

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 22, 2019
Contact: Laura Krider, Director of Education
lkriders@composersforum.org

AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE NEXTNOTES® HIGH SCHOOL COMPOSITION AWARDS

ST. PAUL, MN (April 22, 2019) - The American Composers Forum (ACF) is thrilled to announce the winners of the fifth annual *NextNotes® High School Composition Awards*. *NextNotes* is a national program designed to nurture the next generation of creative voices in music composition inclusive of all musical styles. Awards encourage and recognize the creative and talented composers with mentorship, scholarship funds, and a performance of their work by professional musicians.

The following outstanding 2019 *NextNotes* winners were selected for their compositional skills and strong creative voices (more on each winner below):

- **Olivia Bennett** (Nixa, MO): *Cryptic* for saxophone quartet
- **Tyson Davis** (Raleigh, NC): *String Quartet No. 1*
- **Janelle Finton** (Wheeling, IL): *Right Here* for vocal jazz sextet
- **Maya Miro Johnson** (Salt Lake City, UT): *all that is solid* for piano, oboe, horn, violin, viola, and tap dancer
- **Charlie Meenaghan** (Los Angeles, CA): *fantasia on rain* for flute/piccolo, viola, and percussion
- **Chaoran Zhang** (Interlochen, MI): *Boshi's Rhapsody* for flute, guitar, violins, viola, and cello

"All of us at the American Composers Forum are thrilled to discover and nurture talented composers of our next generation through this program," said Vanessa Rose, ACF President and CEO. "Through mentorship, workshops, and performances by professional musicians, each *NextNotes* composer has a unique opportunity to develop their voices, make new connections, and hear their music come to life."

The distinguished panel of composers who evaluated the **189 submissions from 35 states** were Betsey Biggs, Craig Harris, Paula Matthusen, Linda May Han Oh, and Carl Schimmel. The panel named 6 winners along with finalists, alternates, and honorable mentions. After listening to all of the entries, the *NextNotes* jury commented, "We were blown away by the diversity, creativity, and skill present in the submissions, and encourage young composers to keep

broadening their horizons and learning about the styles in which they've chosen to express themselves! Take risks and keep developing your voice."

The *NextNotes* winners will travel to Minneapolis, Minnesota in June for mentorship with leading professional composers [Carol Barnett](#), [Joshua Clausen](#), and [PaviElle French](#), as well as rehearsals and performance of their winning works by professional musicians. The culminating ***NextNotes Showcase Concert*** will take place on **June 22nd at 7:30pm** at the Southern Theater (1420 S Washington Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55454.) The showcase is free and open to the public.

As a part of the fifth anniversary of *NextNotes*, ACF has invited all alumnae winners to travel to Minneapolis-St. Paul for the June weekend. Participating composers will reconnect, get to know the new season's winners, and celebrate the program's impact with the larger community at the post-Showcase Concert reception. One past winner expressed, "... I feel like *NextNotes* was the first big event that introduced me to this community of musicians, of contemporary music and young composers. I've been a lot more integrated and involved since then but I couldn't have asked for a better segue in – the positive experiences I had, and the great friendships I made there, made me feel so much more excited and comfortable going forward into music." Alum composers will also spend a day at ACF's headquarters with JUNO award-winning composer [Vivian Fung](#) to workshop and share what they have created since their time with *NextNotes*.

2020 *NextNotes High School Composition Awards* applications will be accepted starting on July 22, 2019.

Students in grades 9-12 are invited to apply with a single composition in any genre or style by the deadline of January 6, 2020 for the sixth year of the *NextNotes High School Composition Awards*. Interested high school composers are encouraged to visit the website www.NextNotes.org and connect via [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).

NextNotes applications are submitted electronically through an online process. Six composers will be chosen to receive a scholarship along with travel to Minneapolis-St. Paul for a two-day workshop with professional composer mentors and professional musicians in June 2020. The workshop will conclude with an awards ceremony and culminating concert of the winning works. All applicants receive a free one-year American Composers Forum student membership and a free one-year subscription to [Noteflight Premium](#).

The *NextNotes High School Composition Awards* are generously supported by The Augustine Foundation, the Rosemary and David Good Family Foundation, The Thelma Hunter Fund, the Dr. Fred Noah Gordon Charitable Fund of The Minneapolis Foundation, and other generous individuals. In-kind support is provided by program Partners MakeMusic, Inc and Noteflight.

For more information, please visit www.composersforum.org, www.NextNotes.org, [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or email Laura Krider, Director of Education and Community Partnerships, at lkriders@composersforum.org.



The **American Composers Forum** (ACF) enriches lives by nurturing the creative spirit of composers 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.

#

About the NextNotes High School Composition Awards Winners

Olivia Bennett (Nixa, MO): *Cryptic* for saxophone quartet



Olivia Bennett (b. 2002) is a composer, pianist and cellist from Springfield, Missouri. She currently studies composition with Dr. Carlyle Sharpe. Her work has been performed by various ensembles, including the Columbia Civic Orchestra, Mizzou String Quartet, Springfield Youth Symphony and the Interlochen Philharmonic. Recent accomplishments include: 1st place in the 2016 COMP competition, 2nd place in the 2017, 2018 & 2019 COMP competitions at the University of Missouri, winner of the 2017 and 2019 Missouri Composers Orchestra Project, 1st place in state and region in the 2017, 2018 & 2019 National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC) composition competition, 2nd place nationally in the 2018 NFMC composition competition, winner of the SYS Composition Contest, named an Emerging Composer in the 2018 Tribeca New Music Young Composer Competition in New York and has been commissioned to write for various string ensembles. In addition, Olivia plays cello in the Springfield Youth Symphony and is a piano accompanist.

Her long-term goals are to achieve a doctorate in music composition and teach at a university.

Tyson Davis (Raleigh, NC): *String Quartet No. 1*

Tyson Davis, who studies with Lawrence Dillon, is a senior from Raleigh. His is one of two apprentice composers chosen for NYO-USA 2019. He has the opportunity to write a short piece for large orchestra, which will be performed by the NYO-USA orchestra. He will participate in rehearsals of his piece with NYO-USA and its conducting staff and will explore approaches to composition with award-winning contemporary composer Sean Shepherd and guest faculty. In November 2018, Davis' prizewinning composition "Microludes" for chamber orchestra premiered in New York at the MATA (Music at the Anthology) Junior Festival, a global mentoring program for pre-college-age composers.



While at UNCSA, he has composed music for Grammy Award-winning chamber ensemble Eighth Blackbird, the internationally acclaimed Attacca String Quartet, UNCSA Cantata Singers and the UNCSA Symphony Orchestra.

Davis' works for chorus and percussion ensemble have premiered at Interlochen Summer Music Camp, where he earned the Fine Arts Award. He has also attended Curtis Institute's Summerfest, where he worked with David Ludwig and Jennifer Higdon.

Janelle Finton (Wheeling, IL): *Right Here* for vocal jazz sextet



Janelle Finton is a senior at Buffalo Grove High School in Illinois. Janelle's first instrument was piano, and she started trumpet in 5th grade. She also is a vocalist. Janelle has enjoyed being in her school's bands, orchestras, choirs, and theater. She has performed in the ILMEA honors all-state festivals for concert band sophomore year, jazz band junior year, and orchestra senior year. This year, she won the arrangement category in the ILMEA state composition contest. Janelle was

selected for the NAFME All-National Honors Concert Band junior year, and Jazz Band senior year. Janelle was selected for NYOJazz 2018, where she performed with the band at Carnegie Hall and toured Europe under direction of trumpet player Sean Jones, with guest soloist, vocalist Dianne Reeves. She is returning for NYOJazz 2019's Asia tour with guest soloist, vocalist Kurt Elling. Through these humbling experiences, Janelle has learned that her purpose is sharing joy with others through music. She is so thankful to her family, friends, and teachers for inspiring her to pursue music as a career.

Maya Miro Johnson (Salt Lake City, UT): *all that is solid* for piano, oboe, horn, violin, viola, and tap dancer

Maya Miro Johnson (b. 2001) is an emerging conductor-composer who made her professional debut in February 2019 with a commission from The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and Tito Muñoz. Maya began conducting studies with Rei Hotoda at age 15 and shortly thereafter was selected as Apprentice Conductor, NYO-USA 2017. She was Luna Composition Lab's 2017/18 Griselda Villanueva Fellow and attended the 2018 Boston University Tanglewood Institute as an ASCAP Scholar. She recently conducted premieres of her own works at National Sawdust, Roulette, and UCLA, and is a 2019 National Merit Scholarship Corporation Finalist and a 2019 YoungArts Winner. This summer will include premieres at the Fresh Inc, soundSCAPE, and Cabrillo Festivals, as well as a commission from bassoonist Brad Balliett.



Maya currently studies conducting with Conner Gray Covington, composition with Devin Maxwell, and violin with Yuki MacQueen. Maya is grateful to all her mentors, including Marin Alsop, Nico Muhly, Andrew Norman, Kristin Kuster, Simon Holt, and Missy Mazzoli. In her ever-dwindling spare time, Maya also enjoys film noir, poetry, philosophy, and dance. mayamirojohnson.com

Charlie Meenaghan (Los Angeles, CA): *fantasia on rain* for flute/piccolo, viola, and percussion



Charlie Meenaghan (b. 2001) is a composer and a senior at Harvard-Westlake School in Los Angeles whose work seeks to synthesize, recontextualize, and juxtapose diverse musical aesthetics and techniques in hybrid soundscapes. Charlie has studied composition for two years, primarily under the tutelage of Ian Krouse at UCLA and Andrew Norman through the LA Phil Composer Fellowship Program. Charlie has written works for ensembles such as the LA Philharmonic, Houston Symphony, Kaleidescope Chamber Orchestra, Face the Music, Tanglewood Young Artists' Orchestra, Lyris Quartet, and the Fromme Players, and has received top honors from competitions including ASCAP Morton Gould (Bergen Scholarship), Avalon International, NFMC Junior Composers, and National YoungArts. Recent projects include a film score written under the tutelage of Michael Giacchino for the LA Phil's 'Symphonies for Schools' concert series, as well as a string quartet with electronics for the Luna Composition Lab. Charlie will matriculate at the Columbia-Juilliard Program in the fall of 2019 and is honored to be a NextNotes fellow.

Chaoran Zhang (Interlochen, MI): Boshi's Rhapsody for flute, guitar, violins, viola, and cello

Chaoran Zhang, 15, is a sophomore at Interlochen Arts Academy. He started to play drum set at age of four, and piano at age of five. In 6th grade, he was introduced to orchestral percussion and had a strong interest in orchestral music. Meanwhile, he came up with the idea of writing his own music, and started doodling random notes on sheet papers. He has attended summer workshop at San Francisco Conservatory of Music and his work was being performed by professional players from SF Philharmonic. He is into film music and his music is mostly influenced by Hans Zimmer's movie scores. He is currently studying jazz piano with Bill Sears and plans to playing in Interlochen jazz ensemble for next year.



NextNotes High School Composition Awards Finalist

Adrian Chabla (Long Island City, NY)

NextNotes High School Composition Awards Alternates

Leo Major (Los Angeles, CA)

Benjamin Beckman (Los Angeles, CA)

NextNotes High School Composition Awards Honorable Mentions

Grant Bishko (Atlanta, GA)

Caroline Bragg (Brookline, MA)

Ethan Chaves (Charlton, MA)

David Corbett (Davis, CA)

Venus Cruz (Henderson, NV)

Caleb Dehn (Orange, CA)

Helen Feng (Deerfield, MA)

Joshua Guo (Southborough, MA)

Luke Hoang (Gilbert, AZ)

Louis Josephson (West Windsor, NJ)

Marina Lee (Plainsboro, NJ)

Andrew Liu (Ellicott City, MD)

Maxwell Lu (Dayton, MD)

Sean MacCarthy-Grant (Seattle, WA)
Akira Nair (Shoreline, WA)
Shuto Nakagawa (Interlochen, MI)
Kedhar Narayan (New Providence, NJ)
Sebastian Pallais-Aks (Seattle, WA)
Sam Parnin (Fort Wayne, IN)
Shreya Patibanda (Cupertino, CA)
Jacob Pierce (Yardley, PA)
Katherine Pieschala (Altedena, CA)
Jonathan Rickert (Bloomington, IN)
Keegan Ryan (Elko New Market, MN)
Emily Singleton (Gainesville, FL)
Benjamin Taylor (Taylorsville, UT)
Gideon and Hank Temple (Morgantown, WV)
Anson Tong (Saratoga, CA)
Suhas Vittal (Scottsdale, AZ)
Leslie Wilburn (Denver, CO)