

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**HARLEM SCHOOL OF THE ARTS MUSIC DIRECTOR YOLANDA WYNS  
WAS ONE OF THREE HONOREES CELEBRATED AT THIS YEAR'S  
AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA'S 2020 GALA**

*Presently helping to develop the future musicians, singers, composers and conductors*

Harlem, New York – March 24 2020...Yolanda Wyns, Director of the Music Department at the Harlem School of the Arts was one of three honorees feted at this year's American Composers Orchestra's 2020 Gala, held on Wednesday evening, March 4 at the Bryant Park Grill on West 40<sup>th</sup> street in New York City.



Ms. Wyns was responsible for helping to organize a collaborative partnership with the American Composers Orchestra, on a new multidisciplinary pilot program which was recently launched at HSA. SONIC SPARK LAB is a project-based program that creates an environment where students are inspired to be curious, to be imaginative and to explore their capacity for developing collaborative new ideas and “*creating original works of art*”.

Yolanda Wyns has been inspiring students at the Harlem School of the Arts as a teacher and as Director of the Music Department for a total of seven years. Prior to arriving at HSA, she had been a veteran performer, touring as a backup singer with many top R&B acts including Freddie Jackson, Stephanie Mills and Patti Austin. She was also on Broadway as part of the original cast of *A Color Purple* before finding her passion for teaching and for helping to develop the next generation of musical talent.

Without altering the vision of its founder Dorothy Maynor, Yolanda Wyns has added a fresh approach and placed a contemporary spin on HSA's music department; in the process, she has enriched the community using her extensive cultural network to create branded master classes, artist lectures, and outreach programs with established and notable musicians and leaders.

Ms. Wyns joined fellow honorees – countertenor, Anthony Roth Costanzo and President & CEO of the League of American Orchestras, Jesse Rosen for a very special evening, where all three of these inspirational individuals, were celebrated for their impact on the American musical landscape.

American Composers Orchestra makes the creation of new opportunities for American composers and new American orchestral music its central purpose. ACO programs increase



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opportunities for American composers and generate broader awareness of their work. ACO's new approach generates further interest and programming by other music organizations. It also

increases the audience for contemporary American orchestral music by influencing music decision makers.

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### **About Harlem School of the Arts at The Herb Alpert Center**

New York City's premier community arts institution, the Harlem School of the Arts at the Herb Alpert Center stands uniquely apart as the sole provider of arts education in four disciplines: music, dance, theatre, and art & design, all within our award-winning 37,000 square foot facility. The School's reputation for artistic rigor and excellence attracts students of diverse socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds from the five New York City boroughs as well as Westchester County and the tristate area, which includes Connecticut and New Jersey. HSA's alumni and faculty are counted among the most talented leaders in the arts.

For over 50-years HSA has enriched the lives of tens of thousands of people through world-class training in the arts. HSA offers its students the freedom to find and develop the artist and citizen within themselves in an environment that teaches discipline, stimulates creativity, builds self-confidence, and adds a dimension of beauty to their lives, empowering them to become the creative thinkers and innovative leaders of tomorrow. To learn more about the Harlem School of the Arts, please visit [www.HSAnyc.org](http://www.HSAnyc.org).