

For Immediate Release:

On Tuesday, **May 27, 2014**

New Focus Recordings

offers the national release of **RE: You**,
the debut recording project from composer

Robert Honstein,

featuring a cycle of songs without words, contemplating the search for
connection in a networked world.



ON HONSTEIN'S WORKS:

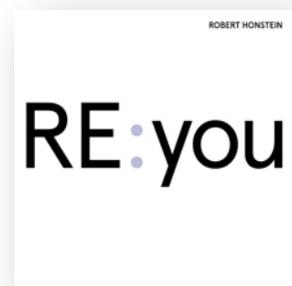
"Quietly poignant...luminous..."

– Stephen Brookes, THE WASHINGTON POST

*"A lonely-hearts story with a genuinely touching emotional
impact..."* – Gerald Fisher, CHICAGO CLASSICAL REVIEW

*"The tensions and doubts fostered by that uncertainty take form in
roiling, insistent orchestral figuration..."*

– Allan Kozinn, THE NEW YORK TIMES



On Tuesday, May 27, 2014, **New Focus Recordings** releases a debut album from composer **Robert Honstein: RE: You**. A chamber music cycle of wordless songs, inspired by a series of misdirected lonely-hearts emails from an online dating service, *RE: You* is a meditation on an individual's experience of the universal desire for human connection cast in the backlit glow of a networked world.

RE: You

Robert Honstein, (2010-2012)

1. My friend I understand 100%. I have no girlfriend. (2:45)
2. Is it Auburn? (5:05)
3. Why are you not answering? I don't wish to play games. (5:40)
4. Better find those little blue pills if you plan on giving her more than lip service. (5:23)
5. Just please let me know and that's all I ask from you. (2:37)
6. Halfway???? (7:30)
7. I am hidden my dear for you!!!!!! (8:23)
8. I know the feeling... (4:59)

This epistolary cycle received its generating spark in 2008, when a friend of Honstein's, Jeffrey K. Miller, was cc'd (in error) by a popular dating website on approximately 100 emails, both outgoing and incoming, of a user with the same name as Mr. Miller. Miller shared the correspondence with Honstein, and the two friends found themselves mesmerized by the yearning and hunger conveyed in these odd, naïve missives.

Honstein explains: *"I found these emails to be hilarious, moving, and bizarre. Both the content and the strangeness of how they entered my life have led me to refer back to them again and again in my work. For these pieces I took the first line of eight emails and composed musical responses to each statement. Ultimately they became a set of songs without words, as much about my own obsession with the emails as with the emotional lives of the people behind them."*

The recipient of these communications, Jeffrey K. Miller, offers additional insight in the album's liner notes, saying "That summer, as Robert and I read these messages, watching the font colors change, encountering strange new emoticons, witnessing a proliferation of maximalist orthography and punctuation not seen since the Vorticist movement (or a sixth-grader's IM history), it was tempting to dismiss them for being ridiculous and naïve. And from the perspective of The Elements of Style, of course, they are. Nevertheless, that very same naiveté gave us access to an emotional life that was too human and too real to ignore. We had to admit that we were not only amused; we were also moved.

Heard as a whole, these songs do not take us on the journey of a love affair, but on the journey of a longing for one. They trace the arc of a very real desire for something to happen. But for all their moments of excitement and absurdity, they never allow us to rise from the solitude of the desk chair, where the sound of the pounding heart is transformed by the fact that there is no one else around to hear it. This strange sensitivity that attends digital romance can be felt in every moment of these compositions."

The works on this album are performed by a circle of musicians who are long-time collaborators and advocates of Honstein's music (many of whom performed the world premieres of these works) and include Concert Black (Domenica Fossati, flute, Owen Weaver, percussion, and Lisa Dowling, bass), Mariel Roberts, cello, Alejandro T. Acierto, clarinet, Derek Johnson, guitar, Karl Larson, piano, and Tema Watson, violin.

The album's cover art and liner notes were designed by Honstein's wife, Laura Grey, who is Assistant Professor of Art and Graphic Design at Boston University.

On Tuesday, May 6, 2014, the album will be given a digital release by New Focus Recordings and the full cycle will be performed by the recording musicians in Brooklyn, NY at Roulette by Ear Heart Music. The hard copy album will be released on Tuesday, May 27, 2014.

Celebrated for his "roiling, insistent orchestral figuration" (New York Times) and "glittery, percussive pieces" (Toronto Globe and Mail), composer **Robert Honstein** (b. 1980) is a composer of orchestral, chamber, and vocal music.

His works have been performed throughout North America by ensembles such as the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble ACJW, Ensemble Dal Niente, the Mivos quartet, the Del Sol Quartet, Concert Black, TIGUE, and the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, among others. He has received an Aaron Copland Award, multiple ASCAP awards and other honors from SCI, Carnegie Hall, and New Music USA. He has also received residencies at Copland House, the Kimmel Harding Nelson Center, I-Park, the Bang on a Can Summer Institute, and the Tanglewood Music Center.

Robert co-produces Fast Forward Austin, an annual marathon new music concert in Austin, TX and is a founding member of the New York based composer collective Sleeping Giant. Upcoming projects include commissions from cellist Ashley Bathgate, a consortium of pianists for a solo piano work, and a new work for Eighth Blackbird as part of a collaborative project with Sleeping Giant. He is also composer-in-residence, along with his Sleeping Giant colleagues, with the Albany Symphony Orchestra, as part of a Music Alive grant from New Music USA and the League of American Orchestras. He studied composition at the Yale School of Music with Martin Bresnick, Chris Theofanidis, and David Lang.

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www.roberthonstein.com

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