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HIGH CONCEPT LABS PROMOTES BILLIE HOWARD TO ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

HCL's first-ever artistic director to provide creative strategy, program planning and vision implementation for the fast-growing Chicago-based artist incubator

CHICAGO — High Concept Laboratories NFP (HCL), a Chicago-based arts service organization, today announced the promotion of Billie Howard to artistic director. In her new role, which builds on her two years with HCL, Howard will be responsible for providing creative strategy, program planning, and implementation of HCL's vision for artist experimentation and discovery across its portfolio of programs and services.

"High Concept Labs' ongoing support of our artists and our passion for connecting their work with the public could not be possible without the artistic insight and strategic thinking Billie has brought to our team," said Steven Wang, executive director of HCL. "Billie's leadership and commitment to our artists has been critical to HCL's continued growth and I look forward to the value she will bring as our first-ever artistic director."

Howard is a Chicago-based musician, educator and arts administrator and originally joined HCL in 2016 as an artistic planning and development associate. She brings nearly 15 years of nonprofit and arts leadership to HCL, in addition to her personal, ongoing work as an active musician, collaborator and teacher in Chicago's creative community.

As a violinist and pianist, Howard regularly performs and collaborates with one of her groups, including The Paver, a.pe.ri.od.ic, Akosuen and the NbN Trio, which was featured as an HCL Sponsored Artist during the Fall 2012 season. Howard also performs frequently with many ensembles, including Noname, Bobby Conn, Wrekmeister Harmonies and Chicago Composer's Orchestra. Her work has been featured on studio recordings by *American Idol*-winner Lee DeWyze, Grammy-nominated children's artist Justin Roberts, and many other national recording artists.

In addition to her work as a performer and arts leader, Howard serves as an adjunct professor of piano at Concordia University, where she maintains a large piano studio. She holds bachelor's degrees in piano and violin performance from Montana State University and a master's of music in piano performance and pedagogy from Northwestern University.

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“For artists operating without major academic or institutional support, HCL offers something truly unique; transparency for the artistic process and the creation of transformational experiences and connections,” Howard said. “As artistic director, I’m thankful for the opportunity to continue working with so many world-class artists and growing our programming and services to bring HCL to the next level.”

As artistic director, Howard is currently overseeing HCL’s recently announced lineup of artists for the organization’s Spring 2018 Sponsored Artist Program, which promotes the growth of artists and their work through the donation of customizable, no-cost support services. Eight local and national artists and collectives representing a diverse artistic disciplines (Jan Bartoszek, Dance; Aquil Charlton, Music; Aram Han Sifuentes, Performance/Installation; Annie Kielman and Joshua Patterson, Performance; Meg Leary, Performance; Rika Lin, Dance; Cat Mahari, Dance; Margaret Morris, Dance) will develop, rehearse and present new work for Chicago audiences this season.

For more information about the Spring 2018 Sponsored Artist Program, visit highconceptlabs.org/spring-2018-sponsored-artists/.

About High Concept Laboratories NFP

High Concept Laboratories NFP supports artists and facilitates dialogue between artists, audiences, and staff members. This increases access and transparency to the artistic process and fosters transformational experiences in an environment of experimentation and discovery.

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For more information, visit highconceptlabs.org.

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