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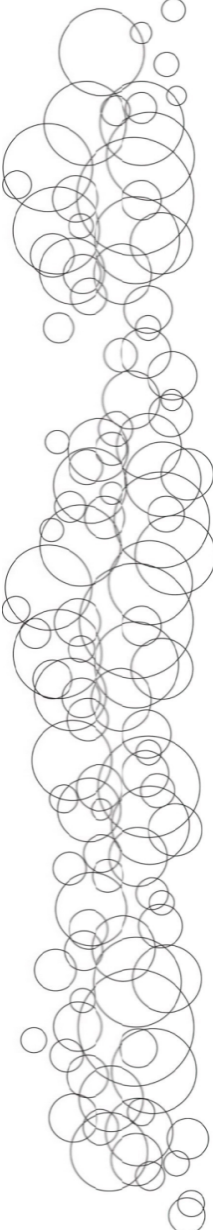
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## American Composers Forum and Roomful of Teeth Announce Three Composers Selected for ACF CONNECT



ST. PAUL, MN – Three composers have been selected as participants for the second annual ACF CONNECT program offered by the American Composers Forum (ACF) in partnership with the GRAMMY-winning eight-voice ensemble Roomful of Teeth. Recognized for reimagining the expressive potential of the human voice and forging a new repertoire without borders, Roomful of Teeth is an excellent match for the ACF CONNECT program. Selected participants will have an opportunity to work with the ensemble over 18 months, culminating in a performance during Roomful of Teeth's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration in August 2019. "It is gratifying to see such gifted composers being selected for the second year of ACF CONNECT", says John Nuechterlein, President and CEO of ACF. "Each of them brings a distinctive style of contemporary composition to the cohort, and we are deeply grateful to Roomful of Teeth for offering them this extraordinary opportunity. The commission is only the beginning of how ACF CONNECT will help them grow as creative artists."

The three selected composers, whose musical voices represent the diverse landscape of music being created today, were chosen out of 459 applicants from across the country. The 2018/2019 cohort of ACF CONNECT composers includes Mingjia Chen (Ontario, Canada), Mary Kouyoumdjian (Brooklyn, New York), and Peter S. Shin (Kansas City, Missouri). Each of the selected composers will receive a \$7,500 commission to write a piece for Roomful of Teeth that will be workshopped and performed by the ensemble in August 2019.

Brad Wells, Roomful of Teeth's Founder/Artistic Director, stated "Reviewing over 450 composer proposals for ACF Connect project was both an inspirational and nearly impossible task. The dynamism evident throughout the submissions was extraordinary; we felt overwhelmed by the many stirring voices making powerful, necessary music in the world today. We are beyond thrilled to begin working with the three selected composers on their respective projects and we cannot wait to see fruits of our new partnerships. But we were equally moved and energized to hear and see the work of literally hundreds of vital, engaging composers – so many of whom we hope to work with in the future. We are immensely grateful to the American Composers Forum for this special opportunity – both to create new work over the coming year and a half and to be reminded that we belong to a community of brilliant and bold voices."

Launched in 2017 with the celebrated Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble (PNME), the ACF CONNECT program was developed to partner with prominent, top-quality ensembles, offering better commission fees, more time to work with performers, and significant learning/networking opportunities with industry professionals. Consistent with the American Composers Forum's mission, the program will support meaningful, long-lasting connections between composers, performers, audiences, and the community where the ensemble is based.

### About the winners

**Mingjia Chen** (Ontario, Canada) <http://www.mingjiamusic.com/>

Improvising vocalist, composer, lyricist and teacher Mingjia Chen (pronounced MING-jee-yah) is an active contributor to the ever-growing Toronto music scene. Recognized for her technical and stylistic versatility, she has performed with and composed for her own chamber ensemble *Tortoise Orchestra* as well as a variety of groups such as her duo with James Fernando, *the science of what ?*, *SonuSkapos Jazz Orchestra*, *Celeste*, *Makes Shapes*, *Pleasurecraft*, etc.

Mingjia is currently completing her fourth year at Humber College's Bachelor of Jazz and Contemporary Music program, and her debut solo EP--*Feel Seen*--is scheduled for release in summer 2018.



**Marry Kouyoumdjian** (Brooklyn, New York) <http://www.marykouyoumdjian.com/>

Marry Kouyoumdjian is a composer with projects ranging from concert works to multimedia collaborations and film scores. As a first generation Armenian-American and having come from a family directly affected by the Lebanese Civil War and Armenian



Genocide, she uses a sonic palette that draws on her heritage, interest in music as documentary, and background in experimental composition to progressively blend the old with the new. She has received commissions from the Kronos Quartet, Carnegie Hall, Alarm Will Sound, the American Composers Forum/JFund, International Contemporary Ensemble [ICE], Brooklyn Youth Chorus, REDSHIFT, the

Los Angeles New Music Ensemble, the Nouveau Classical Project, Music of Remembrance, Friction Quartet, Experiments in Opera, and Ensemble Oktoplus. Her documentary work was recently presented by the NY Philharmonic Biennial and her residencies include Alarm Will Sound, Roulette/The Jerome Fund, Montalvo Arts, and

Exploring the Metropolis. Kouyoumdjian is pursuing her D.M.A. in Composition at Columbia University, holds an M.A. in Scoring for Film & Multimedia from New York University and a B.A. in Music Composition from UC San Diego. She is a co-founder of the annual new music conference New Music Gathering. (Photo credit: Dominica Eriksen)

**Peter S. Shin** (Kansas City, MO) <http://peter-shin.com/>

Peter S. Shin is a composer whose music navigates issues of national belonging, the co-opting and intermingling of disparate musical vernaculars, and the liminality between the two halves of his second-generation Korean-American identity.

In addition to Peter's upcoming concerts at Carnegie Hall through the "First Music" Commission (*Slant* premiering May 27, 2018), and at the Cabrillo Festival through a commission by John Adams and Deborah O'Grady (*Hypercolor* premiering August 11, 2018), his music has been performed at the Walt Disney Concert Hall through the LA

Phil's "Noon to Midnight" series and Chicago's Symphony Center through the Civic Orchestra New Music Workshop.



Peter is the recent recipient of a 2018 American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Scholarship, a 2018 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, a 2017 Fulbright Research Grant, a 2017 Aspen Music Festival Fellowship, the 2017 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, the 2017/18 New York Youth Symphony

"First Music" Commission, the 2019 Mizzou International Composers Festival with Alarm Will Sound, the 2018 Civic Orchestra of Chicago New Music Workshop with coachings by the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), the 2017/18 Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra International Call for Scores, and the 2017 SCI/ASCAP Commission Competition in the Graduate Division, among others.

A native of Kansas City, Missouri and a graduate of the University of Michigan (B.M.) and the University of Southern California (M.M.), Peter is currently a composer fellow of the Berkeley Symphony and will continue studies at the Yale School of Music (M.M.A.) starting this fall. For more information, please visit: [peter-shin.com](http://peter-shin.com). (Photo credit: Brianna Park)

### **Roomful of Teeth**

Roomful of Teeth is a GRAMMY-winning vocal project dedicated to reimagining the expressive potential of the human voice. Through study with masters from vocal traditions the world over, the eight-voice ensemble continually expands its vocabulary of singing techniques and, through an ongoing commissioning process, forges a new repertoire without borders.

Founded in 2009 by Brad Wells, Roomful of Teeth gathers annually at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA) in North Adams, Massachusetts, where they've studied with some of the world's top performers and teachers in Tuvan throat singing, yodeling, Broadway belting, Inuit



throat singing, Korean *P'ansori*, Georgian singing, Sardinian *cantu a tenore*, Hindustani music, Persian classical singing and Death Metal singing. Commissioned Composers include Rinde Eckert, Fred Hersch, Merrill Garbus (of tUnE-yArDs), William Brittelle, Toby Twining, Missy Mazzoli, Julia Wolfe, Ted Hearne and Ambrose Akinmusire, among many others. (Photo credit: Bonica Ayala of Bonica Ayala Photography)

### About the American Composers Forum

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, ACF provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, ACF fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, musicians, and music patrons.

Founded in 1973 as the Minnesota Composers Forum, the organization has grown from an innovative regional initiative into one of the nation's premier composer service organizations. ACF programming reaches composers and communities in all 50 states and helps composers engage communities with music as a source of inspiration, self-reflection, and delight. This engagement takes the form of groundbreaking composer residencies, designed to engage communities in the creative process and broaden the contexts in which new music is written, performed, and heard. It means innovative approaches to teaching music while nurturing the next generation of composers, performers, and audiences. ACF supports composers' artistic and professional growth through a rich variety of programs and services, including commissions, performances, readings, and fellowships. 2,000 members include composers and performers, presenters and organizations that share ACF's goals, and individuals and institutions with an interest in supporting new music. Members come from both urban and rural areas; they work in virtually every musical genre, including orchestral and chamber music, world music, opera and music theater, jazz and improvisational music, electronic and electro-acoustic music, and sound art.

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American Composers Forum: <https://composersforum.org/>

Roomful of Teeth: <http://www.roomfulofteeth.org/>

Mingjia Chen: <http://www.mingjiamusic.com/>

Mary Kouyoumdjian: <http://www.marykouyoumdjian.com/>

Peter S. Shin: <http://peter-shin.com/>