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Play On Philly Launches the *Composing for Young Orchestras Project* in Collaboration with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music

The Composing for Young Orchestra Projects expands representation of musical pieces for youth music ensembles written by composers of color.

PHILADELPHIA – November 1, 2022 – Play On Philly (POP), a tuition-free music education program, launches the *Composing for Young Orchestras Project* in collaboration with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music (GLFCAM), an academy committed to inspiring emerging composers. The *Composing for Young Orchestras Project* brings together diverse emerging composers from around the world to work with POP’s young musicians create and perform new works of music for youth ensembles, expanding representation in the cannon of musical pieces written for youth orchestras and beginner ensembles. Four emerging GLFCAM alumni composers have been commissioned: [Kevin Day](#), [Michael-Thomas Foumai](#), [Erika Oba](#), and [Jungyoon Wie](#).

Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, GLFCAM alumni composers Erika Oba and Kevin Day will visit Play On Philly’s Music Centers in Philadelphia while GLFCAM alumni composers Michael-Thomas Foumai and Jungyoon Wie will conduct virtual visits. The visit provides the commissioned composer with a detailed picture of the student musicians that the piece is being written for, an understanding of their hometown of Philadelphia, and how they learn music. The visits will conclude with an engaging Q&A that will be open to POP students and their families. Each composer will compose a piece orchestrated for different types of ensembles: a full orchestra, wind ensemble, string ensemble, and for two soloists and a full orchestra. POP students will perform world-premieres of these new works in venues across Philadelphia over the span of two years starting in December 2023.

With 95% of POP students identifying as people of color, POP created the *Composing for Young Orchestras Project* to build representation of composers of color in the repertoire music students learn from an early age. As a mentor and a leading voice for diverse composers around the world, GLFCAM will guide the commissioned composers in their process of writing pieces geared towards young instrumentalists. "At the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, it is with great pleasure that we commit to a partnership with Play On Philly to invigorate the musical repertoire for young musicians. Such repertoire is often held in lower esteem to repertoire created for professionals, which is unfortunate." Says Founder and President of GLFCAM, Gabriela Lena Frank, "young minds are impressionable and they should be afforded the highest quality music from a diverse array of composers. Our younger artists are worth the investment! I am so pleased that composer alums from GLFCAM will be commissioned by and interact with the inspirational community that is Play On Philly."

POP was approved for a \$15,000 Grants for Arts Projects award from the National Endowment for the Arts to support the *Composing for Young Orchestras* project. Play On Philly’s project was among the more than 1,100 projects across America that were selected during the second application round of Grants for Arts Projects totaling nearly \$27 million for fiscal year 2021 funding.

POP Director of Educational Programming, Jessica Zweig, says: "we are grateful for the NEA’s support of a project that invests in expanding visibility of works by composers of color for young music students. It’s important for students to see themselves reflected both in the music they play and in the people who create it. There are so many composers with a rich diversity of backgrounds and cultures and yet their work is often less represented on the performance stage, and even less so in the classroom or in a youth orchestra setting. Play On Philly is thrilled to play a role together with GLFCAM in shifting the musical landscape to amplify the voices of young musicians of color."

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About Play On Philly:

Play On Philly (POP) provides high-quality music education to students, who would typically lack access, as a vehicle for life skills and academic achievement. We provide 8 hours of intensive music instruction and ensemble practice every week before and after school and over 25 performance opportunities throughout the year. Students range from pre-Kindergarten to 12th grade and are loaned an orchestral instrument at no cost. POP programming has proven results: our students score ten points higher on standardized tests and have improved behavior and study skills. We cultivate musical excellence, lifelong skills, and confidence. Learn more about POP at our website: www.playonphilly.org.

About Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music:

The Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music is dedicated to inspiring emerging composers to create self-determined artistic lives through mentorship, readings with master performers, and hands-on practicums addressing the creative habit in the intimate and eco-conscious setting of Gabriela's two farms in Boonville, CA. The Academy connects guest musicians and composer fellows from diverse backgrounds with a local small rural community to encourage citizenship in low arts access areas. In addition, fellows of GLFCAM practice climate citizenship and are equipped with the skill set to make music ethically. GLFCAM also creates a support structure for alumni of our programs that entails commissions and seed funds for collaborations with one another. Learn more at www.glfcam.com.