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Press Contact: William J. Lackey

Vice President of Programs

651.251.2833

wlackey@composersforum.org

2017 McKnight Composer Fellows and Visiting Composers Announced

ST. PAUL, MN – The American Composers Forum (ACF) today announced the recipients of this year's McKnight Fellowships for Composers, funded by The McKnight Foundation. These awards, which include \$25,000 in unrestricted funds for each recipient, acknowledge excellence in the field of music composition. The four fellows were chosen from a pool of 55 applicants. In another McKnight funded program, two artists from outside Minnesota have been selected as the McKnight Visiting Composers. Each receives \$15,000 to spend a minimum of two months in Minnesota pursuing a self-designed community residency project. This year's panelists were composer/performers Fang Man (Irmo, SC), Marilyn Shrude (Bowling Green, OH), and Ken Field (Boston, MA).

The 2017 McKnight Composer Fellows are:

deVon Russell Gray (Saint Paul, MN)

Linda Kachelmeier (Saint Paul, MN)

Andrea Mazzariello (Northfield, MN)

Jake Runestad (Minneapolis, MN)

Two artists from outside Minnesota were selected as Visiting Composers. They are:

Paul Giess (Philadelphia, PA)

Kristin Norderval (New York, NY)

About the McKnight Composer Fellows

deVon Russell Gray (Saint Paul, MN) <https://soundcloud.com/dvrg>

deVon R. Gray may be the world's last cultural enigma. The multi-instrumentalist, classically trained composer is as comfortable writing orchestral and operatic works as he is churning out jazz riffs and hip-hop bravado. His breadth of knowledge saturates various instruments, multiple genres, and limitless styles. And he does it all so effortlessly even he is unaware that he's working. While many creators spend hours perfecting their craft & skills, dVRG, as he is known, envisions the pen and watches the music write itself.

In addition to performing, Gray collaborates with artists (mostly musicians) to produce impactful journeys of socially conscious sound and art. Lending his expertise to several different local, regional, and international performing ensembles he's fortunate to have shared stages and screens with folks including: Heiruspecs, Brother Ali, Chastity Brown, Waayaha Cusub, and many more.



A 2015 recipient of a Cedar Cultural Center commission, dVRG penned a new opus entitled *Fractious Child* (string 4tet); a work which attempts to juxtapose the insecurity and the beauty of life for black people in America.

Redefining versatility, dVRG draws inspiration from an enviable record collection, from Claudio Monteverdi to Shuggie Otis, and communicates through nuanced sounds; a musical polyglot disguised as a lone star...ready to super nova.

Linda Kachelmeier (Saint Paul, MN) <http://www.lindakachelmeier.com/>

Linda Kachelmeier is a composer, conductor, and professional singer based in Saint Paul. Her special passion is for choral music and art song because of their unique capacity to convey emotion through the voice. She is interested in the line and curve of melody, and in rich, rhythmic textures and layers. Her vast experience as a singer and choral conductor has made her a uniquely sensitive composer for voice, writing for children, professionals, and all levels in between. From the individuals' sounds she strives to create a "company of voices," incorporating the distinct qualities of the singers into an orchestral texture. Her influences are varied, from medieval chant and polyphony to gospel and folk. Her music has been described as austere but also luscious and fun; she embraces that seeming contradiction.



Linda has composed more than forty works and has been awarded grants sponsored by the Jerome Foundation, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council, the Minnesota State Arts Board, and two Faith Partners residencies. Her work has been commissioned and performed by The Rose Ensemble, Cantus, and The Singers; by the tiny Village Church in downtown Milwaukee and large All-State Honor choirs in Minnesota, North Dakota, and Nebraska; and by the vibrant community choirs Calliope Women's Chorus and One Voice Mixed Chorus. Her compositions have been performed at the Schubert Club and the Basilica of St. Mary in the Twin Cities, the Getty Art Museum and Carnegie Hall on the coasts, as well as in many school gymnasiums and small churches.

Andrea Mazzariello (Northfield, MN) <http://www.andreamazzariello.com/>

Andrea Mazzariello (b. 1978) is a composer, performer, writer, and teacher. He works at the intersections of text and sound, popular and art music, traditional playing technique and one-man-band-inspired performance physiology.

His concert music has been performed by leading contemporary music ensembles, including Sō Percussion, Mobius Percussion, NOW Ensemble, and Newspeak, and presented at Carnegie Hall,



National Sawdust, and San Francisco's Center for New Music, among many others. SEAMUS and New Amsterdam Records have released recordings of his electronic and chamber music. Active as a performer, he plays a unique and continually evolving instrumental setup, including keyboard, drum set, voice, and electronics. He has contributed essays to Albany Records, the Baryshnikov Arts Center Stories series, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra's Liquid Music blog, and Princeton University

Press' forthcoming *The Pocket Instructor: Writing*. The Operating System will publish his first book, *One More Revolution*, in 2017.

He completed his Ph.D. in Music Composition at Princeton University, writing on the vinyl resurgence and its connection to our ideas of physicality and abstraction in music analysis, and then joined the faculty of the Princeton Writing Program, where he taught several first-year music-centered writing seminars. Currently he teaches composition, music technology, and music fundamentals as Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Carleton College, directs the composition program at the Sō Percussion Summer Institute, and runs One More Revolution Records.

Jake Runestad (Minneapolis, MN) <http://jakerunestad.com/>

Jake Runestad is an award-winning and frequently-performed composer of "highly imaginative" (Baltimore Sun) and "stirring and uplifting" (Miami Herald) musical works. Having collaborated with leading ensembles and organizations around the world, Jake has a versatile and prolific career creating works for orchestra, wind ensemble, chorus, chamber ensembles, and opera. His visceral music and charismatic personality have fostered a busy schedule of commissions, residencies, workshops,



and speaking engagements, enabling him to be one of the youngest full-time, independent composers in the world. He has received commissions and performances from Washington National Opera, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, the Santa Fe Desert Chorale, Seraphic Fire, the Netherlands Radio Choir, the Philippine Madrigal Singers,

VocalEssence, The Singers, Craig Hella Johnson and Conspirare, and many more. Considered a “choral rockstar” by American Public Media, Jake is one of the most frequently performed and commissioned composers of choral music, having “...a particular knack for marrying powerful music to texts that speak to some of the most pressing and moving issues of our time” (Star Tribune). Jake Runestad holds a Master’s degree in composition from the Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University where he studied with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Kevin Puts. He also received a life-changing mentorship from acclaimed composer Libby Larsen. A native of Rockford, IL, Mr. Runestad is currently based in Minneapolis, MN and his music is published by JR Music. Find out more at: JakeRunestad.com

About the McKnight Visiting Composers

Paul Giess (Philadelphia, PA) <http://www.paulgiessmusic.com/>

Paul Giess is a versatile trumpet player, composer, and educator from Philadelphia, PA. Paul earned a Master of Music from Louisiana State University and a Bachelor of Music, cum laude, from James Madison University. Paul has studied with notable musicians including Ralph Alessi, Brian Shaw, Joe Magnarelli, Chris Carillo, Bill Grimes and Jim Kluesner. Paul released his debut jazz album "U Suite U" in February of 2015.

Paul is currently active in multiple ensembles in the Philadelphia area including, Bitters and Rye Jazz Band, The Abstract Truth, Dr. B's Groove and The Sofa Kings. Paul is currently employed by



The Center for Creative Works in Wynnewood where he runs a music program for adults with disabilities. Paul also teaches at the Meridee Winter's School of Music and Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz. At the Clef Club Paul also serves as an Education Consultant to the Artistic Director, Lovett Hines. In January of 2015 Paul served as the musical director for an original theater work, “AMERICANA”, performed in New Orleans. In December of 2015 Paul was the trumpet soloist in the Barrymore award winning performance of

the musical, Black Nativity, which produced by Theater Horizon in Norristown. Paul is also active with Outside Sound, a mixed-media project that takes artwork created by adults with developmental disabilities and sets it to original music. Paul is also excited to announce that his composition, "Prayer for Mimi", will be included in the Philadelphia Real Book, which will be published in the spring of 2017.

Paul Giess will collaborate with a program, [Midwest Special Services](#), to produce a concert featuring the artists who attend their program. Paul will work with Midwest Special Services' day program for two months engaging directly with their artists to develop their musical abilities and to prepare them for the final performance. With his experience making music with people with disabilities, Paul believes that he will be able to empower this community's voice through music making.

This project will serve artists from MSS who have been selected based on their expressed interest in music. MSS serves individuals with a variety of intellectual and physical disabilities ranging in age from 21 to 80 years old with varying levels of experience with music.

Kristin Norderval (New York, NY) <http://kristinnorderval.org/>

Kristin Norderval is a composer and singer who has specialized in developing new works for voice, cross-disciplinary work, and works using interactive technology. Her first full-length opera - *The Trials of Patricia Isasa* for 6 soloists, SATB choir, 7 instrumentalists and electronics - was commissioned by Artxchange (Oslo) and premiered at the Monument National Theater in Montreal in May, 2016, in a Chants Libres production with Norderval singing one of the lead roles. *The Trials of Patricia Isasa* was awarded Quebec's OPUS prize in two categories: Best production in Montreal in 2016, and Best contemporary music production in 2016.

Other commissions have included works for the Ultima Festival (Oslo), Den Anden Opera (Copenhagen), jill sigman/thinkdance (New York) and the Parthenia viol consort (New York). Norderval's credits as a soprano soloist include performances with the Oslo Sinfonietta, the Philip Glass Ensemble, Netherlands Dance Theater, and the San Francisco Symphony.

A 2005 recipient of the Henry Cowell Award from the American Music Center, and two-time recipient of the Norwegian Artist's Stipend, Kristin Norderval has also received support from the Jerome Foundation, Meet the Composer, Harvestworks, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Her compositions are featured on Deep Listening, Koch International, Everglade Records, and Losen Records. Her solo CD - *Aural Histories (post-ambient arias for voice and electronics)* - was listed by The New Yorker's classical music critic Alex Ross as one of "Ten Notable Classical Music Recordings of 2012".



More information on Kristin Norderval can be found at <http://kristinnorderval.org>

Kristin Norderval will work in Pelican Rapids and St. Cloud with groups of young women aged 15-25, from diverse ethnic backgrounds (primarily Somali, Hispanic and Scandinavian background) for a series of workshops in vocal improvisation, sound recording, text generation and collaborative composition that would help them articulate hopes and dreams for themselves and their communities. The workshops will introduce participants to various improvisation techniques, as well as to some basics of sound-art and electronic music, including recording ambient sound and spoken word, and using simple lo-tech audio processing and playback to

improvise with both text and found sounds. The workshops would include elements of the practices of Deep Listening as developed by Pauline Oliveros, which Kristin has studied and is certified to teach, and they would lead to the creation of text-based scores that the young women could perform at the end of the workshops. A sound installation might also be one of the end results, depending on the wishes of the participants and the progress of the workshops.

About the McKnight Artist Fellowship Programs

Founded on the belief that Minnesota thrives when its artists thrive, The McKnight Foundation's arts program is one of the oldest and largest of its kind in the country. Support for individual working Minnesota artists has been a cornerstone of the program since it began in 1981. The McKnight Artist Fellowships Program provides annual, unrestricted cash awards to outstanding mid-career Minnesota artists in 10 different creative disciplines. Program partner organizations administer the fellowships and structure them to respond to the unique challenges of different disciplines. Currently the foundation contributes about \$1.7 million per year to its statewide fellowships.

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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