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**Composer** **Chelsea Komschlies wins the 2019 Hermitage Prize in Aspen**

*Komschlies, a composition student at the Aspen Music Festival and School, receives a six-week residency at the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Englewood.*

(Englewood, FL/Aspen, CO) The Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Aspen Music Festival and School (AMFS) announce that Chelsea Komschlies, a composition student at the Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Composition Studies at the AMFS, has been awarded the 2019 Hermitage Prize. Komschlies receives a six-week residency at the Hermitage, along with a $1,000 stipend for travel and food expenses. Komschlies was selected by a jury that included Alan Fletcher, AMFS president and CEO of the AMFS; Robert Spano, music director at the AMFS and the Atlanta Symphony; and Chris Theofanidis, a composition faculty member at AMFS. All three are Hermitage fellows.

Bruce Rodgers, the executive director of the Hermitage, says that the partnership with AMFS has been tremendously rewarding over the past seven years. First awarded in 2013, the Hermitage Prize is given to a promising composer who is enrolled as a composition student at AMFS. Rodgers explains that the residency is the only one the Hermitage grants to an artist who is just embarking on his or her career.

“The Hermitage supports mid-career artists of every discipline who are immersed in their careers,” says Rodgers. “This is the one time we welcome an artist at the very beginning of his or her career. But the bottom line is that both organizations share the same goal—to nurture world-class artists. These students are already on their way to impressive careers with a multitude of recognized work under their belts. The fact that the leadership of the festival are all Hermitage fellows means they understand the tremendous value of a Hermitage residency and are aware of who in their program would be best served to have the experience.” He adds that, as “as the first female composer to be awarded the Hermitage Prize in Aspen, we look forward to having Chelsea on our campus and sharing her in a public program with our community.”

Alan Fletcher, president/CEO of AMFS, says it’s a “precious thing the Hermitage is accomplishing. We are very grateful for this partnership. Choosing the winner was a very humbling experience. Every one of this year’s composers deserved it. The person we chose is someone we felt was ready for this experience and someone who needs it.”

Chelsea Komschlies was a fellow in the 2019 Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Composition Studies at the Aspen Music Festival, where she studied under Stephen Hartke and Christopher Theofanidis. The composer states that her music “forms a lens to the hidden world of dreams that lies behind waking consciousness. My work springs from spontaneous subconscious mental imagery, and I combine musical elements from across time and tradition, from ancient to modern and from the traditional to the strange, to trigger the same in my listeners.”

Komschlies will begin her Ph.D. in composition at McGill University in 2019. Previously she studied with David Ludwig and Richard Danielpour at the Curtis Institute of Music, where she was awarded the Alfredo Casella Award for composition, and with Dan Kellogg and Carter Pann at the University of Colorado at Boulder, where she was awarded the Thurston Manning Composition Award and Cecil Effinger Fellowship in Composition. Her music has been performed in 10 countries around the globe, and she has received fellowship at programs such as the Fontainebleau School where Nadia Boulanger once taught, Copland House’s CULTIVATE, the Mizzou International Composers Festival, and a number of other festivals in the U.S. and abroad. Collaborators include Alarm Will Sound, the Fifth House Ensemble, Choral Arts Philadelphia, the Curtis Symphony Orchestra, Aspen Conducting Academy Orchestra, and others. In addition to musical composition, Komschlies enjoys sculpting, digital painting, and writing.

Komschlies says that winning the Hermitage Prize is “a tremendous honor. I feel it as an encouragement that I'm on the right track, and to continue excavating deeper into my current artistic questions. As someone whose interests cross artistic modes, it's especially exciting to have the time and space to explore new types of work, such as the writing of an operatic libretto, in addition to composition. I'm also looking forward to meeting and working alongside creators in other disciplines and know my work will benefit from this exchange.”

“We never know what will take place during a residency,” Rodgers says. “If the Hermitage Prize winner shares a residency with an established composer it’s usually someone they have heard of and admire. The organic process that occurs when artists interact with each other on our campus is a remarkable thing to observe. We look forward to welcoming Chelsea and doing everything we can to ensure that she has a successful and productive residency.”

**Photo caption**: *Bruce Rodgers, executive director, Hermitage Artist Retreat; Alan Fletcher, president/CEO Aspen Music Festival and School; Robert Spano, music director of AMFS; Chelsea Komschlies, composer, winner of the 2019 Hermitage Prize at the AMFS; and Christopher Theofanidis, composition teacher, AMFS. Credit: Carlin Ma*

**About the Aspen Music Festival and School:**

The AMFS is the United States’ premier classical music festival, presenting more than 400 musical events during its eight-week summer season in Aspen. The organization draws top classical musicians from around the world to this Colorado mountain retreat for an unparalleled combination of performances and music education. Many events are free, and seating on the David Karetsky Music Lawn and in the Music Garden is always free.

Nearly 700 music students from 40 U.S. states and 34 countries come each summer to play in five orchestras, sing, conduct, compose and study with 200 renowned artist-faculty members. Students represent the field’s best young talent; many have already begun their professional careers, and others are on the cusp.

Renowned alumni include violinists Joshua Bell, Sarah Chang, Cho-Liang Lin, Robert McDuffie, Midori, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg and Gil Shaham; pianists Ingrid Fliter, Orli Shaham, Conrad Tao, Yuja Wang, Wu Han and Joyce Yang; conductors Marin Alsop, James Conlon, Leonard Slatkin, Robert Trevino and Joshua Weilerstein; composers William Bolcom, Philip Glass, David Lang, Augusta Read Thomas, Bright Sheng and Joan Tower; vocalists Jamie Barton, Sasha Cooke, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw and Tamara Wilson; cellists Lynn Harrell and Alisa Weilerstein; guitarist Sharon Isbin; performer Peter Schickele; and bassist Edgar Meyer.

**About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Englewood, Sarasota County, Florida. It invites accomplished artists in all disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Its artists, who are asked to interact with the community, touch thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage fellows have included Pulitzer, Tony, Emmy, Grammy and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. The Hermitage awards the $30,000 Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit [www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

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