FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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**CHI: Music of Augusta Read Thomas featuring Spektral Quartet and Third Coast Percussion**

Chicago, Illinois—On Saturday, April 29, 7:30 pm, the University of Chicago’s soaring Rockefeller Chapel welcomes celebrated composer Augusta Read Thomas at a concert dedicated entirely to her music, with 2017 Grammy-winning Third Coast Percussion and Grammy-nominated Spektral Quartet.

The concert, *A Triptych: Earth, Moon, Peace*, will feature three major works: the world premiere of Thomas’ new *Chi for string quartet*, written for Spektral Quartet; *Resounding Earth* – the profound and mystical sound of over three hundred bells – written for Third Coast Percussion, here performed for the first time in the rich acoustic of Rockefeller Chapel; and *Selene, Moon Chariot Rituals*, played by the two ensembles together.

The Chinese refer to the vital life force energy of the universe, present within every living thing, as “Chi.” The idea of Chi has been studied for many thousands of years, from China and Japan to India, the Hawai’ian islands, and South America. Augusta Read Thomas picks up on the idea of Chi as the energy of life itself – emitting soulful colors (auras), giving expressive vibrational frequency and sound, and flowing through the body pathways, or meridians (highpoints) and chakras (deep, subtle spiritual nodes of the profound essential center) of all living forms. The four movements of her new work are named Chi vital life force; Aura atmospheres, color, vibrations; Meridians zeniths; and Chakras center of spiritual power in the body. Appropriately, she has created a work of both inner and outer radiance, inspired by the notion of life’s great energies.

Co-commissioned by Rockefeller Memorial Chapel and Spektral Quartet, Thomas has dedicated *Chi* for string quartet with admiration and gratitude to Rockefeller’s Dean Elizabeth Davenport and Spektral. Spektral is recording the work on Nimbus Records for release later this year.

Grammy-winner *Augusta Read Thomas* produces work that is nuanced, majestic, elegant, capricious, lyrical, and colorful. “It is boldly considered music that celebrates the sound of the instruments and reaffirms the vitality of orchestral music” (Philadelphia Inquirer). She had the distinction of having her work performed more frequently in 2013–14 than any other living ASCAP composer, according to statistics from performing rights organization (New York Times, March 6, 2015).

Thomas is a University Professor at the University of Chicago, the sixteenth person in the history of the University to be named as such. She has recently established the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition at the University, a dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary environment for the creation, performance, and study of new music and for the advancement of the careers of emerging and established composers, performers, and scholars. She has previous been a celebrated teacher at the Eastman School of Music, at Northwestern, and at the Tanglewood and Aspen festivals. She was the longest serving Mead Composer in Residence at the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, for Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez, from 1997 through 2006, a residency that culminated in the premiere of Astral Canticle – one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize in Music. During her residency, Thomas not only premiered nine commissioned orchestral works, but also was central to establishing the thriving MusicNOW series on which she commissioned and programmed the work of many living composers. In 2016 Thomas envisioned and spearheaded Chicago’s first EAR TAXI FESTIVAL, a six-day new music festival celebrating the vibrant classical contemporary music scene in Chicago. Her discography includes 77 commercially recorded CDs.

**Spektral Quartet** actively pursues a vivid conversation between exhilarating works of the traditional canon and those written this decade, this year, or this week. With its most recent album described by Gramophone as “highly-interactive, creative and collaborative…unlike anything its intended audience – or anyone else – has ever heard,” Spektral is known for creating seamless connections across centuries, drawing in the listener with charismatic deliveries, interactive concert formats, an up-close atmosphere, and bold, inquisitive programming. The group is composed of Clara Lyon (violin), Maeve Feinberg (violin), Doyle Armbrust (viola), and Russell Rolen (cello).
Third Coast Percussion is Chicago's Grammy-winning (2017) quartet of classically trained percussionists. For over ten years, the ensemble has forged a unique path in the musical landscape with virtuosic, energetic performances that celebrate the extraordinary depth and breadth of musical possibilities in the world of percussion. The ensemble has been praised for "commandingly elegant" (New York Times) performances, the "rare power" (Washington Post) of their recordings, and "an inspirational sense of fun and curiosity" (Minnesota Star-Tribune). The four members of Third Coast – David Skidmore, Robert Dillon, Peter Martin, and Sean Connors – are also accomplished teachers, and since 2012, have served as ensemble in residence at the University of Notre Dame’s DeBartolo Performing Arts Center.

Performance and ticket information
This performance will be held at Rockefeller Chapel, 5850 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60637. Tickets available online at tickets.uchicago.edu. Ticket prices are $20-35 general admission, free to all students with student ID. Performance time approximately 90 minutes without intermission.

For more information and/or press tickets, contact Eden Sabala at 773.834.4685.

About Rockefeller Chapel
Rockefeller Chapel, the University of Chicago’s iconic spiritual and ceremonial center, is a major arts presenter and venue for the performing arts. Under its Arts Rock label, the Chapel offers diverse programming in music and the visual arts, with a particular focus on contemporary choral and instrumental performance.