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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

HPO commissions new Canadian work in celebration of AGH Centennial

Hamilton, Ontario – The Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra is proud to announce that they are commissioning a **new work by Composer-in-Residence Abigail Richardson-Schulte in celebration of the Art Gallery of Hamilton’s Centennial year**. The piece will make its world première at Hamilton Place for *Pastorale* on **Saturday, April 26** at 7:30pm.

"The AGH is an important contributor to the health and prosperity of the City of Hamilton, and we're pleased to acknowledge the art gallery's history and impact in promoting and showcasing the visual arts in Hamilton with the creation of this new music," says **Executive Director Carol Kehoe**. The commission is supported by a grant from the Canada Council for the Arts and private donors.

Richardson-Schulte’s piece, which is entitled ***A Canadian in Paris***, is inspired by the work of Hamilton-born artist, William Blair Bruce, whose career took him to France in the late 1880s where he became one of the first North American Impressionists. A donation of 29 paintings to the City of Hamilton by his family after his death in 1906 was the impetus for the establishment of the AGH and the seed of its permanent collection. The piece is an orchestral setting of several paintings by the great Canadian artist which will be included in the major retrospective of his work, *Into the Light: The Paintings of William Blair Bruce (1859–1906)*, opening at the AGH on May 24, 2014.

Richardson-Schulte, a Dundas resident, says, “I want the audience to have an opportunity to get inside a piece of artwork through a different medium and, most of all, I want them to feel an emotional connection... I intend to take the listener on a journey, led by the musicians of the orchestra. I want the listener to get inside these paintings just as I had done when letting them inspire this music.” The first movement of *A Canadian in Paris* is inspired by Bruce’s Baltic Seascape paintings while the second movement features narration and was based on Bruce’s well-known work *The Phantom Hunter*.

“This commission is a wonderful gift to the AGH and to the people of Hamilton,” says **Louise Dompierre, President and CEO of the Art Gallery of Hamilton**. “Ultimately everyone in the community benefits from the synergies between the AGH and HPO that continue to nurture and inspire creativity from the past, to the present, to the future.”

A Canadian in Paris will make its world première on **Saturday, April 26** in a program conducted by Gemma New that also features Beethoven’s Symphony No. 6 (*Pastorale*) and Martin Beaver in Saint-Saëns’ Violin Concerto No. 3.

Visitors to the AGH will also have the chance to experience Richardson-Schulte's piece. A smaller arrangement featuring a chamber orchestra of the HPO will also be featured at the **Summer Exhibition Opening on June 8** at the **Art Gallery of Hamilton**.

For more information about *A Canadian in Paris* visit hpo.org and click. For more information about the AGH's Centennial celebrations visit artgalleryofhamilton.com.

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The Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1884 as The Hamilton Orchestral Society and grew to become one of Canada's major professional orchestras. Today, the Philharmonic is a leader in Hamilton's robust arts community where it provides professional orchestral services and music education programs to address the needs of the community. The Philharmonic continues to commission and premiere works and is one of the artistic jewels of the Hamilton/Burlington area. The combined musical talents of its artists continue to enrich the community and enhance the quality of life for its residents.