

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Announcing Young at Art – a collaboration between Astral Artists, Play On Philly and Mural Arts Philadelphia

Young at Art, a new collaboration between three Philadelphia arts organizations aims to answer the question, “What happens if we bring together music and visual art in a way that is possible ONLY in a virtual setting?”

Originally designed as a set of in-person concerts, the project was reimagined as a digital experience due to COVID-19. Thinking creatively about what happens to a living art form like classical music when it cannot be performed live, the teams at Astral Artists and Play On Philly (POP) began exploring other forms of art as points of connection for musical expression. The rich history of murals in Philadelphia became a touchstone for visual art that is accessible, inspiring, and developed within the framework of community - thus Mural Arts Philadelphia became an obvious choice to bring into the project.

So, Young at Art took new shape. In this new iteration, Astral and POP will bring together small groups of chamber musicians of all ages and levels of experience, focusing on five specific instrument groups--strings, brass, woodwinds, percussion and harp. Partnering with Mural Arts Philadelphia, these ensembles of POP musicians and Astral artists will pair music and murals virtually as a journey of expression and creativity.

Knowing that the best art comes from dedicated time together, each ensemble will participate in a series of mentoring visits between Astral artists and POP musicians, building musical skills and relationships between these student musicians and world-class artists. The mentoring visits occur over several weeks in mid-February 2021. If interested in observing a mentoring visit, please contact Astral’s Director of Community Partnerships, Stefanie Wakeman, at stefanie@astralartists.org.

The project culminates in a series of pre-rendered “mini concerts” which will be released during special drop events during the week of April 26-30, 2021. These events will be free to attend and will celebrate this unique fusion of classical music and visual art.

Featured musicians for this project include violinist Hannah Tarley, cellist Thomas Mesa, flutist Annie Wu, harpist Rachel O’Brien, trombonist Brittany Lasch and percussionist Joshua Jones; along with the remarkable student musicians from Play On Philly. Featured murals from the Mural Arts Philadelphia collection will include *Aqui y Alla* by Michelle Angela Ortiz, *Jackie Robinson* by David McShane, *Frequencies* by Ben Volta, and *Philly Rising* by Nilé Livingston, among others.

Young at Art is supported in part by The Connelly Foundation and the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia.

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ABOUT ASTRAL

Based in Philadelphia, Astral is a nonprofit intensive mentoring program that specializes in developing the early careers of extraordinary classical musicians. Astral concentrates its resources on a small number of rising-star soloists and chamber ensembles with the potential to be change-makers and influencers in classical music. Astral provides artists with industry-leading resources, networking, immersive community engagement experiences, and entrepreneurial tools. Astral Laureates have gone on to become Grammy Award Winners, world-renowned soloists, members of top orchestras, founders of concert series and acclaimed music educators. Learn more at www.astralartists.org

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. During a typical year, we provide 2 hours of music instruction and ensemble practice every day after school and over 25 performance opportunities throughout the year. Students range from 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 MURAL ARTS PHILADELPHIA

Mural Arts Philadelphia is the nation's largest public art program, dedicated to the belief that art ignites change. For over 35 years, Mural Arts has united artists and communities through a collaborative process, rooted in the traditions of mural-making, to create art that transforms public spaces and individual lives. Mural Arts engages communities in 50–100 public art projects each year and maintains its growing collection through a restoration initiative. Our core program areas—Art Education, Restorative Justice, and Porch Light—yield unique, project-based learning opportunities for thousands of youth and adults. Each year, 15,000 residents and visitors tour Mural Arts' outdoor art gallery, which has become part of the city's civic landscape and a source of pride and inspiration, earning Philadelphia international recognition as the "City of Murals."