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2018 Composers Now Festival

Opening Event

Hosted by Tania León, Artistic Director

Tuesday, January 30, 2018

7:30 pm

The Jazz Gallery  
New York City

2018 Composers Now Visionary Awards honoring  
Cecille Wasserman and Frank J. Oteri



## 2018 Composers Now Visionary Awardees



**Cecille Wasserman, Cece**, is President of the Cheswaty Foundation, a small family foundation whose mission is to support music. Grants focus on contemporary music, commissions and community engagement projects. Among the institutions receiving support for these projects are Carnegie Hall; WNYC; Miller Theatre at Columbia University; Sphinx; Make Music New York, Face the Music and The Jazz Gallery. Other examples include funding drumming circles for those in prison; CATA, for music therapy; ETHEL, and most recently, *Cubanacan*, an opera in Havana, Cuba. Cheswaty also commissions and underwrites concerts featuring women composers.

For many years, Cece worked with various cultural institutions in NYC, such as American Symphony Orchestra, Carnegie Hall, NYC Board of Education. Present board memberships include Composers Now, Concert Artist Guild, Miller Theatre, Columbia University.



**Frank J. Oteri** (b. 1964) is a composer based in New York City. He is also a music journalist, lecturer, and new music advocate. Oteri's musical works have been performed in venues from Carnegie's Weill Recital Hall to the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art. He was initially interested in composing for musical theatre, and an original musical of his was staged for a week at New York's Carter Hotel Theater in 1980 while he was still a student at The High School of Music & Art, which later merged with the High School of Performing Arts as the Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. He also had a brief appearance in the Alan Parker directed motion picture *Fame* and scored two children's operas for the Metropolitan Opera Guild's In School project. As an undergrad at Columbia University (1981–1985), he grew more interested in minimalism, microtonality, and non-western music, and he completed a master's degree in Ethnomusicology at Columbia in 1990. Oteri has been the editor of *NewMusicBox* since its inception in 1999. He has served as the MC for the ASCAP *Thru The Walls* showcase in New York City as well as Meet The Composer's *The Works* marathon in Minneapolis in 2002. Since 2000, he has additionally curated his own series, *21st Century Schizoid Music*, at the Cornelia Street Cafe in Manhattan's Greenwich Village on the 4th Monday of every month (except July and August). In 2007, Oteri was the recipient of the ASCAP Victor Herbert Award.

## PROGRAM

*Welcome and Presentation of the 2018 Composers Now Visionary Awards*

**Miya Masaoka:** *Hiko-Hiko River Talk* (2018)

Miya Masaoka, performer (as shamanistic character Hiko-Hiko) with percussion dress, instruments, voice, and fixed media

**Sofia Belimova:** *Hallucinations* (2016)

*Sophia Steger, violin, a Face the Music artist*  
*Sofia Belimova, piano, a Face the Music/Luna Composition Lab artist*

**Emma O'Halloran:** *Charm and Strange* (2010)

*Seuss Fu-Rubin, bass clarinet, a Face the Music artist*

**Christopher Trapani:** *The Silence of a Falling Star Lights Up a Purple Sky* (2005)

*Marilyn Nonken, piano*

**Žibuoklė Martinaitytė & Ami Yamasaki:** *Voices of the Enchanted Forest* (2018)

Concept: Ami Yamasaki & Žibuoklė Martinaitytė  
Music: Žibuoklė Martinaitytė  
Video and performance: Ami Yamasaki

**Felix Jarrar:** *Scene IV from The Fall of the House of Usher* (2014)

*Danielle Bounaiuto, soprano – Lady Madeline*  
*Ravenna Lipchik, violin*  
*Ezgi İçelloğlu, viola*  
*Felix Jarrar, piano/director*  
*Brittany Goodwin, House of Usher Maid/director*  
*Petra Jarrar, House of Usher Maid/assistant director*

**Rufus Reid:** *Remembrance* (2018, work in progress)

*Rufus Reid, bass*  
*Roberta Piket, piano*

## Notes on the Program

### **Hallucinations**

Sofia Belimova

This piece is a reflection of my non-musical passions: psychology and neuroscience. In this short composition, I explore the phenomenon of the hallucination; a psychological experience in which an individual undergoes sensations and visions that are only visible to them, which makes it a mysterious and fascinating abnormality of the brain. I have never had a hallucination and wanted to explore the haunting nature of hallucinations through music. Confusion is central to the composition. I create this sensation through patchy texture (with the recurrence of certain motifs), obscure modal landscape, and unpredictability of the melodic world of the piece. Some sections of the piece are harsh and disturbing; others are melancholy and delicate. In this way, I attempt to capture the neurotic quality of the human mind and the isolating experience of a hallucination.

### **Charm and Strange**

Emma O'Halloran

*Charm and Strange* was written back in 2010 for a friend in Dublin, Ireland. I love collaborating with performers because I get to write for their unique strengths, and with this piece I created a framework for any friend to improvise, and really explore all the timbral possibilities of the bass clarinet. *Charm and Strange* is a reference to quarks or elementary particles, and the musical material is built from tiny cells which become the fundamental matter of the entire piece.

### **The Silence of a Falling Star Lights Up a Purple Sky**

Christopher Trapani

The human eye can only distinguish color up to a certain frequency of the spectrum, but smaller wavelengths register as distinct shades with other animals. Flowers that appear plain white to us attract bees in differentiated gradients of ultraviolet.

On New Year's Day, 1953, Hank Williams was found dead, outstretched on the back seat of a Cadillac, yet three of his unreleased singles reached the top of the country charts during the year. *The Silence of a Falling Star Lights Up a Purple Sky* is a piece about drawing arbitrary borderlines along a continuum. The piece scans the spectrum from bottom up, gathering intensity as it progresses. A sort of seven-chord passacaglia slowly coalesces, snowballing in momentum until it shoots past the final point of perceptibility.

### **Voices of the Enchanted Forest**

Žibuoklė Martinaitytė & Ami Yamasaki

This collaborative project started in the autumn of 2017 during our residency at the Pocantico Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, an estate near New York City. Composers Now in partnership with the Asian Cultural Council has a wonderful residency program where they bring together artists from different cultural backgrounds and disciplines and give them the opportunity to collaborate.

The concept of *The Enchanted Forest* came up naturally when sharing stories from our cultural heritage and childhood. Many fairytales in Japan as well as in Lithuania and more generally in Europe, take place in some enchanted forest where lots of things can happen - either people become trees or trees become people, sometimes trees can protect or frighten us. A forest represents a place of transformation and unexpected adventure; it is a threshold to another dimension. A forest is also a greater metaphor for nature, which needs our care especially in modern times.

### **The Fall of the House of Usher**

Felix Jarrar

My chamber opera *The Fall of the House of Usher* is adapted from the eponymous Edgar Allan Poe short story. In this gothic tale a boyhood friend visits Roderick Usher, and learns of the illness that has plagued and killed almost all the members of Roderick's extended family—the only surviving members of the family are Roderick and his elusive and decrepit twin sister, Lady Madeline. The nature of the relationships between all three characters becomes blurred as the specter of the illness grows and they come face to face with their respective destinies. In the finale, which will be performed tonight, the whole opera reaches its climax as Lady Madeline returns from the dead to take one final stand against the doomed fate of the Usher race. She kills her brother and dies in a hysteric mad scene as the House of Usher falls into the tarn. The now grief-stricken Friend flees the House of Usher, and watches it collapse from a distance. The score and libretto I wrote are heavily influenced by Poe's poetry (the first part of the mad scene is a setting of his poem "The Conqueror Worm"), and I explore a wide variety of musical styles that are inspired by operas such as Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and Peter Maxwell Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King*.

### **About Face the Music and Luna Composition Lab**

**Face the Music** is Kaufman Music Center's contemporary music education program for teenagers, and the country's only youth orchestra dedicated to post-genre music by living composers. It features a collection of ensembles including chamber orchestras, a jazz bigband, an improvisation collective, string quartets and mixed chamber-groups, dedicated to studying and performing experimental, new-classical, new-jazz & avant-garde music written exclusively by living composers.

Face the Music also offers mentorship, support and unique promotional opportunities to developing young performers and composers, through its unparalleled network of professional contemporary musicians, organizations, media and venues. In partnership with **Luna Composition Lab**, Face the Music mentors young female composers. Every Sunday, more than 100 students from the New York City tristate area come together to work with a team of coaches and conductors, to explore and study the music of today as a vehicle to learn collaborative decision-making, gain leadership skills and produce performances of music composed by its own members. Each year, Face the Music presents more than 20 concerts at some of New York's best concert venues, experimental performance spaces, as well as schools and educational institutions.

## Featured Composers

**Sofia Belimova** was born in St. Petersburg, Russia. There, she studied composition with her grandfather Sergei Belimov, composer and musicologist. Her family moved to the United States in late 2009. Soon after that, she was accepted to Special Music School. At SMS, she studied piano with Natela Mchedlishvili and composition with Robinson McClellan. She later studied composition privately with Wang Jie. She has studied at the American Composers Orchestra (ACO) Compose Yourself program with Kevin James. She continued to study at Precollege Program of Manhattan School of Music where she was nominated a Luna Composition Lab Fellow and studied with Missy Mazzoli. She currently participates in Face the Music at Kaufman Music Center as a composer-performer. Her music has been performed by the Lysander Piano Trio, Metropolis Ensemble, PUBLIQuartet, Face the Music, Ekemeles Ensemble, and American Composers Orchestra. Lysander Piano Trio will be releasing a CD which will contain Sofia's piano trio, "Titania."

Composer-pianist **Felix Jarrar** has performed at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall and Merkin Concert Hall. He won prizes in composition competitions held by the National Federation of Music Clubs, Sparks Wiry & Cries, the New York Arts Ensemble, the Connecticut Music Teachers National Association, and Webster University. His second opera, *The Fall of the House of Usher*, has deep personal resonance for him. The work world premiered in a fully-staged production in March 2016 at Marlboro College in Vermont. The opera received its New York premiere at the DiMenna Center that April. He is currently working on his fourth opera, *Tabula Rasa*. This jazz opera, presented by Cantanti Project, is about Kiki de Montparnasse and will debut in May 2018.

Jarrar received a B.A. from Marlboro College with highest honors and studied composition with Stanley Charkey and piano with Robert Merfeld. He is currently pursuing a M.M. in composition at Brooklyn College on the Cerf Music and Chancey Memorial Scholarships, and studies with Tania León.

**Žibuoklė Martinaitytė** has been described by WQXR as a "textural magician." She is a New York-based Lithuanian composer whose works explore the tensions and longings of identity and place. She creates sonic environments where musical gestures emerge and disappear within transparencies and densities of sound layers. It's music that slides on the very blades of emotions.

Ms. Martinaitytė's *A Thousand Doors To The World* was commissioned by the Lithuanian Radio to celebrate Vilnius being named the Culture Capital of Europe in 2009. The premiere was broadcast by Euroradio to an audience of 4 million. Her US commissions include the MATA, Look+Listen and Other Minds festivals as well as the Barlow Endowment. Žibuoklė has received residency fellowships from the MacDowell Colony, the Aaron Copland house, the Millay Colony, Harvestworks, Djerassi and the Cité des Arts (Paris).

**Miya Masaoka** is a composer, teacher, and sound artist living and working in New York City. Her work operates at the intersections of sound, composition, improvisation, spatialized perception, and social interaction. Over the past two decades, the classically trained Masaoka has created a body of work encompassing not only notated composition and hybrid acoustic-electronic performance on Japanese traditional string instruments such as the koto and ichigenkin, but also instrument building, wearable computing, and sonifying the behavior of plants, brain activity, and insect movement. Her work has been exhibited nationally and internationally, including the Venice Biennale, Park Avenue Armory, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Institute of Contemporary Art Philadelphia, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, the Centre for Contemporary Art at Ujazdowski Castle, and many others. She is currently the Director of the MFA Sound Art Program at Columbia University. She is premiering a piece with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra and Choir in Glasgow, Scotland May, 2018.

**Emma O'Halloran** is an Irish composer and musician whose work moves freely between acoustic and electronic forces. Currently a doctoral student at Princeton University, Emma has written for folk musicians, chamber ensembles, turntables, laptop orchestra, along with film and theatre. Her work has been performed at the Bang on a Can Summer Music Festival, and MATA Festival, and she has collaborated with artists such as Crash Ensemble, PRISM Saxophone Quartet, and the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. Emma considers much of her music to be reflective, often trying to map real or imagined moments in time to gain a deeper understanding of her own personal experiences. When not composing, she can be found hiking, traveling, practicing yoga, and playing on aerial hoops and silks.

**Rufus Reid** is a seasoned 50-year career veteran who has made over 400 recordings with some of the jazz world's greatest performers. His receipt of the 2006 Raymond Sackler Commission resulted in his five-movement suite for large jazz ensemble, *Quiet Pride-The Elizabeth Catlett Project*, which received two Grammy nominations in 2014. Rufus is a 2008 Guggenheim Fellow in the field of composition. June 2010, and 2014, Rufus Reid was awarded the prestigious MacDowell Colony Fellowship. In New York City, on June 7, 2011, the American Composers Orchestra, conducted by George Manahan, performed the third movement of *Mass Transit*, in the Miller Theater at Columbia University. This concert culminated the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Workshop held at Columbia University.

In April 2016 he was named Harvard University's Jazz Master in Residence, participating in public conversations and performing in concert with his original compositions. In April 2017, *Lake Tyrrell In Innisfree*, Rufus' third symphonic work was debuted in Raleigh, NC by the Raleigh Civic Symphony. Most recently, Rufus Reid was awarded the American Composers Forum Commission to compose for Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble to be premiered July 6-7, 2018. In December 2017, Newvelle Records, an all vinyl recording company, released the Rufus Reid Trio, "TERRESTIAL DANCE", featuring the SIRIUS QUARTET. Rufus Reid truly continues to be THE EVOLVING BASSIST.

**Christopher Trapani** was born in New Orleans, Louisiana. He earned a Bachelor's degree from Harvard, then spent most of his twenties overseas: a year in London, working on a Master's degree at the Royal College of Music with Julian Anderson; a year in Istanbul, studying microtonality in Ottoman music on a Fulbright grant; and seven years in Paris, where he studied with Philippe Leroux and worked at IRCAM. In 2015 he spent eight months in Stuttgart as a fellow at Akademie Schloss Solitude, and in 2016-2017 spent eleven months at the American Academy in Rome, as the winner of the Rome Prize. Since 2010, Christopher has lived in New York City, where he earned a doctorate at Columbia University, studying with Tristan Murail, George Lewis, Georg Friedrich Haas, and Fred Lerdahl. Christopher is the winner of the 2007 Gaudeamus Prize. His scores have been performed by ICTUS, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, and Spektral Quartet, amongst others.

**Ami Yamasaki** is a vocalist and multimedia artist from Tokyo. Her work is diverse and prolific, creating installations, performances, and films in a variety of settings. She has participated in numerous group shows and frequently collaborates, working with Keiji Haino, Ryuichi Sakamoto, and Yasunao Tone. She has led workshops at The National Museum of Art, Osaka, Japan, Arts Maebashi, and Sapporo City Kojo School, as well as a variety of television and film appearances, including narration and voice for "MORIBITO II" (NHK, 2017) and Hayao Miyazaki's latest short film (2017). She presented at TEDx Tokyo in 2016. Currently she is a 2017 Asian Cultural Council fellow based in New York City. In 2018, she will be invited to Philippines by Japan Foundation for the Asia fellowship.



## 2018 Composers Now Festival

throughout the month of February



Composers Now is proud to announce the 2018 Composers Now Festival – a month-long celebration of the music of living composers, taking place throughout the city of New York.

Georg Grawe, Carman Moore, Karen Tanaka, Angélica Negrón, Gene Pritsker, Milica Paranosic, Martha Mooke, Meredith Monk, John Corigliano, Jane Ira Bloom, Daniel Thomas Davis, Marc Peloquin, Charles Wuorinen, Faye-Ellen Silverman, Kyle Bartlett, and Keyla Orozco are only some of the composers representing their works in venues which include Roulette, Symphony Space, Greenwich House, Tenri Cultural Institute, Cornelia Street Café, Weill Recital Hall, ShapeShifter Lab, (le) poisson rouge, National Opera Center, and Spectrum, to name but a few.

Visit us at [www.composersnow.org](http://www.composersnow.org) for a complete listing of all the wonderful musical events taking place in New York City.

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Composers Now is made possible in part with public funds from the Manhattan Community Arts Fund, supported by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council and administered by Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.