



River Oaks Chamber Orchestra

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 26, 2017



### **River Oaks Chamber Orchestra Announces Season 13: “Cultivate Curiosity”**

HOUSTON — The River Oaks Chamber Orchestra (ROCO) announces its 2017–18 season, themed “Cultivate Curiosity,” with a lineup of concerts and collaborations that appeal to lifelong learners and anyone who loves to explore new and exciting worlds.

“In our 13th season, ROCO celebrates all the ways that we embrace innovation and invites audiences to cultivate their own curiosities in musical conversation with ROCO musicians,” says Alecia Lawyer, ROCO founder, artistic director and principal oboist. “From offering real-time musician commentary via the smart phone app EnCue by Octava to presenting world premiere commissions and unexpected selections from established composers to live-streaming performances, ROCO encourages audiences at home and in the concert hall to dig deeper into what links their personal experiences to the music presented and the musicians who make it happen.”



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ROCO Announces Season 13

ROCO continues its tradition of co-creating with nine world premiere commissions. Five new composers to ROCO will be featured on the orchestra's "In Concert" series, which features the full 40-person chamber orchestra. Pieces based upon John F. Kennedy and Houston punk band The Hates are just two examples of what to expect from Michael Gandolfi, Paul Lansky, Dan Visconti and Mark Buller. Three inventive world premiere commissions will be showcased as part of ROCO's "Unchambered" concerts, which take place in a more intimate setting. Paul English, Kevin Lau and Alyssa Morris write pieces inspired by jazz and Disney for soloists or small ensembles from within the chamber orchestra. Marcus Maroney rounds out the commissions for the annual Musical and Literary Ofrenda at Lawndale Art Center.



Scott St. John, Concert Master

During the 2017–18 season, ROCO introduces violinist Scott St. John into the fold as the permanent concertmaster. Since his first performance with ROCO as soloist and concertmaster during season 11, it has been clear that St. John's refined sound, gentle guidance and exacting standards unite the orchestra. His training at Curtis, his past experience with the St. Lawrence String Quartet and his fruitful solo career further enhance ROCO's strengths. St. John coaches chamber music at Western University in his hometown London, Ontario, Canada; plays chamber music in the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont; participates as a partner in the new Rebelheart Collective at Aeolian Hall, also in Canada; and serves as artistic director of Western 360, a chamber music festival at Western University debuting in August.

"Season 13 will be full of new experiences for ROCO, cultivating the curiosity of our audience and musicians alike," says Amy Gibbs, ROCO managing director. "In August, we will make our very first commercial recording at Round Top Festival Hill, featuring a combination of the ROCO musicians' five favorite commissions from our past concerts. Keeping with ROCO tradition, the concerts this season will feature unexpected collaborations and music with surprising inspirations."



Amy Gibbs, Managing Director and Alecia Lawyer, Artistic Director



**In Concert**

ROCO launches its 2017–18 “In Concert” series with **“To the Beat of a Different Drummer,”** Sept. 22 at Miller Outdoor Theatre and Sept. 23 at The Church of St. John the Divine (SJD). The program features the world premiere of *Five Views*, a percussion concerto by pioneering computer music composer Paul Lansky. Written for ROCO's principal percussionist Matthew McClung, the work highlights McClung's technical skills and his gift for creating absorbing soundscapes. Victor Yampolsky, one of ROCO's favorite artistic partners, returns to conduct. He brings the rarely performed *Symphony No. 2* by Kurt Weill, along with Paul Hindemith's *Cupid and Psyche*, Igor Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks* and additional ROCO surprises.

On Nov. 11 at SJD, ROCO presents **“Courageous Catalysts,”** featuring a commission by Michael Gandolfi. This new work, titled *JFK 100*, celebrates the 100th birthday of President John F. Kennedy and the courage of people who fight for change.

Michael Stern conducts the program, which includes Jean Sibelius' *Symphony No. 7 in C major, Op. 105*, the composer's final published symphony; and Bruce Adolphe's *I Will Not Remain Silent*, a violin concerto inspired by the life of German-American rabbi and civil rights leader Joachim Prinz. Throughout the latter piece, the violin, played by ROCO concertmaster and featured soloist St. John, represents the voice of Prinz, while the orchestra represents opposing forces — Nazi Germany in the first movement and America during the Civil Rights era in the second movement.



Michael Stern, Conductor



Christian Kidd, The Hates

St. John will lead from the chair during ROCO's annual conductorless concert on Feb. 10, 2018, at SJD. **“Legendary Love”** is the name of the concert as well as the world premiere of a commission, a classical piece by Dan Visconti honoring Christian Kidd, lead singer of the Houston-based punk rock band The Hates. Antonín Dvorák's *Legends* pairs with *Wood Notes* by William Grant Still, who was heavily influenced by Dvorak's call to American composers to find their own unique voice.

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## ROCO Announces Season 13

The season 13 “In Concert” series closer keeps the audience guessing on April 21, 2018, at SJD. *Nursery Rhymes* and *Epitaphs*, two world premiere commissions by Houston composer Mark Buller, bookend the “**Twists of Fate**” program, which also features Dmitri Shostakovich’s surprising *Symphony No. 9* and Anna Clyne’s *Within Her Arms*. Teddy Abrams conducts and guest performer Timothy Jones, baritone, is the featured soloist.

At each “In Concert” series performance, ROCO will continue engaging audiences with EnCue by Octava, a smart phone app that delivers musician and composer commentary in real time. ROCOrooters, a music education and childcare program, will also be available during performances at SJD and TWUMC.



### Unchambered

ROCO’s “Unchambered” series, performed on the stage at the Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), features ROCO soloists or small ensembles in an intimate setting.



The series opens with “**Nik-NAK**” on Oct. 8 at MATCH and Oct. 10 at the Cypress Creek Foundation for the Arts & Community Enrichment (FACE). Following a festival tour of France, the ROCO Wind Trio — Alecia Lawyer, oboe; Nathan Williams, clarinet; and Kristin Wolfe Jensen, bassoon — will perform works by female composers, including the world premiere of *Nik-NAK*, a work for wind trio commissioned from composer Alyssa Morris (and named after the musicians Nathan, Alecia and Kristin).

For “**Musical Parfait**” at MATCH on Nov. 19, featured artist Lorenzo Golofeev, viola, adds “layers” of other musicians throughout the evening’s program. Golofeev also performs Maxime Goulet’s *Symphonic Chocolates*, during which audience members taste a piece of chocolate during each of the four movements: Caramel, Dark, Mint and Coffee.



ROCO Announces Season 13



On Feb. 18, 2018, at MATCH, the ROCO Brass Quintet — led by George Chase, trumpet — will present **“The Wonderful English and Oz”**, a program that includes the world premiere of a commission by Houston-based jazz composer Paul English.

The season 13 “Unchambered” series concludes on April 8, 2018, with **“Magical Inspirations”** at MATCH and FACE. Violinist St. John is the featured artist for this program, which includes an illustrated piece inspired by Disney and written for violin, horn, piano and percussion by Canadian composer Kevin Lau.



**Connections**

Each season, ROCO collaborates with dynamic partners throughout the Houston community with a series of “Connections” concerts. The season 13 lineup includes:

- **“Musical Trick-or-Treat,”** a progressive salon at the Heritage Society on Oct. 26. Audiences travel in groups to four historic homes to hear a short piece by one musician at each house.
- The annual **“Musical and Literary Ofrenda”** at Lawndale Art Center on Oct. 30. A collaboration between ROCO, Lawndale, Inprint, Musiqa and the Houston Hispanic Forum, this year’s performance features the premiere of five new miniature musical remembrances by Houston composer Marcus Maroney. An oboe, viola and cello trio from ROCO will perform with baritone Timothy Jones.
- **“A Season of Thanks for the Mastersons”** concert on Nov. 30 at Rienzi, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH) house museum for European decorative arts, in celebration of the home’s former owners.
- A **“Beer and Brass”** performance by the ROCO Brass Quintet at Saint Arnold Brewing Company on Jan. 4, 2018.
- **“Peter and the Wolf”** at the Houston Zoo on Jan. 14, 2018. Sergei Prokofiev’s classic is refreshed with a collaboration between ROCO and Horse Head Theatre Company, including new costumes with materials donated by nonprofit design house Magpies & Peacocks.

**SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Subscriptions, starting at \$50, are on sale now. A “Golden Ticket” season pass, which includes entry to all of ROCO’s 2017–18 concerts, can be purchased for \$350. For more information or to purchase a subscription, visit [roco.org](http://roco.org).



**ABOUT ROCO**

Founded in 2005, ROCO is a 40-piece professional chamber orchestra featuring musicians and guest artists from around the world who present unexpected classics, original compositions and delightful performances with the goal of removing barriers for our multi-generational and curious audience. In 12 seasons, ROCO has commissioned and world premiered 58 works and is regularly broadcast nationally on APM's Performance Today. ROCO's Anytime, Anywhere program provides free live streaming of In Concert performances, free listening to past concerts on [roco.org](http://roco.org), and DVDs are sent to nursing homes and hospitals for their patient channels. ROCO is known as "the most fun you can have with serious music!"

Website: [rocohouston.org](http://rocohouston.org)

Phone: 713-665-2700

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**RIVER OAKS CHAMBER ORCHESTRA  
2017–18 SEASON CALENDAR**

**ROCO IN CONCERT: “TO THE BEAT OF A DIFFERENT DRUMMER”**

Friday, September 22, 2017, 8 p.m.

Miller Outdoor Theater, 6000 Hermann Park Drive, Houston, TX 77030

Saturday, September 23, 2017, 5 p.m.

The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Boulevard, Houston, TX 77019

**ROCO UNCHAMBERED: “NIK-NAK”**

Sunday, October 8, 2017, 5 p.m.

Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Tuesday, October 10, 2017, 3 p.m.

Cypress Creek FACE, 6823 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, TX 77379

**ROCO CONNECTIONS: “MUSICAL TRICK OR TREAT”**

Thursday, October 26, 2017, reception at 5:30 p.m., concert tour starts at 6:30 p.m.

The Heritage Society, 1100 Bagby Street, Houston, TX 77002

**ROCO CONNECTIONS: “MUSICAL AND LITERARY OFRENDA”**

Monday, October 30, 2017, art tour begins at 5:30 p.m.; concert starts at 6 p.m.

Lawndale Art Center, 4912 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

**ROCO IN CONCERT: “COURAGEOUS CATALYST”**

Saturday, November 11, 2017, 5 p.m.

The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Boulevard, Houston, TX 77019

**ROCO UNCHAMBERED: “MUSICAL PARFAIT”**

Sunday, November 19, 2017, 5 p.m.

Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

**ROCO CONNECTIONS: “SEASON OF THANKS FOR THE MASTERSONS”**

Thursday, November 30, 2017, Self-guided tours 4:30 – 6:30 p.m.; reception starts at 5:30 p.m.; concert starts at 6:30 p.m.

Rienzi, 1406 Kirby Drive, Houston, TX 77019

**ROCO CONNECTIONS: "BEER AND BRASS"**

Thursday, January 4, 2018, 6 p.m.

Saint Arnold Brewing Company, 2000 Lyons Avenue, Houston, TX 77020

**ROCO CONNECTIONS: "PETER AND THE WOLF"**

Sunday, January 14, 2018, 2, 3 and 4 p.m.

Houston Zoo, 6200 Hermann Park Drive, Houston, TX 77030

**ROCO IN CONCERT: "LEGENDARY LOVE"**

Saturday, February 10, 2018, 5 p.m.

The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Boulevard, Houston, TX 77019

**ROCO UNCHAMBERED: "ROCO BRASS QUINTET"**

Sunday, February 18, 2018, 5 p.m.

Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

**ROCO UNCHAMBERED: "MAGICAL INSPIRATIONS"**

Sunday, April 8, 2018, 5 p.m.

Midtown Arts & Theater Center Houston (MATCH), 3400 Main Street, Houston, TX 77002

Tuesday, April 10, 2018, 3pm

Cypress Creek FACE, 6823 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, TX 77379

**ROCO IN CONCERT: "TWISTS OF FATE"**

Saturday, April 21, 2018, 5 p.m.

The Church of St. John the Divine, 2450 River Oaks Boulevard, Houston, TX 77019