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## **Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Announces Recipient of annual \$50,000 Composer Award**



*Rockland, ME* – The Ellis-Beauregard Foundation is pleased to award Keith Fitch from Cleveland Heights, OH its annual \$50,000 Composer Award. With the Award, Fitch will create a new work to be performed during the Bangor Symphony Orchestra’s 2024-25 season. Fitch was selected through a juried national competition and chosen from over 304 applicants.

Photo credit: Alex Cooke

“I am thrilled and honored to have been selected as this year's recipient of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation's Composer Award, and I'm very much looking forward to working with Maestro Richman and the Bangor Symphony in the creation of a new work for the Bangor community. As someone who spent much of my early life as a visual artist, I'm particularly excited to explore the work of Joan Beauregard and John David Ellis as I begin gathering ideas for this piece, which I hope will have meaning for the Bangor community beyond the concert hall. I am deeply thankful for the foundation's support.” said Fitch.

The jury was composed of distinguished professionals in the field, who have this to say about the process and outcome:

“I am very happy that the prize has been awarded to Keith Fitch. His music is extraordinary-beautifully colored with extraordinary use of the orchestra, structured with drama and propulsion, architecturally stunning. Keith's voice is sophisticated and at the same time deeply

communicative. Congratulations to this superb American composer!” - JoAnn Falletta, Music Director, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra

“Keith Fitch’s *A/ee* for orchestra is highly original. It’s full of color in the delicate textures.” - Zhou Long, University of Missouri-Kansas City, Bonfils Distinguished Research Professor of Composition

“His is the work of a mature composer, one of our best. It has depth and mystery, as well as drive and excitement. It is multi-dimensional in its character, color, and texturing. For all the intricacy and careful layering of its construction, it makes a direct and bold statement to the listener.” - Shulamit Ran, Andrew MacLeish Distinguished Service Professor Emerita at the University of Chicago Department of Music

“It was an arduous task to review the scores and recordings from 304 excellent composers and the Foundation is extremely grateful to the jurors for their time and expertise,” says Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Executive Director Donna McNeil. “We are thrilled to welcome our awardee in this field and look forward to bringing Fitch and his compositions to the residents of Maine. We are additionally grateful for the partnership of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra under the leadership of Music Director Lucas Richman and Executive Director Renia Shterenberg for their guidance throughout the process and their willingness to join us in the commission of a new work to be premiered in Bangor. None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our founders Joan Beauregard and John David Ellis and the vision of our board of directors.” Board President Ellen Golden adds, “The Ellis Beauregard Foundation is thrilled to announce the composer fellowship winner. Music was important to our founders, John David Ellis and Joan Beauregard, throughout their lives. This award continues their legacy in a significant and personal way while expanding opportunities for composers, musicians and audiences in Maine.”

Fitch will participate in a residency in the cities of Rockland and Bangor leading up to the premiere of the new work during the Bangor Symphony Orchestra’s 2024-25 season, the orchestra’s 129<sup>th</sup>. Details of the full season and Fitch’s premiere will be announced in April. Lucas Richman, Music Director & Conductor of the Bangor Symphony Orchestra says, “Keith Fitch writes dramatically evocative music so I’m really looking forward to collaborating on a new work of his which I’m sure will enchant our Maine audiences.”

Keith Fitch currently heads the Composition Department and holds the Vincent K. and Edith H. Smith Chair in Composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he also directs the CIM New Music Ensemble. Called “gloriously luminous” by The Philadelphia Inquirer, his music has been consistently noted for its eloquence, expressivity, dramatic sense of musical narrative, and unique sense of color and sonority. Reviewing a performance of his work *Totem* by Wolfgang Sawallisch and The Philadelphia Orchestra (chosen by Maestro Sawallisch to celebrate the orchestra’s centennial), The Wall Street

Journal praised “the sheer concentration of his writing, and its power to express a complex, unseen presence shaping the course of musical events.” The American Academy of Arts and Letters has said, “[his] music reveals an individual landscape that concentrates on unusual textures and sounds – all within a strong narrative that drives towards a rich and powerful conclusion.”

A native of Indiana, Keith Fitch (b. 1966) began composing at age seven and began formal musical training on the double bass at age eleven. While still in high school (age sixteen), he received his first professional orchestral performance. He attended the Indiana University School of Music, where he studied composition with Frederick Fox, Eugene O’Brien, and Claude Baker, double bass with Bruce Bransby and Murray Grodner, and chamber music with Rostislav Dubinsky, founder of the Borodin Quartet. He also counts Donald Erb and Joan Tower among his compositional mentors. Among his many awards are three each from ASCAP and the National Society of Arts and Letters, an Individual Artist Grant from the Indiana Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, a Fromm Music Foundation Commission, two Individual Excellence Awards from the Ohio Arts Council, a Copland House Residency Award, the 2016 Walter Hinrichsen Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a 2023 Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. He has enjoyed multiple residencies at The MacDowell Colony and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, as well as at Yaddo, The Charles Ives Center for American Music, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and he has twice served as Resident Composer and faculty at the Chamber Music Conference and Composers’ Forum of the East.

Highly regarded as a teacher, chamber music coach, and conductor of new music, he has taught at Indiana University, Bard College, and for eleven years served on the faculty of the Mannes College of Music in New York. From 2015-2017, he served as Composer-in-Residence and Director of the Young Artist Seminar in Composition at the Rocky Ridge Music Center.

### **About the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation**

The Ellis-Beauregard Foundation provides resources for artists, engages with community and promotes the legacy of its founding artists, Joan Beauregard and John David Ellis. The vision of the Foundation is to encourage, expand and sustain the courageous and imaginative dialogue that is fundamental to the arts. The Ellis-Beauregard Foundation celebrates the value of art to transcend cultures and engage with diverse communities. Through its programs, the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation supports the exploration of the common ground that art occupies, the way it engages people, and its ability to reveal our shared human experience.

### **About the Bangor Symphony Orchestra**

Founded in 1896, the Bangor Symphony Orchestra’s mission is to provide powerful, enriching and diverse musical experiences through live concert performances and education programs of the highest quality. Led by Grammy Award-winning Music Director and Conductor Lucas Richman, the BSO today performs a robust mainstage season of Masterworks and Young People’s concerts. Guided by a vision of serving the community in new and exciting ways, the BSO offers a variety of educational and

community-focused programs, including the Bangor Symphony Youth Orchestras comprised of local young instrumentalists from the greater Bangor region and a Music & Wellness Program which brings BSO musicians to perform live music for individuals under care at St. Joseph's Healthcare and Lafayette Family Cancer Institute. The BSO is a founding member of the Bangor Arts Exchange in downtown Bangor.