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**DSO CELEBRATES CONCLUSION OF ORCHESTRA HALL CENTENNIAL WITH UNVEILING OF ARTIST KEN APTEKAR'S "I hear an echo"**

*Commissioned by Gary L. Wasserman & Charles A. Kashner in honor of DSO President and CEO Anne Parsons, painting is on display in the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center*

Detroit, (October 27, 2020) – On Friday, the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra** (DSO) unveiled a new painting by celebrated artist Ken Aptekar titled "I hear an echo" (2020), which references Orchestra Hall's opening in 1919 and DSO's then-music director Ossip Gabrilowitsch. The painting is a gift to the orchestra from Gary L. Wasserman & Charles A. Kashner, who commissioned the work in recognition of Orchestra Hall's centennial and in honor of President and CEO Anne Parsons.

The unveiling ceremony, which featured a performance by Acting Concertmaster Kimberly Kaloyanides Kennedy, took place on Orchestra Hall's 101st birthday, Friday, October 23 at 6:30 p.m. for a small number of socially distanced guests in the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center (The Max). "I hear an echo" is displayed in the foyer of The Max and viewable through the DSO's front doors on Woodward Avenue. This partnership exemplifies the DSO's collaborative spirit and shared vision for combining and supporting arts, artists, and culture of all kinds at The Max.

About the commissioned work, Gary Wasserman said, "The DSO, Orchestra Hall, the DIA, Gentileschi's painting of St. Cecilia, and Ken Aptekar's evocative interpretation represent the 'echoes' of generations of Detroit families and patrimony, and we are grateful to be able to recognize the depth of these ties in the origins and composition of this magnificent painting."

Born and raised in Detroit, Aptekar is the son of art and music educators and credits the DSO and the Detroit Institute of Arts (DIA) as "keys to who [he] became as an artist." He grew up attending DSO concerts at the orchestra's then home of Ford Auditorium under music director Paul Paray, but heard DSO recordings from Orchestra Hall and longed to experience the outstanding acoustics firsthand. "For me, there was always the promise of that great sound I might hear one day," Aptekar said. "That idea is behind the echoing image in my painting for the DSO entitled 'I hear an echo'."

Measuring 96 inches by 96 inches across nine panels, "I hear an echo" is comprised of oil on wood panel, sandblasted glass, and bolts. Its source is the seventeenth century Italian painter Orazio Gentileschi's Young Woman with a Violin (Saint Cecelia) (1612), [which hangs at the](#)

[DIA](#). Aptekar is known for bringing contemporary points of view to the history of art by combining paintings with text. The overlay text of “I hear an echo” reads:

*“1959. I sit spellbound next to my parents in a darkened Detroit concert hall. I hear an echo, though I don’t know where it comes from. Eight o’clock, October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1919. Ossip Gabrilowitsch strides onstage to inaugurate Orchestra Hall. He waits for silence, then sweeps his baton upward. His handpicked musicians raise their instruments. The Maestro from Russia slices the air. A horn sounds the ascending first three notes of Weber’s Overture to Oberon. The strings whisper, the flutes reply, and the music begins.”*



Ken Aptekar

“I hear an echo” (2020)

Oil on wood panel, sandblasted glass, bolts

96" x 96" (nine panels)

After Orazio Gentileschi, *Young Woman with a Violin (Saint Cecilia)*, ca. 1612, oil on canvas, collection: Detroit Institute of Arts, just up the street from Orchestra Hall, (from the DIA website: "This image of a young woman playing the violin has traditionally been interpreted as a personification of Saint Cecilia, an early Christian martyr and the patron saint of music, whose presumed body had been exhumed intact in 1599. Orazio may have used his daughter, the painter Artemisia Gentileschi, as a model for the woman, thus adding a note of realism to his representation.")

### **About Ken Aptekar**

Ken Aptekar is an artist who combines painting with text. He paints new versions of historical paintings and frames, bolting glass with sandblasted words to his painted panels. Aptekar's work belongs to the tradition of painting, yet he brings to that tradition a recognition that paintings produce meaning only through their interaction with viewers. He investigates the nature of spectatorship. By "recreating" works of art in a painterly but utilitarian manner, Aptekar promotes viewers' own narratives prompted by the image-text combinations. He overlays his own responses to the historical works, too, alongside those of audiences he invites to look at paintings with him in museums. Often his and others' responses would be considered unorthodox in a traditional museum or gallery setting—the sort you think but don't say. Yet when engraved in glass and seen in a work of art, the comments lend an encouraging legitimacy to viewers' own particular responses. In recent years Aptekar has started producing videos in addition to painting. The videos continue his efforts to bring contemporary points of view to the history of art.

Born in Detroit, Michigan, in 1950, Aptekar received his BFA at the University of Michigan, then moved to Brooklyn in 1973 to complete an MFA at Pratt Institute (1975). From February 7 through May 29, 2016, a major commissioned solo exhibition, NACHBARN ("NEIGHBORS"), was on view at the St.-Annen Museum in Lübeck, Germany. Previously, his work has been seen in solo exhibitions at the Victoria & Albert Museum in collaboration with the Serpentine Gallery (London), the Corcoran Gallery of Art (Washington, DC), Memorial Art Gallery (Rochester, NY), Centro da Cultura Judaica (Sao Paulo, Brazil), Musée Robert Dubois-Corneau (Brunoy, France), Espace d'Art Contemporain Camille Lambert (Juvisy, France), The New Museum (NY), Douglas Cooley Gallery at Reed College in Portland, OR, Palmer Museum at Penn State, Cummer Museum (Jacksonville, FL), the Contemporary Art Center of Virginia, and the Elaine Jacob Gallery at Wayne State University in Detroit. In 2012 Aptekar's work was the subject of a survey exhibition, "Ken Aptekar: Look Again," at the Beard and Weil Galleries, Wheaton College, Massachusetts.

A mid-career retrospective of his work, *Ken Aptekar: Painting Between the Lines, 1990-2000*, organized by the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, completed its tour in the United States in 2002. Solo gallery exhibitions include Wasserman Projects (Detroit), Bernice

Steinbaum Gallery (Miami), Pamela Auchincloss Projects, Steinbaum Krauss Gallery, Jack Shainman Gallery, and Bess Cutler Gallery (all in NYC). Aptekar's first solo exhibition with the James Graham & Sons Gallery in New York took place in May-June, 2006; his second, a show of portraits, was in March-April, 2010. A new work commissioned by the Contemporary Jewish Museum in San Francisco was on view there as part of the exhibition "As it is written; Project 304,805." Aptekar's work was also seen at the San Antonio Museum of Art in "The Missing Peace: Artists Consider the Dalai Lama," and was the subject of a survey exhibition entitled "Some for Me, Some for You: Paintings by Ken Aptekar," in Wilkes-Barre, PA, at the Sordoni Art Gallery, Wilkes University in 2008. His work was included in the Natural World Museum's exhibition, "Moving Towards a Balanced Earth: Kick the (Carbon) Habit!" in Wellington, New Zealand, in 2008 as well. The Mint Museum commissioned Aptekar to produce a series of works based upon their portrait of Queen Charlotte by Sir Allan Ramsay for their new building in Charlotte, NC. In 2010 the works were unveiled to the public on the occasion of the museum's opening. They are currently installed in the contemporary gallery there.

Aptekar is the recipient of two NEA Fellowships in Painting, a Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Award, a Rockefeller Residency at Bellagio, Djerassi Resident Artist Program and Ucross residencies, and a Pollock-Krasner Foundation Award. For his 2016 exhibition, *Nachbarn* ("Neighbors"), at the St.-Annen Museum in Lübeck, Germany, Aptekar has received grants from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the New York Foundation for the Arts/Artspire/Malka Fund.

Among the museum collections in which Aptekar's work can be found are the Jewish Museum (NY), Corcoran Gallery of Art, Victoria and Albert Museum (London), Kunsthalle St. Annen, (Lübeck, Germany), The Frost Museum (Miami, FL), Denver Art Museum, National Museum of American Art, Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art (Kansas City, MO), Contemporary Art Trust (UK), San Jose Museum of Art, Blanton Museum of Art (Austin, TX), Huntington Museum of Art, (West Virginia), Oregon Jewish Museum and Holocaust Study Center, Portland, OR, and in numerous private and institutional collections. For more, visit [kenaptekar.net](http://kenaptekar.net).

### **About Orchestra Hall**

Built for the DSO at the request of then-music director Ossip Gabrilowitsch during the summer of 1919, Orchestra Hall was designed by noted theater architect C. Howard Crane (who also designed Detroit's Fox Theatre and the current Detroit Opera House) and is renowned for its historic beauty and perfect acoustics. After the hall's opening on October 23, 1919, the DSO entered a twenty-year golden age, which included its Carnegie Hall debut, its first records for RCA Victor, and making history as the first orchestra to perform a live radio broadcast concert, on February 10, 1922, from Orchestra Hall.

When the DSO left for the larger Masonic Auditorium in 1939, Orchestra Hall took on a new life as the Paradise Theatre from 1941–1951, serving as Detroit's premier venue for jazz, blues, and

R&B. The hall was then long-dormant and nearly demolished in 1970 to make way for a fast-food burger chain, before a group of musicians and civic leaders rallied to save it from the wrecking ball and raise money to restore it over the course of 20 years. The DSO returned to a refurbished Orchestra Hall in 1989 and expanded its footprint in 2003 with the opening of the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center.

### **About the DSO**

The most accessible orchestra on the planet, the acclaimed Detroit Symphony Orchestra is known for trailblazing performances, collaborations with the world's foremost musical artists, and a deep connection to its city. As a community-supported orchestra, generous giving by individuals and institutions at all levels drives the continued success and growth of the organization. In January 2020, Italian conductor Jader Bignamini was named the DSO's next music director to commence with the 2020-2021 season. Conductor Leonard Slatkin, who concluded a decade-long tenure at the helm in 2018, now serves as the DSO's Music Director Laureate, endowed by the Kresge Foundation. Celebrated conductor, arranger, and trumpeter Jeff Tyzik is the orchestra's Principal Pops Conductor, while the outstanding trumpeter and composer Terence Blanchard holds the Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Jazz Creative Director Chair. Making its home at historic Orchestra Hall within the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, the DSO offers a performance schedule that features Classical, PNC Pops, Paradise Jazz, and Young People's Family Concert series. One of the world's most acoustically perfect concert halls, Orchestra Hall celebrates its centennial in 2019-2020. In addition, the DSO presents the William Davidson Neighborhood Concert Series in eight metro area venues, as well as a robust schedule of eclectic multi-genre performances in its mid-size venue The Cube, constructed and curated with support from Peter D. & Julie F. Cummings. A dedication to broadcast innovation began in 1922, when the DSO became the first orchestra in the world to present a radio broadcast and continues today with the free Live from Orchestra Hall webcast series, which also reaches tens of thousands of children with the Classroom Edition expansion. With growing attendance and unwavering philanthropic support from the people of Detroit, the DSO actively pursues a mission to embrace and inspire individuals, families, and communities through unsurpassed musical experiences.

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