



AMERICAN  
COMPOSERS  
FORUM

*publisher of*



American Composers Forum | 75 West 5th Street, Suite 522 | Saint Paul MN 55102  
651-251-2840 | Fax: 651-291-7978 | [www.composersforum.org](http://www.composersforum.org)

## Composer Jen Shyu Named Composer-in-Residence to Write New Piece for William Alexander Middle School Choir

November 4, 2019  
For Immediate Release

**For more information, contact:**

Laura Krider, American Composers Forum, 651-251-2840, [lkriders@composersforum.org](mailto:lkriders@composersforum.org)

**(St. Paul, MN) American Composers Forum announced today that composer Jen Shyu has been selected as the 2019-2020 *ChoralQuest*® composer. [Shyu](#) will work with choir director Mimi Broderick at [William Alexander Middle School](#) MS 51 in Brooklyn, NY in a year-long residency beginning November 1 and culminating in performances on May 13, 15, and 16, 2020. MS 51 was selected to host the residency due to its enthusiastic leadership and clear integration into the existing music program.**

Shyu expressed, “I’m absolutely thrilled to be working with the students at M.S. 51 William Alexander. As the human voice has been my main instrument and obsession for decades, taking me across oceans and allowing me to dive into different vocal traditions and languages, it may seem strange that this is my first time composing for choir. But the universe gives you gifts at just the right time. My life was changed by first singing in choir in middle school, after literally being mute from shyness until then, so I can’t wait to work with these students and inspire them to create



MS 51 8<sup>TH</sup> Grade Chorus Members with Mx. Broderick

and use their voices for good throughout their whole lives, wherever they venture into the world.”

*ChoralQuest* is a music series that commissions new works for middle-level choirs by world-class composers. The series is designed to breathe new life into the available repertoire for choral students in middle school and junior high, introduce students to the composition process, and give commissioned composers the unique opportunity and challenge of writing new works for young, changing voices.

Based on the success of the American Composers Forum’s twenty-year *BandQuest*® program, *ChoralQuest* enables creative artists to partner with a middle school in their community. Artists visit rehearsals and engage with the students while composing a piece specifically for the choir. These pieces are published by ACF and are distributed exclusively by the Hal Leonard Corporation. The experience is fully funded: composers receive commission fees and it is provided free of cost to the school.

Students can expect fulfilling experiences working with Shyu. She will visit the school several times over the next months, giving students the opportunity to interact with a living composer as she writes a new piece specifically for a choir at the school. Broderick, MS 51’s Choir Director, reflects on the opportunity saying, "I am incredibly honored to be chosen for this composition collaboration with Jen Shyu! I have recently started arranging songs for my choirs, and I am very excited to get to work with Jen on a new song composed specifically for my 8th grade. I have performed in pieces composed for the choir I sing with, however I have never done this as a director/conductor and I can't wait to see where this goes!"

The premiere performance will take place at MS 51 on May 13, 2019. Visit [choralquest.org](http://choralquest.org) for more details as the date approaches.



Photo by Steven Schreiber

#### **ABOUT JEN SHYU**

Guggenheim Fellow, USA Fellow, Doris Duke Artist, Fulbright scholar, multilingual vocalist-composer-instrumentalist-dancer [JEN SHYU](#) is “one of the most creative vocalists in contemporary improvised music” (The Nation). Born in Peoria, Illinois, to Taiwanese and East Timorese immigrants, she was the first female and vocalist as bandleader on Pi Recordings, now having produced seven albums. A Stanford University graduate, she speaks 10 languages and has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, BAM, Metropolitan

Museum of Art, etc. Her acclaimed album Song of Silver Geese (Pi 2017) was among NY Times' "Best Albums of 2017." She'll premiere her next solo ZERO GRASSES October 30, 2019, at National Sawdust on John Zorn's Commissioning Series. She's touring both Zero Grasses and her previous solo work Nine Doors—one of NY Times' "5 Standout Shows" (2018)—on her 50-state +DC tour of creativity workshops in rural towns across America, promoting cross cultural / generational exchange. Jen Shyu is a Steinway Artist.

### **ABOUT AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM**



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.

---

For more information, please visit [www.ChoralQuest.org](http://www.ChoralQuest.org) or [www.ComposersForum.org](http://www.ComposersForum.org).

#####