



AMERICAN
COMPOSERS
FORUM

For Immediate Release
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***Healing & Hope Through Song* Composer and Poet Announced**

SAINT PAUL, MN (May 22, 2017) - The American Composers Forum is pleased to announce a new community residency program with Giving Voice Chorus (GVC), Giving Voice Initiative (GVI), and the MacPhail Center for Music in Minneapolis. Composer Victor Zupanc and poet Louisa Castner will collaborate to create a new choral work to be premiered by GVC singers in spring 2018. This *Healing & Hope Through Song* community residency - and the music created from shared stories and experiences - will increase and promote the creative potential of people with Alzheimer's disease and their caregivers through choral music experiences, and reduce the public stigma associated with Alzheimer's and other dementias. GVC co-founder and co-president Marge Ostroushko affirms, "this is an extraordinary opportunity for the singers to hear their stories transformed into a compelling, contemporary musical work that will bring audiences a new awareness of the creativity, resilience, and joy that exist in people living with Alzheimer's and other dementias."

Since 1992 more than 175 communities/organizations have participated in ACF community residency programs, including *McKnight Visiting Composer*, *Continental Harmony*, *Faith Partners*, and *Healing & Hope Through Song*. "We have seen countless examples through this work how composers can help build and strengthen community through their music," says John Nuechterlein, President and CEO of ACF. "It is especially exciting in this case because music is a truly powerful ally in the fight to keep our minds active and alive as we age."

The tremendous response to Giving Voice Chorus in the Twin Cities has birthed the Giving Voice Initiative, which now inspires and equips organizations around the world to build choruses that bring joy, well-being, purpose, and community understanding to people with Alzheimer's and their care partners. The only organization of its kind, GVI is triggering a movement to build choral music communities that celebrate the potential of people living with dementia. It creates unique opportunities for people to connect, grow, challenge stereotypes, and significantly improve quality of life. GVI hopes to be a catalyst for changing the stigma of Alzheimer's disease and a contributor to emerging dementia and music studies.

Established in 1907, MacPhail Center for Music is the nation's oldest and largest community-based music education non-profit. Each year, MacPhail serves more than 15,500 students in Minnesota – as well as anywhere in the world through MacPhail Live Online. MacPhail has offerings

for all musical types, experience levels and ages, from six weeks to over 100 years old. The diverse programs offered include everything from individual lessons and group lessons to early childhood music, music therapy, the Suzuki teaching method, MacPhail Music for Life™ (55+), online lessons, and community partnerships.

“I am truly honored to be composing new music for this distinguished ensemble which is, for me, an incredibly inspirational group of people,” says composer Victor Zupanc. “I was immediately moved by the concept of Giving Voice Chorus because I have witnessed the strength and power of music when I play and sing with my elderly father, who is living with dementia. I look forward to collaborating with Giving Voice Chorus and the wonderfully talented poet Louisa Castner to create, enjoy, and sing together as one.”

You can keep up to date on the *Healing & Hope Through Song* collaboration by visiting the American Composers Forum website at <https://composersforum.org/programs/healing-hope-through-song/>.

About the Selected Artists

Victor Zupanc has composed music for nearly 300 plays at some of the most prestigious theaters in America including The La Jolla Playhouse, The Guthrie, Playwrights Horizon, SITl Company, The Acting Company, New Victory Theatre, Brooklyn Academy of Music, The Kennedy



Center, Missouri Rep, San Diego Rep and The Berkeley Rep. Artists he has worked with include Des McAnuff, Bill Irwin, Anne Bogart, Tony Taccone, Marion McClinton, Robert Woodruff, Stephen Sondheim, Randy Newman and David Byrne. He has composed many concert pieces for various choirs, orchestras and chamber groups and has received numerous major awards and honors around the country for his work. His music has also been heard in China, Japan, Europe, South America, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. In addition, he has scored several feature films and documentaries that have been distributed worldwide including the critically acclaimed motion picture, *The Operator* by Jon Dichter. Mr. Zupanc’s theme music can also be heard regularly on

National Public Radio. Since 1989, Mr. Zupanc has been the resident Music Director/Composer at the Tony Award winning Children’s Theatre Company of Minneapolis.



Louisa Castner is a poet, editor, and amateur jazz pianist. She and her 88-year-old father believe they are one of the few, if not only, father-daughter boogie-woogie piano duos in the world. As a musician, she has also enjoyed a five-year stint as the drummer in an all-women polka band that performed in Minnesota, the Polkastra. As a poet, her work has appeared in various journals, including *Dust & Fire* and *Calliope*. She was managing editor of the erstwhile *Evergreen Chronicles*, a Minneapolis-based LGBT literary journal. De-

mentia has touched her life deeply: her mother, Katie, lived with Alzheimer's for twelve years. Surrounded by her musical family, Katie thrived, singing in the church choir and enjoying the liveliness of musical activities. Ms. Castner shares that she "is delighted by the opportunity to collaborate with the gifted Victor Zupanc and the inspiring Giving Voice Chorus."

About the Healing & Hope Through Song Program

Healing & Hope Through Song is a unique, collaborative program which brings together a composer, poet, health services organization, and a musical organization to illuminate an issue facing members of our community, and to celebrate the strength of the human spirit through a new work of text and music. In 2016-17 the new work "Still Standing" was created in collaboration with acclaimed composer George Maurer; National Poetry Slam winner Sierra DeMulder; RECLAIM, a St. Paul based integrative therapy center for GBLTQ youth; and One Voice Mixed Chorus, North America's largest LGBT and straight allies community chorus. The 2015-16 season was a partnership between nationally recognized composer Paul John Rudoi; published poet Brian Laidlaw; the Twin Cities Ronald McDonald House; and the Minnesota Boy Choir, from which came the new work, "My Friends and I."

About the American Composers Forum

The American Composers Forum was organized in 1973 as a group of students at the University of Minnesota, for the purpose of creating performance opportunities outside the academic setting. Over the course of four decades, ACF has nurtured the work of thousands of composers: programming now reaches composers and communities in all 50 states, and helps composers engage communities with music as a source of inspiration, self-reflection, and delight. This engagement takes the form of groundbreaking composer residencies, designed to engage communities in the creative process and broaden the contexts in which new music is written, performed, and heard. It means innovative approaches to teaching music while nurturing the next generation of composers, performers, and audiences. ACF supports composers' artistic and professional growth through a rich variety of programs and services, including commissions, performances, readings, and fellowships. The organization's 2,000 members include composers and performers,

presenters and organizations that share ACF's goals, and individuals and institutions with an interest in supporting new music. Members come from both urban and rural areas; they work in virtually every musical genre, including orchestral and chamber music, world music, opera and music theater, jazz and improvisational music, electronic and electro-acoustic music, and sound art.

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Victor Zupanc: www.victorzupanc.com

American Composers Forum: <http://composersforum.org/>

Healing & Hope Through Song: <https://composersforum.org/programs/healing-hope-through-song/>

Giving Voice Chorus: <https://givingvoicechorus.org/>

Giving Voice Initiative: <https://givingvoicechorus.org/about/>

MacPhail Center for Music: <http://www.macphail.org/>