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## Arapahoe Philharmonic's Holiday Concert Celebrates Winter Season

Littleton, CO – The Arapahoe Philharmonic (AP) presents its annual holiday concert on **Saturday, December 8, 2018, at South Suburban Christian Church, 7275 S. Broadway, Littleton, CO 80122** under the direction of Assistant Conductor Hisham Bravo Groover. This year's theme celebrates the winter season with festive works by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Ottorino Respighi and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor; three new holiday-inspired compositions by Jonathan Bingham, Elizabeth Comninellis and Edgar Girtain; and traditional favorites, Leroy Anderson's *Sleigh Ride* and sing-along carols. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. and is preceded by a talk with Maestro Groover at 6:45 p.m. Violin students of Noteworthy School for Strings will get us in the holiday spirit with pre-concert carols in the lobby starting at 7:10 p.m.

Rimsky-Korsakov wrote his opera *Christmas Eve* in 1894-1895 based on a folk story of the same name by Nikolai Gogol. The Suite was created several years later in order to be playable by orchestras on the concert stage. The vivid orchestrations and lively themes transport the listener to a snowy moonlit night.

*Trittico Botticelliano, or Three Botticelli Pictures*, is a gem from Respighi who is perhaps most well-known for his monumental tone poems. The three-movement work was written for chamber orchestra, but is no less colorful than his larger works. Inspired by Botticelli paintings in Florence's Uffizi Gallery, the charming work evokes the sounds of nature and birds in *La Primavera* (Spring), Gregorian chant in *The Adoration of the Magi*, and the melodious song of Venus in *La nascita de Venere* (Birth of Venus).

Composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was born in London and began his musical studies on violin at a young age. He showed great promise and was admitted into the Royal Academy of Music to study with Charles Villiers Stanford. His greatest compositional success was *The Song of Hiawatha* composed at the turn of the century, which made his a familiar name, especially in choral societies, before passing at the young age of 37. His *Christmas Overture* is a delightful work incorporating the carols *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* and *Hark the Herald Angels Sing*.

The Arapahoe Philharmonic commissioned three new works from emerging compositional voices for this program:

Edgar Girtain won the first Vincent C. LaGuardia, Jr. Composition Competition and held the Arapahoe Philharmonic's first composer residency from 2014-2016. He wrote *A Celestial Snowstorm* for this

concert, which features the Celesta as a solo instrument. Girtain states: “The work, as one might infer, conveys imagery of a snowstorm. At the start, in isolated stillness represented by two clarinets, the temperature drops. The storm comes on slowly, ebbing and flowing, as what starts as dispersed snowflakes gradually increase in quantity. The storm scene culminates in a spectacular triple fugue where the principal theme appears in double and quadruple time. The work terminates in an eerie, frozen landscape.”

Jonathan Bingham was the Arapahoe Philharmonic’s second composer-in-residence from 2016-2018. We will premiere his *Monograph for Orchestra*. The piece is centered around a small figure moving through the orchestra over an ostinato. Bingham’s work is distinguished by its introspective quality. Despite its more serious undertones, during its conclusion, *Monograph* settles in a peaceful and nostalgic manner.

Elizabeth Comninellis composed *Waits Carol* for this concert. She explains: “In Medieval times each town had a group of musicians called the waits. They welcomed distinguished visitors, took part in processions and even played on people’s doorsteps. As I was writing this piece, I imagined a group of joyful musicians warming people’s heart during the cold winter months with their music. The opening chords of *Waits Carol* arise from a deep personal enjoyment of music from that era. The strong, dark, beautiful sound of medieval music, much of it written in honor of the Christmas season, is to me some of the most gorgeous music of all time. When the Arapahoe Philharmonic invited me to write a piece for this concert, I was moved to write something that echoes that ancient music, but which also incorporates rhythmic and harmonic elements from contemporary and even popular music.”

Single tickets are available on our website at [www.arapahoe-phil.org/events/buy-tickets/](http://www.arapahoe-phil.org/events/buy-tickets/) and at the door the night of the performance, pending availability.

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### **THE 2018–2019 65<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY SEASON: SYMPHONIC TRIUMPHS**

#### **Concert 3: Saturday, December 8, 2018 at 7:30 p.m.**

Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov: *Christmas Eve Suite*  
Ottorino Respighi: *Trittico Botticelliano*  
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: *Christmas Overture*  
Edgar Girtain: *A Celestial Snowstorm* (World Premiere)  
Jonathan Bingham: *Monograph for Orchestra* (World Premiere)  
Elizabeth Comninellis: *Waits Carol* (World Premiere)  
Leroy Anderson: *Sleigh Ride*  
Holiday carols for all to sing

South Suburban Christian Church  
7275 S. Broadway, Littleton, CO 80122

Hisham Bravo Groover talks about the concert program in this video: <https://youtu.be/MIavOLQW3mo>

*The Arapahoe Philharmonic is grateful for its season sponsors: Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and Colorado Creative Industries.*

**Download the full 2018–2019 Season Brochure:** <https://www.arapahoe-phil.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/18-19-Season-Brochure.pdf>

### About the Arapahoe Philharmonic

Founded in 1953, the Arapahoe Philharmonic is among the longest established musical resources in Colorado. The organization is dedicated to engaging, enriching and inspiring our community through musical performance, education and outreach. The orchestra's musicians are primarily volunteers playing for the love of music, with a core of compensated section principals who provide technical leadership and support the excellence of performance.

Concerts feature repertoire spanning the centuries, from the great masters to composers of the current day. The Philharmonic is invested in future generations, presenting an annual Children's Discovery Concert, sponsoring outreach to schools, working with area student honor orchestras, sponsoring a Play-In side-by-side event for high school students and presenting three collegiate-level competitions, the T. Gordon Parks Concerto Competition and the Vincent C. LaGuardia, Jr. Conducting and Composition Competitions. New initiatives this year include a Family Concert and music therapy-inspired programs for individuals with developmental disabilities and dementia.

### About the Assistant Conductor

Conductor and violinist, Hisham Bravo Groover, is currently serving in his first season as Assistant Conductor of the Arapahoe Philharmonic. At the same time, he directs the Arapahoe Community College String Orchestra and also teaches violin. Outside of Denver, his upcoming performance schedule includes appearances with the Mississippi Valley Orchestra as well as with the CSU-Pueblo Honors Orchestra.

During his time in Colorado, Hisham has worked with numerous orchestras in the area. From 2016-2018, he served as the Associate Conductor for the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra. Furthermore, while pursuing his Artist Diploma in Orchestral Conducting from the Lamont School of Music, he served as the Assistant Conductor for the Lamont Symphony Orchestra as well as the Lamont Opera Theatre, during which he assisted in the productions of *Die Fledermaus* and *Le Nozze di Figaro*.

Before his time in Colorado, Hisham graduated from The University of Iowa with a Master's Degree in Orchestral Conducting. In Iowa, he conducted various university ensembles including the UI Chamber Orchestra, All-University String Orchestra, Opera Scenes, and the Center for New Music. Moreover, he was an Adjunct Instructor of Music at Ripon College, Wisconsin, where he served as the conductor of the Ripon College Orchestra.

Hisham also holds a Master's Degree in Violin Pedagogy from Western Kentucky University and a Bachelor's Degree in Violin Performance from Loyola University in New Orleans. His violin studies have also taken him to the New Zealand School of Music as well as to the Jacobs School of Music during two of its summer festivals. Hisham's primary conducting mentors are Dr. William LaRue Jones and Dr. Lawrence Golan.