

PRESS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Central Arkansas Library System and Arkansas Symphony **Call for Spoken Word Submissions**

Spoken word performers will join Arkansas Symphony Orchestra on stage for Beethoven's Symphony No. 9: Ode to Joy February 23 & 24.

Little Rock, ARK, September 7, 2018 - The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra (ASO) and Central Arkansas Library System (CALs) have announced a collaboration in a spoken word performance event focused on themes of joy, unity and hope. Spoken word artists ages 18 and younger should submit their work, either in writing or by video, through a participating CALs branch or via email at teenpoetry@cals.org. Adults should submit via odetojoy@arkansassymphony.org. Submissions will be accepted from September 10 until December 3, 2018, and should be limited to no more than three minutes long. Performers may perform original work or works for which they have secured performance rights.

CALs and ASO will invite youth and adult finalists to perform for a panel of judges and a live audience January 10, 2019 at the Ron Robinson Theater. At this event, performers will be selected to join the ASO on stage at Beethoven's Symphony No. 9: *Ode to Joy*, February 23 & 24 at the Robinson Center.

"Whether lyrics in a popular song, libretto for an opera, or a symphonic setting of a poem, music and writing go hand-in-hand," said Christina Littlejohn, CEO of the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra. "We are excited to join with another fundamental Little Rock institution to enrich our community with the power of orchestral music and language in our first spoken word collaboration."

"Engaging people with words, music, and creativity lies at the center of our broad library mission," said Nate Coulter, CALs Executive Director. "This collaborative performance with ASO musicians and library patrons speaking poetry will be an opportunity to express shared hopes and joys through two of our oldest and most emotionally evocative art forms. Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' is a great choice by the orchestra to inspire and embrace our library community's aspiring poets."

With a full orchestra and massed Arkansas intercollegiate and professional chorus, Maestro Philip Mann will lead more than 300 musicians on stage to perform one of the most powerful and recognizable works in the entire history of music: Symphony No. 9, "Ode to Joy." In this first ever collaboration between the ASO and CALs, spoken word artists will perform from the Robinson Center stage during the concert.

A series of special events at CALs branches is being planned as part of the partnership, including spoken word performances, mini-concerts and educational performances by ASO musicians, and panel discussions. CALs will also curate a multimedia collection of materials on Beethoven's Symphony No. 9,

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its libretto, and other topics relevant to the themes of the presentation. For detailed information about events and materials at CALS and ASO, please visit ArkansasSymphony.org/spoken-word.

Tickets to *Ode to Joy* are available now and cost \$16, \$36, \$57, and \$68; active duty military and student tickets are \$10 and can be purchased online at ArkansasSymphony.org at the Robinson Center street-level box office beginning 90 minutes prior to a concert; or by phone at 501-666-1761, ext. 1. All Arkansas students grades K-12 are admitted to Sunday's matinee free of charge with the purchase of an adult ticket using the Entergy Kids' Ticket, downloadable at <http://www.arkansassymphony.org/freekids>.

About Central Arkansas Library System

The Central Arkansas Library System includes 14 branch libraries located in Little Rock, Perryville, and throughout Pulaski County. CALS has the largest research collection in central Arkansas. Most of its more than one million items may be reserved online and picked up at any branch that is convenient to the patron. Library Square, the library system's downtown Little Rock campus, includes the Main Library, as well as the Ron Robinson Theater, the Bobby L. Roberts Library of Arkansas History & Art, and The Bookstore at Library Square (formerly River Market Books & Gifts).

About Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 53rd full season in 2018-2019, under the leadership of Music Director Philip Mann. ASO is the resident orchestra of Robinson Center Music Hall, to which the ASO returned in November of 2016 after a two-year renovation of the historic structure. ASO performs more than sixty concerts each year for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, ACXIOM Pops LIVE! Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, Intimate Neighborhood Concerts, and numerous concerts performed around the state of Arkansas, in addition to serving central Arkansas through numerous community outreach programs and bringing live symphonic music education to over 26,000 school children and over 200 schools. ASO is a member of the League of American Orchestras.

For more information about the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra call 501-666-1761 or visit www.ArkansasSymphony.org

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