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Donation In Memory of Henri Lazarof Allows American Youth Symphony To Name Music Director Chair

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Pictured: Henri Lazarof

The American Youth Symphony (AYS) has received a major gift in memory of composer Henri Lazarof. The donation—the largest contribution in the organization’s 50-year history—will name the “Henri Lazarof Music Director Chair of the American Youth Symphony” for the next 10 years.

Current Music Director Alexander Treger, AYS veteran of 17 years and retired LA Phil concertmaster, will now assume the “Music Director, Henri Lazarof Chair.”

This leadership gift kicks off the 50th anniversary season for AYS, set to launch next year. AYS patrons and audiences will be hearing an orchestral work by Lazarof each season through 2023-24.

Lazarof published 126 compositions including seven symphonies, three concertos for orchestra, three violin concertos, three cello concertos, two flute concertos, a viola concerto, a piano concerto and 11 string quartets.

In 1991, Lazarof was nominated for two Grammys: “Best Contemporary Composition” and “Best Classical Performance for Instrumental Soloist(s) with Orchestra.”

Lazarof died in December 2013 at 81.

Led by Treger, the AYS trains competitively selected musicians ages 15-27. AYS Fellows receive a full scholarship, perform at Royce Hall and work alongside such guest artists as Daniél Bjarason, Anna Clyne, Sarah Chang, Johannes Moser, John Williams, David Newman, Alan Silvestri, Charles Fox and Lera Auerbach.

Their training includes a wide repertoire and varied styles of music, from classical masterworks to world premieres and film scores. AYS performs 5-7 free concerts each season.

“Mr. Lazarof was a longstanding advocate of the exceptional training and performances of AYS,” said Kevin Dretzka, AYS board chair. “Henri Lazarof’s artistic legacy is the perfect complement to the innovative spirit of the American Youth Symphony.”