

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 12, 2015



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The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia Receives \$15,000 Special Project Grant from The Presser Foundation to Support "A Fused Muse: Technology Meets Composition"

"A Fused Muse" premiering September 2015 with pianist/composer Conrad Tao's new concerto for chamber orchestra, piano, technology and experimental media

PHILADELPHIA – The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia is one of seven locally-based arts organizations to receive a Special Project grant from The Presser Foundation recently. The \$15,000 award helps support "A Fused Muse: Technology Meets Composition," an ambitious new project that includes a new concerto from pianist and composer Conrad Tao. As part of "A Fused Muse," Mr. Tao will create a concerto for chamber orchestra, piano, technology, and experimental media, to be performed in September 2015 in the Kimmel Center's intimate Perelman Theater. Despite its classical inclinations, The Chamber Orchestra has had a tremendous amount of success in recent years with "Dirk's Islands," the brief, non-traditional pieces played at the beginning of the second half of certain concerts. "A Fused Muse" will expand on the popular success of "Dirk's Islands" by presenting a challenging new work as the focus of an entire program.

At just twenty years old, Conrad Tao has earned worldwide recognition as an in-demand composer and instrumentalist. The Dallas Symphony Orchestra recently commissioned his new piece, "The World Is Very Different Now" in observance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Recent accolades (Gilmore Young Artist Award, Avery Fisher Career Grant) helped fund the creation of last summer's UNPLAY Festival. Mr. Tao is fascinated by the processes of history and narrative in music, examining how music has impacted or has been impacted by its historical context, and how it influences his own performance and composition. As a composer, Tao experiments with technology and atypical instrumentation (iPads, rope, video games, etc.) to create a unique soundscape. His recent work explores music that not only exists within the present, but also embraces transience and ephemeral beauty. As a performer, Tao has chosen to explore what makes music familiar. By performing new works alongside the canon, he challenges the conception of classical music and what it takes for new works to integrate into that category.

The project will be performed in September 2015 under the baton of Maestro Dirk Brossé, Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of The Chamber Orchestra. The full program will include Mr. Tao's new concerto and Saint-Saëns' *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Minor*. The contrast in the works will underscore Mr. Tao's compositional interests and highlight the Chamber Orchestra's ambition to embrace technology as a tool of composition and musical expression. Both performances will be captured in audio and HD video for future dissemination through various media platforms.

The Chamber Orchestra will also broaden the work's impact on the region by collaborating with other local cultural organizations. These educational and entertaining events will allow the artists to share their musical perspectives, examining how technology impacts modern music, and how it can coexist with a more traditional ensemble like a chamber orchestra.

According to Maestro Brossé, "This project will increase the modern repertoire for chamber orchestra, advance the field of composition through technology, and extend audience understanding of what music can be." Brossé added that, "As The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia moves into its second half century, it is also evolving as a performing arts

organization—both musically and technologically. I admit we are taking a creative risk by opening a season with Conrad Tao’s avant-garde musical perspectives. However, The Chamber Orchestra is ready to use exciting new music of this caliber to make a bold statement about our past, our present, and, most importantly our future.”

Vera Wilson, Chair of the Special Projects Committee of The Presser Foundation, explained why the Foundation chose to support this project. "The Presser Foundation contributes to many worthy music presenting, music performing and music education organizations in the Greater Philadelphia area. 'A Fused Muse: Technology Meets Composition' will appeal to Philadelphia-based contemporary and classical music fans, international contemporary and classical music fans, and Philadelphia-area music students. It is a great example of the type of creative initiative we love to see happen in this city."

The Presser Foundation

The Presser Foundation was established in 1939 under the Deeds of Trust and Will of the late Theodore Presser. It is one of the few private foundations in the United States dedicated solely to music education and music philanthropy. The Presser Foundation supports music performance and education through undergraduate and graduate scholar awards, operating and program support for music organizations, capital grants for music building projects, and assistance to retired music teachers. Much of the grant making focus of the Foundation is on organizations and institutions in the 100-mile radius surrounding Center City Philadelphia.

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

A founding resident company of The Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia is a 33-member professional ensemble led by Music Director Dirk Brossé, a conductor and composer of international acclaim. For half a century, The Chamber Orchestra has earned a sterling reputation around the world for distinguished performances of repertoire from the Baroque period through the 21st century.

The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia has commissioned and premiered over 70 new works and has performed with such internationally acclaimed artists as Plácido Domingo, Luciano Pavarotti, Mstislav Rostropovich, Issac Stern, Rudolph Serkin, The Eroica Trio, Jean-Pierre Rampal, Julie Andrews, Bernadette Peters, Elvis Costello, and Sylvia McNair, among others. This fall, Chamber Orchestra completed a successful national tour with Branford Marsalis.

The Chamber Orchestra performs from September through May in the Kimmel Center's intimate, 600-seat Perelman Theater and performs one concert program each year in the Kimmel Center's Verizon Hall as well as selected concert programs at Lincoln University. The Chamber Orchestra also performs with other musical ensembles throughout the region and travels regularly across the United States, Europe, and Israel.

Chamber Orchestra Music Director Dirk Brossé has made more than 60 CD recordings and has conducted in numerous world-famous concert halls, such as the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Royal Festival Hall, the Barbican Centre and the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Victoria Hall in Geneva, the Seoul Arts Center, the Tokyo Forum and the Concert Hall Shanghai. Additionally, he has done extensive work as a composer/conductor for film, giving him great skill and insight into managing projects with multiple moving parts.

“The Chamber Orchestra always walks a fine line between creating an experience that’s different from what goes on elsewhere in the Kimmel Center and something that won’t alienate mainstream audiences. Music Director Dirk Brossé is so singular that, regardless of an individual concert’s success, it won’t be like anything else around.” - Philadelphia Inquirer

For information, please contact The Chamber Orchestra at 215.545.5451 or visit chamberorchestra.org.

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The Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia 50th Anniversary Season 2014-15

Di Wu Plays Mendelssohn | September 14 & 15, 2014 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center

***Baroque Concerti with Hai-Ye Ni* | October 19 & 20, 2014 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center**

***Spotlight on Kozasa* | November 9 & 10, 2014 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center
November 11, 2014 | The Lincoln University**

***Mozart with Miho* | January 25 & 26, 2015 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center**

***Mahler's 4th* | February 22 & 23, 2015 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center**

***Masters of All Time* | March 22 & 23, 2015 | Perelman Theater, Kimmel Center**

***50th Anniversary Celebration* | May 10, 2015 | Verizon Hall, Kimmel Center**

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**Kimmel Center: \$24 - \$81 | chamberorchestra.org or 215.893.1709
The Lincoln University: Free | *Groups of 10+ require reservation: 484.365.7434***