues the creative resurgence of the orchestra that has been sparked by its multi-talented young Music Director – who is, as the *Wall Street Journal* notes, possessed of a **"prodigious, almost intimidating" energy** – since starting his tenure two years ago. Marked by a signature mix of compelling programming and extensive community engagement, the orchestra's partnership with Abrams is one to which Louisville audiences have responded with unbridled enthusiasm, as evidenced by a **93% increase in ticket sales** since 2012-13.

In one of Abrams's key innovations, the orchestra now launches each season with an ambitious, immersive community collaboration. In 2014, their powerhouse performance of *Carmina Burana* drew on a local cast of hundreds, **"offer[ing] incontrovertible proof that Abrams [was] leading the Louisville Orchestra into the next great leg of its journey"** (*Arts-Louisville*). Likewise, last fall some 240 musicians joined forces for Leonard Bernstein's *Mass*, a tour de force that Abrams **"endowed ... with coherence, humanity, and winning theatricality"** (*Wall Street Journal*). Once again calling for extensive local reinforcements, this year's offering is **Mahler's** monumental **Second Symphony**, the "Resurrection," which, besides employing huge orchestral forces – the score calls for unusually numerous woodwinds and percussion, ten trumpets and horns, and "the largest possible contingent of strings" – also features soprano and alto soloists, full choir, and organ

(Oct 8).

Sharing the Louisville Orchestra's mission of reaching the widest possible audience, superstar cellist **Yo-Yo Ma**, a recent Kennedy Center honoree, consistently pushes the boundaries of musical communication, whether through concerto engagements, chamber music, recitals, or the exchange of cultural ideas fostered by his groundbreaking Silk Road Project. He joins the orchestra for a special performance of **Elgar's Cello Concerto** (Oct 30). Other concerto soloists include young German violinist **Augustin Hadelich**, winner of the 2016 Grammy Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo, who joins Abrams and the orchestra for Britten's elegiac Violin Concerto on an all-English program that closes with selections from Walton's *Façade* (March 31, April 1).

Under Abrams's auspices, the orchestra has undertaken interdisciplinary collaborations with a variety of local institutions, including the Louisville Ballet and the Center for Interfaith Relations. To commemorate this year's **400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death**, the Folger Shakespeare Library has organized a tour of the Bard's **First Folio of 1623** – the first collected edition of his plays – to all 50 U.S. states, as well as to Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. In honor of the First Folio display at Louisville's Frazier History Museum, **"Shakespeare in Music"** (Nov 18, 19) pairs excerpts from Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet* with *let me tell you*, a transcendent new song cycle from Denmark's **Hans Abrahamsen**, with celebrated new-music exponent Susan Narucki as soprano soloist. Based on Paul Griffiths' novel of the same name, the cycle explores the troubled soul of Shakespeare's Ophelia through a first-person narrative that uses only the few words she speaks in *Hamlet*. As the *New Yorker* marveled, Abrahamsen's setting **"causes thousands of people to stop breathing for a long moment,"** and it was named as the winner of the coveted 2016 Grawemeyer Award.

An immediate success at its premiere, **Shostakovich's** evocative and politically subversive **Symphony No. 11 ("The Year 1905")** has remained an audience favorite ever since. Incorporating revolutionary songs from the composer's youth, the symphony has come to serve as something of a requiem for Russia's post-Revolutionary generation, of which Shostakovich himself was a member. Programmed alongside the symphony is **Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto** with soloist **Andrew Tyson**, who recently swept Zurich's 2015 Géza Anda International Piano Competition, as well as the **world premiere of a new commission** from the **"dizzily versatile"** (*New York Times*) Russian violist-composer **Lev 'Ljova' Zhurbin** (Jan 28). Commissioning new music to expand and revitalize the orchestral literature is a key component of Abrams's appointment and has long been central to Louisville's mission; indeed, since receiving a 1953 Rockefeller grant, the orchestra has won **19 ASCAP awards** for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music. As Abrams puts it: **"Being at the forefront of music that is 'now' is at the heart of what the Louisville Orchestra is about."**

After two seasons of programming in which new and homegrown music has played an increasingly central part, Abrams has succeeded in fostering an extraordinary level of trust

between the orchestra and its audience. It is this that gave him the confidence to launch another signature initiative: the annual **Festival of American Music**. In 2017, this will open with "**Mavericks**" (April 15), a program led by guest conductor **Michael Tilson Thomas**, one of the great champions of new American composition and a key mentor to Abrams. Under Abrams's own leadership, the festival will conclude with "**All Concertos**" (April 29), which showcases two **world premieres**: First, **Louisville Concerto II**, the second installment of a hit group composition project that Abrams conceived to bring together musicians from different genres with shared ties to the Louisville community; and secondly, his own new **composition, Muhammad Ali Portrait**. About his new piece, Abrams explains:

**"The Muhammad Ali Portrait gives us a unique opportunity to celebrate one of Louisville's own and to collaborate with the Muhammad Ali Center. ... I envision the piece as a living, breathing orchestra jazz work that fuses multiple styles including rap. While there will be text, the piece is not a narrative but rather an art piece that captures Ali's life as a symbol. ... I will collaborate with a rap artist using Ali's words, writings and poetry as inspiration for the through-composed rap. While the rapper must work within the parameters of the music, the text he/she chooses for inspiration will be uniquely personal, so each performance of this piece will be distinctive."**

A further collaboration with community partners is the "**Classic Film and Music**" event (Feb 25), presented in conjunction with the new film initiatives at Louisville's recently renovated and reopened **Speed Art Museum**. An account of Debussy's *Jeux* will accompany the world premiere of a new baseball documentary from filmmaker Dennis Scholl, in partnership with another Louisville institution, the Louisville Slugger Museum. The program will also include a live orchestral performance of the score to a classic Hollywood blockbuster that is yet to be announced.

### **Louisville Orchestra Pops Series**

The Louisville Orchestra celebrates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary season of Bob Bernhardt as Principal Pops Conductor with an entertaining series of Orchestral Pops. Bernhardt, coincidentally also marks 35 years with the LO in the auspicious 2016-2017 season. A highlight of the season is **Star Wars & More** [November 5), an evening of the music of John Williams and the holidays will sparkle with aerial artistry of **Cirque Musica** (November 26) performing with live orchestral music of Yuletide. The series also features tributes to Ella Fitzgerald and the late David Bowie. When **Time for Three**, the genre-bending string trio hailed as "**the future of music**" (Sir Simon Rattle), took part in the closing concert of Abrams's inaugural season, *Arts-Louisville* marveled: "**This terrific trio deserved every second of the standing ovations that they received.**" Now the three classically trained musicians rejoin the orchestra for an eclectic mix of '90s hip-hop, grunge, bluegrass, and pop and classical standards, when Abrams takes the podium for his first Louisville Pops concert (March 25). This concludes another full pops season for the orchestra.

## **LO Family Series**

Families are invited to orchestrate a musical adventure with the 4-concert LO Family Series presented on Saturday mornings at the Brown Theatre. Opening with **Halloween Spooktacular** (October 1) and offering a kid-sized version of **Cirque Musica** (November 26) Christmas show. We feature the beloved **Carnival of the Animals** (January 21) and close the series with **Heroes and Villains** (March 18). These one-hour concerts are designed with kids aged 4 to 12 years in mind though kids of “all ages” enjoy these performances.

## **Concerts Around Louisville**

Finally, beyond the concert hall, Abrams continues to find numerous alternative ways of reaching Louisville listeners. In the **neighborhood series “LG&E Music Without Borders,”** he leads favorite classics throughout the city’s churches, community centers and synagogues. Performances of Handel’s **Messiah** are scheduled for December 1, 2 & 3 (locations TBA). Meanwhile, besides taking his piano to the streets to meet locals face to face, Abrams continues to wire his own pianos to an external sound system, so that passers-by can hear the music-making that takes place in his home. All told, Louisville’s 2016-17 offerings confirm that, as the *Wall Street Journal* recently concluded, **“There’s a reason for optimism at the Louisville Orchestra.”**

## **Tickets**

Subscription packages for a variety of concert series’ are currently available. Subscriptions are surprisingly affordable and offer discounts, exchange privileges and other benefits to ticket-buyers. Information is available through LO customer service representatives during regular business hours at 502.587.8681. Online information at [www.LouisvilleOrchestra.org](http://www.LouisvilleOrchestra.org).

Special event tickets to the Yo-Yo Ma concert will be available to subscribers (Classics, Coffee Pops series) only starting on May 9 at 9 AM. Any available tickets will be released for single sales on September 15. These tickets will be available ONLY through the Louisville Orchestra ticket office at 502.587.8681 or by mail order (Louisville Orchestra Ticket Office, 323 W. Broadway, Suite 700, Louisville KY 40202). Gala tickets \$400; Box seats \$150; \$95, \$75, \$50.

Single tickets to individual events are available starting August 1 at 9 AM.

## **About the Louisville Orchestra**

Established in 1937 through the combined efforts of Louisville mayor Charles Farnsley and conductor Robert Whitney, the **Louisville Orchestra** is a cornerstone of the Louisville arts community. With the launch of **First Edition Recordings** in 1947, it became the first American orchestra to own a recording label. Six years later it received a Rockefeller grant of

\$500,000 to commission, record, and premiere 20<sup>th</sup>-century music by living composers, thereby earning a place on the international circuit and an invitation to perform at Carnegie Hall. In 2001, the Louisville Orchestra received the **Leonard Bernstein Award for Excellence in Educational Programming**, presented annually to a North American orchestra. Continuing its commitment to new music, the Louisville Orchestra has earned **19 ASCAP awards for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music**, and was also recently awarded large grants from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music and the National Endowment for the Arts, both for the purpose of producing, manufacturing and marketing its historic First Edition Recordings collections. Over the years, the orchestra has performed for prestigious events at the White House, Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, and on tour in Mexico City. The feature-length, Gramophone Award-winning documentary **Music Makes A City** (2010) chronicles the Louisville Orchestra's founding years. The 12-part web documentary **Music Makes A City Now** follows Teddy Abrams as he establishes himself in Louisville as the youngest music director of a major regional orchestra.

High-resolution photos are available. Contact Heather O'Mara at 502.587.8681  
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[www.louisvilleorchestra.org](http://www.louisvilleorchestra.org)

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## **Louisville Orchestra: 2016-17 Season Calendar Order**

*Except where noted, all concerts take place at Whitney Hall at Kentucky Center for the Arts under the leadership of Music Director Teddy Abrams.*

### **Sep 17 :: Pops Series**

#### **"ELLA AND LOUIS: ALL THAT JAZZ"**

Marva Hicks, vocalist

Byron Stripling, trumpet

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

### **Oct 1 :: LO Family Series**

#### **"HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR"**

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

Brown Theatre

### **Oct 8 :: Classics Series**

#### **"MAHLER SECOND"**

MAHLER: Symphony No. 2 in C Minor ("Resurrection")

Celena Shafer, soprano

J'nai Bridges, mezzo-soprano (LO debut)

Kent Hatteberg, chorusmaster

**Oct 21, 22 :: Coffee and Classics Series**

**"ALL DVORÁK"**

DVORÁK: Slavonic Dances (Nos. 1, 7, 8)

DVORÁK: Cello Concerto (with Amit Peled, cello)

DVORÁK: Symphony No. 7

Donato Cabrera, conductor

**Oct 30 :: LO WOW! Special event**

Concert with Yo-Yo Ma

ELGAR: Cello Concerto

**Nov 5 :: Pops Series**

**"STAR WARS & MORE: MUSIC OF JOHN WILLIAMS"**

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

**Nov 18, 19 :: Coffee and Classics Series**

**"SHAKESPEARE IN MUSIC"**

DEBUSSY: *Le roi Lear*, mvmt 1

ABRAHAMSEN: *Let Me Tell You*

PROKOFIEV: Selected excerpts from *Romeo and Juliet*

**Nov 26 :: LO Family Series**

**"HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS with CIRQUE MUSICA"**

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

**Nov 26 :: Pops Series**

**"CIRQUE MUSICA HOLIDAY SPECTACULAR"**

Bob Bernhardt, conductor

featuring the aerialists and acrobats of Cirque Musica

**Dec 1, 2, 3 :: Neighborhood**

**"HANDEL'S MESSIAH"**

Kent Hatteberg, conductor

University of Louisville Chamber Choir

TBA, soloists

TBA, locations

**Jan 7, 2017 :: Pops Series Jan 13, 14 :: Coffee and Classics Series**

**"BRAHMS SECOND"**

DEBUSSY: Prelude to *The Afternoon of a Faun*

MOZART: Sinfonia concertante (with soloists from the Louisville Orchestra)

**"MUSIC OF DAVID BOWIE"**

Brent Havens, conductor

