The January 2020 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute is generously sponsored by The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, The Amphion Foundation, Hella Mears Hueg and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.
We are very glad you are joining us for MusicMakers Conducted by Osmo Vänskä.

During the preceding week seven composers will participate in the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. Intensive workshops with musicians, one-on-one mentoring sessions, meetings with Osmo Vänskä, and seminars with leaders in the music industry will hone the composers’ skills for both the business and artistic sides of their professions. This collaboration between the Minnesota Orchestra and the American Composers Forum opens doors to the professional orchestra world that are often inaccessible to aspiring composers.

We’re thrilled that you will share in the adventure of discovering new music from talents as distinctly inventive as these. We are excited to offer you the chance to submit questions digitally using Slido. Use the event code #MNORCH to submit your questions.

Once a question is posted it is visible for all to see. The question list is sorted by number of likes, so please like the questions you find most interesting to help ensure that we answer the questions that are most important to you. It is a pleasure to share this experience with all of you, our friends in the audience, as we unveil this new music!

Osmo Vänskä, conductor

Finnish conductor Osmo Vänskä, the Minnesota Orchestra’s tenth music director, is renowned internationally for his compelling interpretations of the standard, contemporary and Nordic repertoires. Since becoming the Orchestra’s music director in 2003, he has led the ensemble on several major international tours, including historic tours to Cuba and South Africa and six visits to Europe. Next summer he will lead the Orchestra on its first-ever tour to South Korea and Vietnam. This month he begins a new tenure as music director of the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra. He is also the honorary conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra. As a guest conductor, he has led all the major American and European orchestras, along with several major orchestras in Asia. He has earned wide acclaim for his support of contemporary works and composers, and has received a Champion of New Music Award from the American Composers Forum. In 2006 he expanded the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute to include the public concert now known as MusicMakers, with which he has since introduced Minnesota audiences to 79 new works. Additional works he has premiered with the Orchestra range from Kortekangas’ Migrations and concertos by Rautavaara and MacMillan to the oratorio To Be Certain of the Dawn, composed by Stephen Paulus to a libretto by Michael Dennis Browne, and Harmonia Ubuntu by Bongani Ndodana-Breen, which was commissioned by Classical Movements for the Orchestra’s 2018 South Africa tour. Vänskä, who began his music career as a clarinetist, held the co-principal chair of the Helsinki Philharmonic (1977–82) and the principal chair of the Turku Philharmonic (1971–76). For more information, see page 6 of January 2020 Showcase or visit minnesotaorchestra.org.

““The Composer Institute is vital to the Orchestra and our community as we cultivate new music and a new generation of composers. We are entrusted to be curators of all orchestral repertoire—both the historic works as well as music of today.”

—Osmo Vänskä, Minnesota Orchestra music director
Kevin Puts, Composer Institute director

Kevin Puts, now in his sixth season as director of the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, won the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for the opera *Silent Night*, which was commissioned and premiered by the Minnesota Opera, as was his 2015 opera *The Manchurian Candidate*. His work has been commissioned and performed by leading orchestras in the U.S. and abroad, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Pops, Zurich Tonhalle Orchestra and Minnesota Orchestra. In recent seasons the Minnesota Orchestra has performed several of his works including *Two Mountain Scenes, Millennium Canons, Rivers Rush, Inspiring Beethoven*, and Symphony No. 4, *From Mission San Juan*. He has written five symphonies as well as concertos premiered by prominent soloists including Yo-Yo Ma and Evelyn Glennie. Among his most recent works is an orchestral song cycle based on the letters of Georgia O’Keeffe and Alfred Stieglitz titled *The Brightness of Light*, which received its world premiere this past July by the Boston Symphony Orchestra with soloists Renée Fleming and baritone Rod Gilfry. It has subsequently been performed by the Colorado Symphony and National Symphony in Washington, D.C. Another new work for orchestra, *Virelai*, was premiered in September 2019 by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. His other recent works include an Oboe Concerto, *Moonlight*, commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony for its principal oboist Katherine Needleman, and *Silent Night Elegy*, an orchestral fantasy based on music from *Silent Night*, premiered by the San Francisco Symphony. His first chamber opera, an adaptation of Peter Ackroyd’s gothic novel *The Trial of Elizabeth Cree*, with libretto by Mark Campbell, was commissioned and premiered by Opera Philadelphia in 2017. He is currently composing a large work for the Metropolitan Opera to star Renée Fleming, as well as a concerto for the crossover string ensemble Time for Three set to premiere in summer 2020. His music is also well-represented on recordings, including *Loves Comes in at the Eye*, released in July 2018 by Albany Records. For more information, visit kevinputs.com or minnesotaorchestra.org.

Felicity James, violin

American-Australian violinist Felicity James, who joined the Minnesota Orchestra in 2018 as associate concertmaster, previously served as concertmaster of the Verbier Festival Orchestra, Colburn Orchestra and Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra, and has led orchestras under the batons of James Conlon, Gianandrea Noseda, Edo de Waart, Ludovic Morlot and Edward Gardner. She has also played with the Seattle Symphony and Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and she has performed with conductors including Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Valery Gergiev, Daniel Harding, Christoph Eschenbach, Antonio Pappano, Stéphane Denève and Leonard Slatkin. As a soloist, she has appeared with orchestras across the U.S., including the Seattle Symphony. She has also competed in numerous international violin competitions, and she is an enthusiastic chamber musician, having performed frequently in ensembles at the Verbier, Sarasota and Aspen music festivals, as well as the Colburn Chamber Music Society, the Los Angeles Da Camera Society and the Minnesota Orchestra’s chamber music series. She has also served on the faculty of the Prague Summer Nights Music Festival. More: minnesotaorchestra.org.
Danielle Beckvermit, soprano

Soprano Danielle Beckvermit, currently a Resident Artist at Minnesota Opera, made her mainstage Carnegie Hall debut as the soprano soloist in Mozart’s Requiem with the Cecilia Chorus of New York. She was a Grand Finalist in the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions in 2018, and has been recognized by several other major competitions including being a finalist in the Lotte Lenya Competition, finalist in the Jensen Foundation Competition, and award winner in the George London Foundation Competition. She was also first prize winner in the Classical Singer Competition and the Civic Morning Musicals Competition. She has been most recently seen with Minnesota Opera as Berta in Il Barbiere di Siviglia, Fifth Maidservant in Elektra, Annina in La Traviata, and Anaide in The Italian Straw Hat. Her other notable roles include Alice in Falstaff, Anne Trulove in The Rake’s Progress, Fiordiligi in Cosí fan tutte, the title role in Susannah, and both Donna Anna and Donna Elvira in Don Giovanni. She was an Apprentice Artist with Santa Fe Opera for the summer of 2019. She will make her European Debut singing at The Kurt Weill Fest in Dessau, Germany this February. More: daniellebeckvermit.com.

Lisa Marie Rogali, soprano

Rising American soprano Lisa Marie Rogali, who is also a current Resident Artist at Minnesota Opera, is quickly establishing herself as a versatile performer of opera, musical theater and concert music. Last summer, as a recipient of the OTSL Gaddes Career Award, she returned to Opera Theatre of Saint Louis to sing Countess Ceprano in Rigoletto, covered Susanna in The Marriage of Figaro and covered Drusilla in The Coronation of Poppea. During Minnesota Opera’s 2019–20 season she is performing the roles of Fourth Maid in Elektra, Tina in Flight, Princes/Lucy/Marlene in the world premiere of Edward Tulane and Zerlina in Don Giovanni. She has also appeared with Opera Theatre of St. Louis and Opera Saratoga, and in productions of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, Penn State Opera Theatre, Fuse Productions and the State Theatre. On the concert stage, she has been a featured soloist with the Pennsylvania Centre Orchestra, the Penn State Chamber Orchestra and Eric Whitacre’s Virtual Choir, among other ensembles. She was recently named a winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions (Kentucky District) where she later advanced to the Region Finals in Chicago. She will be attending the Glimmerglass Festival this upcoming summer as a young artist. More: lisamarierogali.com.
Theo Chandler  /  Songs from Brooches  
for Two Sopranos and Orchestra

PROGRAM NOTE
In Songs from Brooches, I set texts from the collection Brooches by New York-based poet Zeke Greenwald. I appreciate Greenwald’s poetry for his beautiful descriptions of familiar, mundane or even unsightly subjects. These descriptions often provide two layers that can be depicted in music: decorative surface beauty, and less pleasant subtext. The poems in Brooches tell the story of a single day in the life of the speaker. The selections to be performed by the Minnesota Orchestra at this concert include movements two and three of the four-movement work.

In movement two, we hear text describing the speaker cooking dinner. I depicted the line “the gas chats with the flame” with quite literal, incessant chatting between the two singers. In the third movement, the speaker has become preoccupied, while his friend asks him questions about his day. To depict his absentmindedness, I placed the singers in a timeless soundscape, as if the world has gone out of focus.

—Theo Chandler

SONGS FROM BROOCHES TEXT

II. Kitchen
The gas chats with the flame it makes 
and something in the pan awakes and turns, 
with lower volume in the pan, 
its juices lovelorn to withstand evanescence. 
Then seeing somehow my tripe shaped mind, 
you read aloud where pleats incline 
with questions:

III. What she asked me
“And was it loud on your commute? 
Your thoughts sobbing, forcefully nude, 
stripped before sunbathing made them want to? 
“Oh, regretting having ferberized your muse 
who shrieks for solace every night: 
wakefully thoughtless, brake shrieks might 
contend with her for your despite? 
“Still early morning’s maquillage 
beneath your eyes glossed on to gauze, 
distant and departing railroad lines 
lend lovely smoke to your sleepless eyes.”

—from Brooches by Zeke Greenwald

BIOGRAPHY
Theo Chandler is a Houston-based composer who is currently pursuing his doctorate of musical arts at the Rice University Shepherd School of Music. He is the recipient of the Charles Ives Scholarship from the Academy of Arts and Letters, the Graduate Music Award from the Presser Foundation and a Morton Gould Award from ASCAP. He was selected as a winner of Juilliard’s Orchestra Competition, Juilliard’s Gena Raps Competition, the New Juilliard Ensemble Competition and the Maryland Wind Festival Call for Scores, and was runner-up for the RED NOTE New Music Festival Chamber Music Competition. He has received commissions from the New York Youth Symphony First Music Program, Tanglewood Music Center, Utah Arts Festival, Les Délices, Golden West Winds and other ensembles and institutions.

Chandler has been a fellow at the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Mizzou International Composers Festival, Tanglewood Music Center, Copland House CULTIVATE and Aspen Music Festival. He has been the Composer in Residence for the Maryland Wind Festival, Young Artist Composer for Da Camera, Emerging Composer Fellow for Musiqa, Composer in Residence for Les Délices and Young Composer in Residence for the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, and he participated in the I-Park Composer + Musicians Collaborative Residency with Akropolis Reed Quintet. He received his previous degrees from the Juilliard School and Oberlin Conservatory. His composition teachers include Shih-hui Chen, Karim Al-Zand, Anthony Brandt, Melinda Wagner, Samuel Adler, Steven Stucky, Lewis Nielson and Dan Tacke.

While *Acadian Vista*’s beginning depicts a broad, cautious optimism, those characteristics are frequently combined or interrupted with rambunctious rhythmic interjections and sudden accelerations in tempo. At the apex of the piece, these rhythmic patterns and interjections find brief serenity and harmony through a soaring melodic line meant as an echo to the optimism that opens the piece and also as a mirror to the fleeting, yet meaningful, clarity I found at the top of Cadillac Mountain.

This work was commissioned by the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra as part of its composer in residence program. The WCYO gave the premiere performance under the leadership of its music director, Eric Mahl, in June 2018.

—Paul Frucht

**BIOGRAPHY**

Paul Frucht’s acclaimed music has been commissioned and performed by the American Composers Orchestra, Juilliard Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, Weill-Cornell Music and Medicine Orchestra, American Modern Ensemble, Asian American New Music Institute, Euclid Quartet, New York City Ballet Choreographic Institute, cellist Julian Schwarz and violinist Rachel Lee Priday. He has been the recipient of the Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award, the Brian H. Israel Prize, Juilliard’s Palmer Dixon, Arthur Friedman and Gena Raps Prizes, and the American Composers Orchestra’s Audience Choice Award. The 2019-20 season includes performances of his music by the Bowling Green Festival Orchestra, violinist Alice Ivy Pemberton, cellist Julian Schwarz, the Ulysses Quartet on the Mostly Music Series and at the Buffalo Chamber Music Society, and the world premiere of an orchestral song cycle commissioned for Kenneth Kellogg and the Ridgefield Symphony Orchestra.

Frucht is the artistic director of the Charles Ives Music Festival at the Western Connecticut Youth Orchestra, where he was previously composer in residence during the 2017-18 season. He has been an adjunct faculty member at New York University’s Steinhardt School since 2015. His primary composition teachers have been Robert Beaser and Justin Dello Joio, and he holds D.M.A. and M.M. degrees from the Juilliard School as well as a B.M. from New York University. More: paulfruchtmusic.com.

—Clare Glackin

**ARCHAEO**

Depicts an imaginary ancient landscape, a city I have cobbled together in my imagination from places with which I have become familiar recently. The three sections of the work show the landscape throughout the day: the first movement depicts the blinding light of the sunrise, and the second the orange glow cast over the city buildings in the evening, ending with the final glimmer of light as the sun sinks below the horizon. The third movement, a lively percussive dance, represents nighttime which, for me, has always been filled with energy and possibility. The piece incorporates into its language elements of traditional fiddle music; some of my earliest musical memories are of dancing around the house while my father played Irish fiddle tunes. This music is strongly connected in my mind with the landscape I am imagining.

—Clare Glackin

**BIOGRAPHY**

Clare Glackin is a composer of instrumental and vocal concert works who writes music inspired by place and setting, language and the linguistic properties of melody, as well as the full spectrum of human experiences and emotions. Her work has been commissioned and performed by ensembles such as the Houston Grand Opera and Culver City Symphony, and she has been a composer fellow at music festivals and workshops including the Aspen Music Festival, Mizzou International Composers Festival and the University of Nebraska Chamber Music Institute. She loves working personally with the musicians who play her work, and she has collaborated with some of the most exciting young new music performers on the scene. Her recent projects include a violin encore written for violinist Giancarlo Latta as part of his “16x16: The Rice Encores Project,” an oboe concerto written for Rachel Van Amburgh and premiered by Van Amburgh and the USC Thornton Symphony, and a setting of text excerpted from Stravinsky’s lecture series “Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons” written for soprano Ally Smither.

A native of Mount Vernon, Washington, Glackin holds degrees from the University of Southern California, where she was named a Discovery Scholar and Outstanding Graduate of the composition program, and Rice University, where she attended on a Brown Fellowship. Her current projects include a wind ensemble piece commissioned to celebrate the 100th

Marc Migó / Nocturne for Violin, Piano obbligato, String Orchestra and Harp

PROGRAM NOTE
Nocturne is the second movement of my Double Concerto for violin and piano, but it can be played on its own as an individual piece. In this work I explored the common elements that connect Spanish musical roots with Argentinian ones, as both cultures are close and dear to me. This is why I decided to compose a double concerto as if it were a journey from the Mediterranean coastline to the energetic and vibrant Argentine province of Tucumán, located on the opposite side of the Atlantic.

Nocturne serves as a bridge connecting the two sides of the ocean. It starts alla saeta (an improvised religious chant from Spain) with an intimate and quiet violin accompanied by muted strings and sometimes a solo cello. This climate will gradually remind the audience of Argentinian dances such as the zamba—elegant and majestic—and the tango—energetic and passionate. Then there will be an unusual re-exposition of the initial material resulting in the convergence of two apparently irreconcilable worlds: the quasi-religious, mystical musical background and the mundane dances. In contrast with the first and final movements of the Double Concerto, the second is the quietest. The violin has a much more prominent role than the piano, which is mostly treated as an obbligato part, and only the string section and harp are used.

–Marc Migó

BIOGRAPHY
Barcelona native Marc Migó started studying piano under the guidance of Liliana Sainz, then privately studied harmony and counterpoint with Xavier Boliart. In 2013 he was accepted at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya, where he studied composition with Salvador Brotons and Albert Guinovart. In 2017 he moved to New York to continue his musical studies thanks to a scholarship issued by Fundación SGAE (Spain). He received his masters in composition studying at the Juilliard School with Melinda Wagner, and he is currently on his first year of D.M.A. studies as a C.V. Star fellow at the same institution, where he has moved to the studio of John Corigliano. Migó was recently awarded the 8th International Pablo Casals award for his sonata for cello and piano, Cerdanyenca, which has been performed across Spain by cellist Mark Prihodko and pianists Anna Keiserman and Viktoria Korolionok. He received an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award as well as the New Juilliard annual commissioning competition award. He also received a sponsorship from Lebois Foundation, which has allowed him to undertake some of his latest projects. He will be a 2020 artist in residence at the National Sawdust thanks to a Blueprint Fellowship. He is currently composing a song cycle for mezzo and chamber orchestra to be premiered this April at New York’s Alice Tully Hall by mezzo Maggie Reneé and the New Juilliard Ensemble, conducted by Joel Sachs. More: marcmigo.com.

Patrick O’Malley / Rest and Restless

PROGRAM NOTE
Several of my recent pieces concern themselves with dichotomies, or pairs of ideas that push and pull against each other. I find that I have difficulty writing unless I have at least two opposing concepts that I can somehow “compose between.” Rest and Restless carries this process out with regard to emotional states—I would describe the piece as an “emotional landscape.” The music slowly alternates, pendulum-like, from low angst-broodings to brighter hopes, back and forth, but without letting either mood “win” over the other. These forces eventually come to a head in a tutti explosion, followed by a stark coda that, to me, feels either optimistic or dejected, depending on what mood I am in. While I’m working on this program note, my mind keeps coming back to an image of looking out my bedroom window in Los Angeles at the evening clouds, my imagination being ignited by the simultaneously serene and troubled shapes of grey. Perhaps the music reflects that fantasy in some emotional fashion. Rest and Restless was premiered by the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra on July 20, 2019.

–Patrick O’Malley

BIOGRAPHY
Patrick O’Malley is a composer of orchestral and chamber music who is often inspired by mysterious dichotomies in nature and art, composing music that embraces abstract
worlds rather than concrete images. Often when writing a new piece, he considers the listeners’ imagination as much as every other musical element. His works have been performed across the U.S. and also in Europe.

O’Malley’s music has been recognized and/or performed by organizations including ASCAP, the Hear Now Music Festival, the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s National Composers Intensive, The American Prize, and the Albany, Columbus, Milwaukee and New Jersey symphonies. He was named Composer of the Year by the Sioux City Symphony for 2018, and he has been a fellow at various music festivals and residencies including the Copland House residencies, the Los Angeles Film Conducting Intensive, the Aspen Music Festival and Avaloch Music Farm. He also serves as the arranger and a conductor for the innovative video game concert series Journey LIVE with Fifth House Ensemble and composer Austin Wintory. O’Malley recently finished a commissioned work for the New York Youth Symphony to be premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2020, and recently completed his doctorate at the University of Southern California, where he studied with Andrew Norman and Sean Friar. He divides his time between Los Angeles and Lake Charlevoix, Michigan, and he is currently working on a large chamber work for the Chicago-based Fifth House Ensemble. More: musicbypatrickomalley.com.

Liza Sobel / Ticking Time Bomb

PROGRAM NOTE
People are on edge, whether it is sparked by grave national issues such as gun control or immigration, or by not quite such life-and-death issues, including the furor over Starbucks’ holiday cup decorations, appropriate dog breeds or celebrities’ clothes. The climate is explosive and anything could trigger it.

As I was completing my orchestral piece Ticking Time Bomb, Northwestern University experienced a lock down, and the building in which I live was the epicenter of a shooting threat that later was revealed to be a hoax. My thoughts fluctuated wildly as my colleagues and I barricaded ourselves in a music office while we struggled to finish our meeting.

Ticking Time Bomb depicts being on the verge of nearly exploding. Sometimes, the harder a person tries to control oneself, the closer the person comes to detonating. Ultimately, the piece does completely lose control and implodes. It was written for an orchestra reading session with the Aspen Music Festival’s Conducting Academy Orchestra; this performance by the Minnesota Orchestra is the world premiere.

–Liza Sobel

BIOGRAPHY
Liza Sobel’s compositions are often influenced by current social issues. Her recent inspirations include anxiety and stress in today’s society, the negative impact of social media and its link with depression and suicide, and sexual assault. Her music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Symphony Space, Bang on a Can, Aspen Music Festival, Eighth Blackbird’s Creative Lab, Aldeburgh Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Brevard Festival and Bowdoin Music Festival. Last summer, she attended the Orchestra of St. Luke’s inaugural DeGaetano Composition Institute. Performers who have played her music include the Spektral String Quartet, Orchestra of St. Luke’s, Cygnus Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion, Nouveau Classical Project, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, and Joseph Lin, former first violinist of the Juilliard String Quartet. Her current projects include a chamber opera for the Zafa Collective, in which she will also perform, and a new work for Ensemble Dal Niente. Her Requiem won the American Prize in the choral division and was a finalist in the BMI Young Composers Award. Other awards she has won include a Fulbright scholarship, as well as Rutgers and Cornell’s endorsed candidate and/or finalist for the Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright and Keesbey scholarships.

Sobel is also a singer, and she performs both new and standard repertoire, as well as her own music. She frequently performs music by living emerging composers, and many composers have written pieces specifically for her. Last summer, she performed a recital in Thirsty Ears, Chicago’s only classical music street fair. This March she will perform an all-American program of Charles Ives songs and George Crumb’s Apparition at Constellation, Chicago. She is a doctoral candidate in composition at Northwestern University, where she teaches a broad spectrum of music courses, including Music Theory, Aural Skills, History of the Symphony, Intro to Music for non-majors, and Composition for non-majors. She previously studied at Rutgers University (M.A.), Cornell University (B.A. with honors) and Manhattan School of Music. More: lizasobel.com.
**Nicky Sohn / Bird Up**

**PROGRAM NOTE**

*Bird Up* encapsulates my perspective on the erratic nature of New York City, as seen through the lens of the bizarre and chaotic humor in *The Eric Andre Show*. Throughout several years of living in the absurd and unpredictable environment that is New York, I found that his skits were a clever match to the everyday unpredictability of the city. The skit that inspired this piece reflects the extreme end of the chaos that New Yorkers often encounter with a humorous twist: Eric Andre dresses up as a bird and confronts strangers on the street. I developed the piece around direct inspiration from the show; the primary motivic material of the piece is derived from the opening chords of the TV show. Incorporating this motive in several modes, the piece gradually transforms, reflecting the humor of the ever-changing yet constantly absurd reality of the show and New York City.

—Nicky Sohn

**BIOGRAPHY**

From ballet to opera to Korean traditional-orchestra, the wide-ranging talent of composer Nicky Sohn is sought after across the U.S., Europe and Asia. Characterized by jazz-inspired, rhythmically driven themes, Sohn’s work has been described as “like John Adams’ ‘Short Ride in a Fast Machine’ on steroids” (YourObserver), “dynamic and full of vitality” (The Korea Defense Daily) and having “elegant wonder” (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung). As a result, she has enjoyed commissions from the world’s preeminent performing arts institutions, including sold-out performances at the Stuttgart Ballet in Germany, the National Orchestra of Korea, and the New York Choreographic Institute at New York City Ballet.

In 2019, Sohn attended the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy as Gerald Fischer Fellow, where she worked with Grammy-winning soprano Jessica Rivera. She also has received a fellowship from the DaCamera Young Artist Program in Houston for its 2019-20 season. Her other projects include commissions from the Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra and Chelsea Music Festival. She has also appeared at renowned music festivals including the Aspen Music Festival, Les Ecoles d’Art Américaines de Fontainebleau, Ars Nova with Unsuk Chin and the Seoul Philharmonic, and the Summer Festival of the Moscow Conservatory of Music, among others. She is currently pursuing a fully-funded doctoral degree at the Shepherd School of Music of Rice University, and she holds degrees from the Juilliard School and Mannes College of Music. Her pedagogues include Robert Beaser, Chris Theofanidis and Richard Danielpour. More: nickysohn.com.
ABOUT THE MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA COMPOSER INSTITUTE

The Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, now in its 17th year, is an outgrowth of the Orchestra’s Perfect Pitch program, an annual series of new music reading sessions for emerging Minnesota composers launched during the 1995-96 season in collaboration with the American Composers Forum. In 2002 the program was reformulated as the Composer Institute and opened to composers from across the country. Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Aaron Jay Kernis became its director, and the program added seminars with industry leaders and Orchestra musicians, mentoring and other activities.

In 2006, the Orchestra added a public Future Classics concert, now called MusicMakers, conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä, as the Institute’s capstone. Pulitzer Prize-winner Kevin Puts is now in his sixth season as the Institute’s director, while others instrumental to the program’s success have included the Orchestra’s Artistic Operations Manager Mele Willis and former Institute Co-Director Beth Cowart.

“The week at the Composer Institute was one of the best weeks in my life,” says Ming-Hsiu Yen, a 2008 Institute participant. “The first-rate music education system in the United States is what brought me here from Taiwan, and the conservatory training that I received has been invaluable in making me a better musician. There has been nothing, however, that could compare to what I learned in a week at the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute.”

The program’s influence has spread throughout the music world via the success of participants such as 2004 alumnus Andrew Norman, who in 2017 won the Grawemeyer Award and was recently nominated for a 2020 Grammy Award; 2006 alumnus Anna Clyne, a 2015 Grammy nominee; and trailblazers in the field of contemporary opera such as Missy Mazzoli and Matthew Peterson, 2006 and 2015 participants respectively. In 2018 both of the finalists for the Pulitzer Prize for Music were past Institute participants: 2008 alumnus Ted Hearne was recognized for his cantata Sound from the Bench, while 2016 alumnus Michael Gilbertson earned the honor for his Quartet. In 2019 Andrew Norman was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize for his orchestral work Sustain.

Several past participants have gone on to have their music performed on the Orchestra’s subscription season, including Polina Nazaykinskaya, whose Winter Bells will be performed at Orchestra Hall on March 27 and 28, 2020. Alumni have also fostered connections with other local ensembles such as the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, which is conducted by William Schrickel, the Minnesota Orchestra’s assistant principal bass.

As of this week, the Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute and its predecessor, Perfect Pitch, have boosted the careers of 148 composers, with 156 works receiving readings or performances.

OUR PARTNER

The Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute benefits from the support of many partnering organizations and individuals. Our closest and longest-term partner is the St. Paul-based American Composers Forum, which manages the score submission process, brings word of the program to its large body of constituents—and serves as the Institute’s greatest friend, advisor and resource, continually helping to fine-tune and expand the program.

The American Composers Forum (ACF) enriches lives by nurturing the creative spirit of music creators and communities. Through commissions, grants, mentorships, performances, publications, residencies, and hosted gatherings, we provide innovative opportunities for composers and their music to flourish, and we link communities and composers through creation, connection, and engagement. ACF facilitates an ecosystem that reflects the diversity of our world, and we partner with a variety of creative musicians and organizations to develop the next generation of new music creators, performers, and advocates. Visit www.composersforum.org for more information.

Submit your questions!
slido.com // #MNORCH
Program Management
Kevin Puts, Composer Institute director
Mele Willis, artistic operations manager

Seminar Faculty
Sarah Blain Chaplin, director of individual giving
Jennifer Higdon, composer and co-owner, Lawdon Publishing
Tim Igel, publicist, innova Recordings
James M. Kendrick, attorney, Alter, Kendrick & Baron, LLP; secretary and a director of The Aaron Copland Fund for Music
William J. Lackey, vice president of programs, American Composers Forum
Cheryl Lawson, co-owner, Lawdon Publishing
Bonnie Marshall, vice president of development, American Composers Forum
Rob Nygaard, director of institutional giving
Kevin Puts, composer

Minnesota Orchestra Musician Seminar Faculty
Maureen Conroy, principal librarian
Kathy Kienzle, principal harp

Music Director Osmo Vänskä
Minnesota Orchestra Musicians
American Composers Forum
Fred Child

Composer Selection Panel
Kevin Puts, Kati Agócs, Akiko Fujimoto and Michael Gandolfi

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CALL FOR SCORES: 2021 MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA COMPOSER INSTITUTE

Calling all composers! The Minnesota Orchestra and the American Composers Forum are pleased to announce that the next Composer Institute will take place in May 2021, culminating in a public concert conducted by Music Director Osmo Vänskä on Friday, May 14, 2021.

Visit minnesotaorchestra.org/composerinstitute later this year for details on how to apply.

Top photo by Mele Willis. Middle and lower photos by Greg Helgeson.