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Composer Sofia Rocha
wins the 2022 Hermitage Prize in Composition at
Aspen Music Festival & School

Rocha, a composition student at the Aspen Music Festival and School, receives a residency and Fellowship at the Hermitage Artist Retreat in Sarasota County, Florida.

(August 16, 2022) **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) and the **Aspen Music Festival and School** (Aspen, Colorado) announce that **Sofia Rocha**, a composition student at AMFS, has been selected as the recipient of the 2022 Hermitage Prize in Composition. Rocha is the ninth recipient of this annual award, which includes a residency at the Hermitage, along with a \$1,000 cash stipend. Rocha was selected by a jury that includes **Robert Spano**, Music Director of the AMFS and the Atlanta Symphony and a past member of the Hermitage Curatorial Council; **Alan Fletcher**, AMFS President and CEO; and the composition faculty of the AMFS, including Hermitage Fellow **Christopher Theofanidis**.

Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg presented the award to Rocha at the Aspen Music Festival's Benedict Tent, alongside Fletcher, Spano, Theofanidis, and award-winning composer and Hermitage Fellow **Nico Muhly**. This unique initiative, launched in 2013 and now celebrating its tenth year, reflects an invaluable partnership between AMFS and the Hermitage, designed to champion new and original works and to recognize exceptional talent in the field of contemporary classical music. To celebrate this milestone, the Hermitage and AMFS produced a retrospective video featuring exclusive interviews with past winners, distinguished

AMFS faculty members, and renowned thought leaders in music, which can be seen [here](#) (URL link below). The idea for the prize was first conceived when Robert Spano was in residence at the Hermitage and shared with his colleagues in Aspen how beneficial the retreat had been for him and his work. The Hermitage Prize in Composition was created to offer the same experience to young, talented composers just beginning their professional careers.

“It was thrilling to hear the original works performed by these gifted young composers as they were workshopped and performed with the full AMFS student orchestra in the Festival’s premiere venue,” notes Sandberg.” We are honored to recognize Sofia Rocha as the winner of this year’s Hermitage Prize, and we were thrilled that the weekend’s festivities could be celebrated alongside fellow Hermitage alumni including Robert Spano, Nico Muhly, Anne Patterson, Christopher Theofanidis, and the very first recipient of the Hermitage Prize in Composition, Patrick Harlin (2013).” Sandberg adds that the Hermitage Prize at AMFS is the only student residency awarded each year; all other Hermitage Fellows are accomplished working professionals and leaders in their field, selected by the Hermitage’s National Curatorial Council. “This provides the recipient of the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition the opportunity to share this unmatched Hermitage experience with leading artists from all around the world.”

Hermitage Fellows have included 15 Pulitzer Prize winners, multiple Grammy, Oscar, Emmy, and Tony winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur 'Genius' Fellows, and more. Hermitage Fellows regularly describe their time at the Hermitage as "magical," "transformative," and "life-changing."

“I want to offer thanks to all the jurors for the 2022 Hermitage Prize; I am extremely grateful and excited to have this opportunity, especially at this early stage in my career, to meet and interact with artists across fields and disciplines who all create incredible work,” Rocha said after learning she had won the Prize. “The benefits of being in such a place are innumerable, and I am eagerly anticipating the time that I will spend and the work I will create at the Hermitage.”

Sofia Rocha is originally from Boulder, Colorado and grew up in Naples, Florida. Rocha writes music of uncompromising emotional intensity while exploring cognition,

randomness, rhythm, and counterpoint within post-tonal frameworks. She writes for all manner of performing forces: instrumental, vocal, and electronic. Recent and upcoming projects include newly commissioned works for the 2022 Aspen Music Festival as a Composition Fellow, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and the Fifth House Ensemble as a Fromm Foundation Fellow at the 2020 Fresh Inc. Festival. Rocha's first orchestral work, *Replier*, was chosen as the winner of the 2020 New England Philharmonic annual call-for-scores and premiered in May of 2022. Rocha has also received honors from ASCAP, OM/NI Composition Competition, and Tenebrae New Music Ensemble. Rocha is also an avid trombonist and conductor, having performed with numerous symphony orchestras, wind ensembles, and jazz groups. (*Full bio below.*)

Previous residencies of AMFS Hermitage Prize recipients have led to exciting collaborations, lifelong friendships, and extraordinary new compositions. Past winner **Sid Richardson** (2018) notes that winning the Hermitage Prize has been “an affirmation of my musical explorations. I can't think of a greater opportunity for a young artist than to be given time, space, and a community of like-minded individuals within which to work.” Last year's recipient of the award, **David Clay Mettens** (2021) added: “My time at the Hermitage was such a gift – I found the natural beauty of the grounds to be rejuvenating and my interactions with artists from other disciplines so artistically fulfilling. I can't imagine a better opportunity for a young composer than to be in the presence of creative luminaries in their respective fields.” Previous Hermitage Prize recipients include: **Patrick Harlin** (2013); **Thomas Kotcheff** (2014); **Phillip Sink** (2015); **Andrew Hsu** (2016); **Joel Thompson** (2017); **Sid Richardson** (2018); **Chelsea Komschlies** (2019); and **David Clay Mettens** (2021). The Hermitage Prize was not awarded in 2020, as the Aspen Music Festival and School was on hiatus due to the pandemic.

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse and accomplished artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of visual art, theater, music, literature, dance, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free community programs, offering audiences throughout the Gulf Coast

region a unique opportunity to engage with some of the world’s leading artists and to get an authentic “sneak peek” into extraordinary projects and artistic minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theaters, and museums around the world. These free and innovative programs include performances, lectures, interactive experiences, readings, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year. Past Hermitage Fellows have included fifteen Pulitzer Prize winners, MacArthur “Genius” Fellows, Poet Laureates, National Book Award recipients, and multiple Tony, Grammy, Oscar, and Emmy Award nominees and winners.

To learn more about the Aspen Music Festival and School and the current schedule of programming, visit **AspenMusicFestival.com**. To learn more about the Hermitage and its upcoming programs, or to support this organization in its mission to champion artists and the creative process, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

Hermitage Prize Video Link and Landing Page:

<https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org/HermitagePrizeAspen/>

SOFÍA ROCHA (Full Bio)

Sofía Rocha, originally from Boulder, Colorado and having grown up in Naples, Florida, is the 2022 recipient of the Hermitage Prize in Composition at the Aspen Music Festival and School. Rocha writes music of uncompromising emotional intensity while exploring cognition, randomness, rhythm, and counterpoint within post-tonal frameworks. She writes for all manner of performing forces: instrumental, vocal, and electronic. Upcoming projects include newly commissioned works for the 2022 Aspen Music Festival as a Composition Fellow, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and the Fifth House Ensemble as a Fromm Foundation Fellow at the 2020 Fresh Inc. Festival. Rocha’s first orchestral work, *Replier*, was chosen as the winner of the 2020 New England Philharmonic annual call-for-scores and will be premiered in May of 2022. Rocha has also received honors from ASCAP, OM/NI Composition Competition, and Tenebrae New Music Ensemble. She has worked with numerous ensembles including the Arditti Quartet, JACK Quartet, DeCoda, loadbang, Brentano String Quartet, Castle of our Skins, Transient Canvas, Hypercube, arx duo, and Duo Entre-Nous, as well as numerous solo performers. Rocha received her master’s degree in composition from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory as a Chancellor’s Scholar and recipient of Elsberry & Gonder Family and Conservatory Scholarships. There, she studied with Chen Yi, Yotam Haber, Paul Rudy and Zhou Long. Rocha was also the 2019 Composer-in-Residence for the Graduate Fellowship String Quartet. She completed her undergraduate work at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at

Gettysburg College in 2019, receiving a BA in Music with Honors as a Wagnild Scholar and studying composition with Avner Dorman. She has attended June in Buffalo, Fresh Inc. Festival, the Atlantic Music Festival, Divergent Studio, and the Hypercube Composition Lab as a composer, studying and taking master classes with composers such as Augusta Read Thomas, Hannah Lash, Hilda Paredes, Jeffrey Mumford, Alex Temple, Richard Danielpour, Aaron Helgeson, Amy Beth Kirsten, and David Serkin Ludwig, among others. Besides composing, Rocha is also an avid trombonist and conductor, having performed with numerous symphony orchestras, wind ensembles, and jazz groups. SofiaRochaMusic.com

About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:

The Hermitage is a non-profit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage Fellows have included 15 Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur ‘Genius’ Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, the newly announced \$35,000 Hermitage Major Theater Award for an original theater commission, and the Aspen Music Festival’s Hermitage Prize in Composition.

For more information, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

The Hermitage is supported by:

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About the Aspen Music Festival and School:

Founded in 1949, the Aspen Music Festival and School is regarded as one of the top classical music festivals in the United States, noted both for its concert programming and its musical training of mostly young-adult music students. The typical eight-week summer season includes more than 400 classical music events—including concerts by five orchestras, solo and chamber music performances, fully staged opera productions, master classes, lectures, and children’s programming—and brings in 100,000 audience members. In the winter, the AMFS presents a small series of recitals and music education programs for local youth and families. **For more information, visit AspenMusicalFestival.com.**

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