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Please note: Images are available for download from the [online media gallery](#).

Annual Auction at Memminger Auditorium on February 23 to Benefit Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra

Plus a free preview event this Thursday at Fritz Porter

February 7, 2018 (Charleston, South Carolina) — Spoleto Festival USA's Annual Auction will take place Friday, February 23, at Memminger Auditorium in support of young artists of the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra. The festive evening begins at 6:30pm and will include a cocktail reception with artists, creative cuisine led by Chef John Zucker, dancing, and a live auction—along with a few fun surprises. Event tickets are available online at spoletoauction.com or by calling 843.720.1114.

The Annual Auction benefits the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra, one of the country's most prestigious ensembles for young musicians. This year, more than 80 instrumentalists will comprise the orchestra; each member is handpicked by Festival Resident Conductor and Director of Orchestral Activities John Kennedy through 10 auditions nationwide. Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra members perform in a wide range of works during the Festival. This year's repertoire ranges from Liza Lim's contemporary *Tree of Codes* to classics including Donizetti's *Pia de' Tolomei*, Brahms's German Requiem, and Mahler's first symphony. Select musicians will also play during *Il matrimonio segreto*; Atom Egoyan's staging of Zemlinsky's *Lyric Symphony*; as well as the new music series, Music In Time.

Auction guests will have the opportunity to bid on sponsorships of Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra members (starting at \$500) for their residency during the 2018 season; funds raised help offset the cost of the musicians' housing and travel. Other live auction items will include a two-day stay at the Chattooga Club in North Carolina and a special group retreat at Montana's Bar Double T River Ranch

along with two special pieces from artists Jill Hooper and Vincent J. Musi. Ms. Hooper, an accomplished fine artist who splits her time between Charleston and London, has had work exhibited in London's National Portrait Gallery, Greenville County Museum of Art, and Charleston's Gibbes Museum of Art. Her stunning charcoal and chalk portrait of a woman, titled *India*, is 15.5 inches by 28.5 inches, framed. A celebrated photographer whose recent projects include capturing the expressions of exotic and domesticated animals, Mr. Musi's work has been featured in and on 11 covers of *National Geographic*. He is offering a commissioned dog portrait session in his downtown Charleston studio to create a large-format, signed print.

Also on display at Memminger Auditorium will be more than 20 striking works of art, generously donated by private collectors, gallery owners, and the artists themselves. The works are available from February 19 to March 5 through the Festival's online auction at spoletoauction.com; the online auction also features exquisite Charleston vacations, dining experiences, and exciting getaways. Orchestra sponsorships are available online as well.

For those interested in viewing the art prior to the Annual Auction, a selection of pieces will hang in the gallery of luxury design collective Fritz Porter (located at 701 East Bay St.) beginning Thursday, February 8. A free and open preview party from 6:00pm to 8:00pm on February 8 inaugurates the showcase; the work will remain at Fritz Porter until February 15.

Spoletto Festival USA works closely with donors, especially artists and galleries to ensure the terms of the donations are transparent and mutually agreed upon. Each donor sets a fair market value for donated work, and the pieces are returned to artists/donors should bids not surpass that amount by the auction's completion. All artists have been invited to attend the auction's cocktail reception to meet and mingle with potential patrons and collectors. One-hundred percent of the funds raised from the silent and live auctions is allocated to the Spoleto Festival USA Orchestra.

Founded in 1977, Spoleto Festival USA is an annual 17-day performing arts festival that presents leading artists in classical and popular music, jazz, dance, and theater, contributing to the rich cultural fabric of Charleston, SC. The 2018 season includes more than 160 ticketed events from May 25 through June 10. Tickets for all performances are available now at spoletousa.org. Spoleto Festival USA is a non-profit organization.

A release outlining the entire 42nd season can be found [HERE](#).