

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Pink Flamingo and Calgary Philharmonic bring music to murals in special concert celebrating community

Calgary Alta. (September 19, 2022) - On Saturday, October 1, 2022, the Calgary Philharmonic presents *I Rise*, a special concert produced in partnership with Black-led advocacy organization Pink Flamingo, at the Jack Singer Concert Hall at 7:30 pm. *I Rise* is a celebration of a collaboration between both organizations aiming to represent the struggle of Black artists in Calgary and the beauty, strength, and resilience of the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour) communities.

The concert features the premiere of a new work for the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus by Canadian composer Laura Hawley based on LR Knost's poem *I Rise*. The debut of this new work will be accompanied by the mural artists of Pink Flamingo's Black Lives Matter Mural Project, who were invited to respond to LR Knost's poem in their murals. The mural artists are Harley Burden, Roger Garcia, Olivia Johnson, Destiny Kirumira, SK Okemow, Elsa Robinson, and Jae Sterling. The concert also features music by Duke Ellington and Florence Price, with performances by local R&B/Hip-hop artists Uyemi and Sinzere.

In early 2021, the Calgary Philharmonic and Pink Flamingo came together. They conceived the idea that Pink Flamingo's upcoming 2021 Black Lives Matter Mural Project would include an invitation to the mural artists involved to respond to LR Knost's poem *I Rise* in their murals. The Calgary Philharmonic Chorus had selected the poem as a piece of creative writing for Canadian composer Laura Hawley to work with for a new work commissioned for the Chorus.

"I've always really loved and appreciated the Calgary Philharmonic – I used to go with a neighbour that would buy tickets when I was younger, and it was a really formative experience for me," says Allison Dunne, Director and Founder of Pink Flamingo "But at the same time, I never really felt like I fit in or totally belonged there. I didn't have the right clothes, and I felt awkward. I only saw a few people who looked anything like me, and there was no Black representation. But I still always loved going!"

While the lack of gender representation has been slowly changing in classical music over the last decade, there is still a lack of racialized, and especially Black representation, within this realm of musical expression and performance. "This project, and really this partnership, started because there is a clear discrepancy within classical music - it has historically been dominated by straight, white men. And it's been like this since the induction of classical music. The Calgary Phil would like to be part of changing that, and the mural project, which in and of itself has been so powerful, seemed like a great place to start," says Jason Stasiuk, Artistic Operations Manager at the Calgary Phil.

With the help of the talented multidisciplinary creatives at Calgary's art and production house, FOREIGNERZ, the project takes engaging footage of the different murals to showcase the open-ended, raw responses to the poem from the artists to create an audio-visual concert. As such, a unique multimedia concert and the first of its kind, *I Rise*, will take place on October 1, conducted by world-class New York-based conductor Leslie B. Dunner. The evening wraps up with a post-concert after party in the lobby, curated by Pink Flamingo, featuring artists Felicia Bonnee, Vogue YYC, Woezo Africa, and Jнии.

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"This concert is a celebration of us, of our community, and we are making some real waves because these are not things that we have ever seen happen before in this realm of classical music," says Allison Dunne. "But I think, ultimately, this is just the beginning of what we want to see happening and what the future looks like."

For more information on I Rise, visit calgaryphil.com/events/i-rise. Media interviews with Allison Dunne and Jason Stasiuk and high-resolution images are available on request.

Media Opportunities

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About the Calgary Philharmonic

The Calgary Philharmonic celebrated 65 years as a pillar of Calgary's vibrant arts community in 2020 and has grown to be one of Canada's most celebrated live music ensembles. Led by Music Director Rune Bergmann, the Orchestra presents classical standards, pop favourites, bold collaborations, and cutting-edge new works and attracts world-renowned guest artists and dynamic conductors each season. In addition to 66 orchestra musicians, the Calgary Phil is one of two major symphony orchestras in Canada that has its own chorus of over 125 volunteer singers, which celebrates 60 years in 2023. In a typical season, the Calgary Phil welcomes over 100,000 visitors to the concert hall, engages more than 10,000 students through educational programs, and reaches audiences worldwide through free and accessible digital programming. Follow the Calgary Phil at @calgaryphil on social media and register for email updates at calgaryphil.com.

About Pink Flamingo

Pink Flamingo is a Black-led advocacy organization that uplifts the QTBIPOC community in our city by creating events, workshops, education, and safer spaces. In doing this, Pink Flamingo is proudly providing the facilitation of an array of opportunities. Pink Flamingo partnership initiatives have created a vast network of artists and organizers of diverse experiences, including an ambassador program that provides access to far-reaching corners of the LGBTQ2SIA+ communities.