



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 20, 2020**  
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## **AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF THE NEXTNOTES® HIGH SCHOOL MUSIC CREATOR AWARDS**

ST. PAUL, MN (April 20, 2020) - The American Composers Forum (ACF) is thrilled to announce the winners of the sixth annual *NextNotes® High School Music Creator Awards*. *NextNotes* is a national program designed to nurture the next generation of creative voices in music inclusive of all styles. The talented young artists convene as a cohort and receive mentorship, scholarship funds, and recognition through a national awards ceremony.

The following outstanding 2020 *NextNotes* winners were selected for their skill, originality, potential, and strong creative voices (more on each winner below):

- **KiMani Bridges** (Louisville, KY): *Gray* for flute quintet
- **Helen Feng** (Deerfield, MA): *Soaring to the Past: Jin Se* for voice and piano
- **Gene Angelo Nual** (Mesquite, TX): *Calle de los Trinos* for piano quintet
- **Rohan Srinivasan** (Portland, OR): *A Dialogue* for cello and piano
- **Jasper Talwani** (Los Angeles, CA): *Eschatology* for drum set, double bass, piano, guitar, trumpet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, and violin
- **Charlotte Weinstein** (Brooklyn, NY): *Disequilibrium* for string quartet

"ACF is proud to recognize and support our newest generation of creators through this program," shared Vanessa Rose, President & CEO. "This opportunity to discover the musical ideas being generated by young people today provides all of us great hope and inspiration at this strange time in the world. We are grateful we can adapt the format and continue the program for this year's awardees."

The distinguished panel of composers who evaluated the **143 submissions from 33 states** were Ruby Fulton, Adam Levy, Jessica Mays, Daniel Sonenberg, and Matthew Evan Taylor. The panel named 6 winners along with finalists, alternates, and honorable mentions. After spending time with all the entries, the *NextNotes* panel commented, "We were completely blown away and flabbergasted by the level of submissions showcased in *NextNotes* 2020—it was a veritable embarrassment of riches! We left genuinely excited and inspired at the level of creativity, ambition, and musical diversity represented by these emerging composers. There is hope for the state of new music in the hands of this generation of American creators."

Throughout May and June, the *NextNotes* creators will participate in a robust series of virtual conversations, workshops, and lessons with mentors [Marcos Balter](#), [Mary Ellen Childs](#), and [Joseph Horton](#). Balter, Childs, and Horton provide a breadth and depth of expertise in many areas of music creation, and will bring the cohort together to explore topics ranging from concept and how to find your music's purpose, realizing your work with performers, production and presentation, life as a creator, giving and receiving feedback, to speaking about your music. The *NextNotes* will culminate in a live-streamed awards ceremony emceed by public radio and podcast creator of *Trilloquy* Garrett McQueen. The ceremony will take place on Saturday, June 27, 2020 at 7:30pm CST, and is free and accessible to all.

Revising *NextNotes* as a fully virtual experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic has provided a great opportunity to engage with the creative community in the digital space. The program's mentors and *NextNotes* staff will optimize every tool and every conversation to ensure a rich experience for the winners by providing opportunities to experiment and apply learnings between mentorship and cohort sessions, and the ability to work in smaller and larger group settings without time constraints. Along with the workshops, each winner will receive a scholarship of \$1000 to be used for music creation studies, \$500 in "bring it home" funds to share their accomplishment with their hometown, a complimentary [Finale](#) subscription for continued creation and experimentation, the opportunity to nominate an influential music educator in their life for recognition and a [SmartMusic](#) subscription, and access to a wealth of resources and opportunities via the ACF community.

The *NextNotes High School Composition Awards* are generously supported by The Augustine Foundation, the Rosemary and David Good Family Foundation, The Thelma Hunter Fund, Pearl and Bob Bergad, 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](http://www.composersforum.org), [www.NextNotes.org](http://www.NextNotes.org), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), or email Laura Krider, Director of Education and Community Partnerships, at [lkriders@composersforum.org](mailto: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](http://www.composersforum.org) for more information.

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### **About the NextNotes High School Music Creator Awards Winners**

**KiMani Bridges** (Louisville, KY): *Gray* for flute quintet



KiMani Bridges (b.2002), a senior at duPont Manual Magnet High School/Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville, Kentucky, is a flutist and a composer. She has been playing the flute since she was 11 and just recently started composing in 11th grade. She partakes in her school's Symphonic Band, Chamber Ensemble, and Composition class. She has received numerous distinguished ratings for flute in KMEA Solo and Ensemble, has performed at Walt Disney World and the Field Museum, and has participated in multiple summer music camps. She has had her pieces performed at the University of Louisville, in her school's New Works Festival, was a participant in the Loretto Project's Pathways Initiative

Program, and is a Luna Composition Lab Fellow of 2019-20. KiMani will be attending the Jacobs School of Music in the fall of 2020.

**Helen Feng** (Deerfield, MA): *Soaring to the Past: Jin Se* for voice and piano

Helen Feng (age 18) is a composer, pianist and vocalist currently attending Deerfield Academy. She found interest in composition around four years ago, and was since prompted to explore ways in which music can intermingle with her passions for literature, philosophy, and socio-cultural studies. Studying performance inspires her to reflect on the evolving roles of 21st-century composer-performers, amid a growing emphasis on new media, interpersonal music-making, improvisation, interdisciplinary studies and cultural competency in an interconnected world. Recently, Helen attended the Walden School in Dublin, NH and gave a TEDx talk exploring cultural appropriation through music—how artists can mindfully narrate stories beyond the personal realm to advance constructive cultural dialogue.



**Gene Angelo Nugal** (Mesquite, TX): *Calle de los Trinos* for piano quintet



Gene Angelo Nugal (b.2003) is an emerging composer and multi-instrumentalist from Dallas, Texas. His background in classical strings and inspiration from newer classical music influences his writing style as he strives to push the envelope on string technique and sound. He pours emotion and passion into each piece, sometimes weaving multiple genres and styles into colorful experiences. A junior attending Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, Gene has studied piano, cello, and viola and plans to further his musical horizon and learn the mariachi harp and vocal jazz in his senior year. He has worked with composers Dr. James Eakin, Dr. Donia Jarrar, and Mr. John Hardy. He currently studies composition under composer Jasmine Barnes, performs in his school's Varsity Strings, Symphony, and Opera Orchestras, directed by Dr. Michael Jacko, and plays cello in his

independent quartet, Four for Strings. Gene is highly honored to receive this award as his first accolade in Music Composition, and he's thankful for his supportive family and mentors that have guided him throughout.

**Rohan Srinivasan** (Portland, OR): *A Dialogue* for cello and piano

Rohan Srinivasan is a junior at Sunset High School in Portland, Oregon. He studies composition with Dr. Ryan Francis. Rohan started out playing cello, and now drums in his school's jazz band. Composing keeps him connected to contemporary classical music, but he is inspired by many improviser-composers as well. He has participated in the Portland Jazz Composers Ensemble's Grasshoppers program, and, for the last three years, been mentored by Jeff Payne and Fear No Music in their Young Composers Project. Through this amazing experience, he has participated in a masterclass with Gabriella Smith. He was a winner in the Penn State 2019 Young Composers Contest and was accepted into the Young Artists Composition Program at BUTI for the 2020 season. Rohan is also really grateful to have gotten the opportunity to compose an orchestral piece -- scheduled to premier in June -- for the Metropolitan Youth Symphony. In his free time Rohan likes to procrastinate on homework, go on hikes, and play games with friends until questionably late hours.



**Jasper Talwani** (Los Angeles, CA): *Eschatology* for drum set, double bass, piano, guitar, trumpet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, and violin



Jasper Talwani is a jazz composer, arranger, bassist and amateur linguist from Los Angeles, California. His compositions and arrangements have been premiered by the Colburn Monday Night Band, Thursday Night Band, and Big Band, led by Lee Secard. His first instrument was the double bass, which he began learning in 6th grade under the tutelage of Dr. David Young.. Over the course of the years, he took an interest in music theory, choral singing, and jazz. He will be spending his quarantine writing more music, working on a linguistics project, and cooking elaborate dishes of macaroni and cheese. He has been accepted to UC Berkeley as a linguistics major and is excited to attend in the fall.

**Charlotte Weinstein** (Brooklyn, NY): *Disequilibrium* for string quartet

Charlotte lives in Brooklyn and goes to school in Queens, New York, where she is a freshman at Bard High School Early College Queens. She plays cello with her school orchestra and with the Kaufman Music Center's Face the Music Philharmonic, a youth orchestra that exclusively plays work of living composers. A lot of her influences and ideas for composing come from contemporary composers whose work she played there. She has also played piano, her first instrument, and even played trombone for a year with Visionary Youth Orchestra led by William Parker, Melanie Dyer, and Kyoko Kitamura, among others. She learned from William Parker that, during improvisation, no note is random, and so she thinks that sometimes even the concepts that don't emerge in composing deliberately are worth expression. Her first composing classes were with Face the Music and the American Composers Orchestra. She thinks that the world she is currently living in should be reflected in the music we hear now.



### ***NextNotes High School Music Creator Awards Alternates***

Caroline Bragg (Brookline, MA)

Leo Major (Los Angeles, CA)

Sam Tucker-Smith (Williamstown, MA)

## ***NextNotes High School Music Creator Awards Honorable Mentions***

Melvin Askie (Sicklerville, NJ)  
Nicole Balsirow (Jackson, NJ)  
Gabriel Brady (Alexandria, VA)  
Andre Casiano (Redmond, WA)  
Anisha Chatterjee (San Jose, CA)  
Madeline Cheng (Los Altos, CA)  
Athena Chuang (Brooklyn, NY)  
Benjamin Dickey (Seattle, WA)  
Ethan Fisher-Chaves (Charlton, MA)  
Yoni Fogelman (Burbank, CA)  
Noah Godard (Moorpark, CA)  
Abigail Harris (Kew Gardens, NY)  
Yusei Hata (New York, NY)  
Hee Jae Hwang (Traverse City, MI)  
Breezy Love (Winnetka, IL)  
William Jae (Los Angeles, CA)  
Nate Jenkins-Goetz (New York, NY)  
Ella Kaale (League City, TX)  
Rafael Karpowitz (Hudson, NY)  
Varun Karry (Edison, NJ)  
Leona Liu (Chappaqua, NY)  
Maxwell Lu (Dayton, MD)  
Zachary Luginbill (Eau Claire, WI)  
Krishan Rai (Williamstown, MA)  
Ethan Resnik (Bedford, NY)  
Marco Roberts (Bellevue, WA)  
Emily Singleton (Gainesville, FL)  
Misha Swersey (New York, NY)  
Noah Tan (Stevensville, MI)  
Christina Xiao (Lexington, MA)