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New York Youth Symphony Announces 2020-21 First Music Commissions Seven New Works from Promising Emerging Composers



**Jonathan Cziner, Anteo Fabris, Benjamin Morris, Liza Sobel, Ari Sussman,
Matthew Waterman, and Drew Zaremba**

Seven World Premieres during the 2020-2021 NYYS Concert Season

New York, NY - The **New York Youth Symphony (NYYS)** announces seven commissions of new works to be premiered during the 2020-2021 season, through its **First Music** program. The selected composers will write for the NYYS Orchestra, NYYS Chamber Music program, and NYYS Jazz. All of the composers are age 30 or under and represent some of the most promising new voices of their generation. The commission winners are selected annually by jury through a blind application process.

Jonathan Cziner (Grand Prize Winner), **Liza Sobel**, and **Ari Sussman** will write new orchestral works to be premiered by the NYYS Orchestra at each of its three concerts at Carnegie Hall, led by Music Director **Michael Repper**. **Anteo Fabris** received the chamber music commission and will write a new work to be premiered by the NYYS Chamber Music program, led by Director **Dr. Lisa Tipton**, at Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall in spring 2021. **Benjamin Morris** (Grand Prize Winner), **Matthew Waterman**, and **Drew Zaremba** will write new works to be premiered by NYYS Jazz under Director **Andy Clausen** in three concerts at Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center, and another leading jazz venue to be announced. The works by Cziner, Fabris, and Morris are co-commissioned through the NYYS's ongoing partnership with the **Interlochen Center for the Arts**, which will present premieres of these three composers' new works in summer 2021.

Described as "invaluable" by *The New York Times*, the **NYYS First Music commission program** has been widely acknowledged for the past 37 years as one of the leading forces in the United States for bringing the work of gifted young composers to public attention. The NYYS has commissioned over 160 original works for orchestra, chamber music, and jazz through First Music since 1984, all of which have been premiered by NYYS ensembles at venues including Carnegie Hall and Jazz at Lincoln Center. First Music commissions have been awarded to Aaron J. Kernis, David Lang, Kevin Puts, Julia Wolfe, Michael Torke, and Timo Andres,

among others. First Music composers have been recognized with 12 Rome Prizes, 16 Guggenheim Fellowships, two Grawemeyer Awards, and four Pulitzer Prizes.

This season's orchestra and chamber music jury was chaired by **Christopher Theofanidis**, and included **Juri Seo**, **Patrick Harlin**, **Courtney Orlando**, **Eric Stomberg**, and **Michael Repper**. The jazz jury was chaired by **Arturo O'Farrill**, a pianist, composer, and founder of Afro-Latin Jazz Organization, and included **Emilio Solla**, **Michele Rosewoman**, **Eric Stomberg**, and **Andy Clausen**.

Christopher Theofanidis, chair of the First Music orchestra/chamber music advisory board, speaks from his own experience as a previous winner, saying, "The NYYS First Music competition is a truly unique opportunity for young composers work with the exceptional student ensembles of the New York Youth Symphony, as well as to have their work premiered at Carnegie Hall by this excellent group of young musicians. I can't wait to hear what the 20/21 season winners compose this year!"

Eric Stomberg, Director of Music for Interlochen says, "Interlochen is proud to continue our partnership with the New York Youth Symphony in co-commissioning outstanding new works by incredible young composers. We are excited to have our musicians perform the Midwest premieres of these orchestral, chamber music, and jazz pieces in summer 2021."

Arturo O'Farrill, chair of the First Music jazz advisory board says, "The NYYS First Music competition celebrates young jazz composers and the diversity they bring to the art. Our 2020-2021 class has distinguished itself as a forward-looking group of unique voices that will insure the advancement of this craft. I can't wait to experience the music they've created for NYYS Jazz."

First Music applications are accepted annually between August and October. Additional information about **First Music** can be found at <http://www.nyys.org/programs/first-music>

The First Music commissions for the 2020-21 Season:

NYYS ORCHESTRA

Ari Sussman: Sunday, November 22, 2020 at 2:00 PM
Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

Jonathan Cziner: Sunday, March 7, 2021 at 2:00 PM (Grand Prize Winner)
Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

Liza Sobel: Sunday, May 9, 2021 at 2:00 PM
Stern Auditorium/Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall

NYYS CHAMBER MUSIC

Anteo Fabris: Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 7:30 PM
Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall

Orchestra/Chamber Honorable mentions: **David Bird**, **Katherine Bodor**, **Zev Malina**, **Ryan Stees**, **Patrick Thompson**, **Max Vinetz**

NYYS JAZZ

Matthew Waterman: Monday, December 7, 2020 at 7:30 PM and 9:30 PM
Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Drew Zaremba: Monday, March 8, 2021 at 7:30 PM and 9:30 PM
Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Benjamin Morris: May 2021 (Grand Prize Winner)
Venue TBD

Jazz Honorable mentions: **Estar Cohen** and **Kent Hickey**

The remaining First Music commissions to be premiered in the 2019-2020 Season include:

Tanner Porter: *The Sycamore and the Oak*
Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 2 PM at Stern/Perelman at Carnegie Hall
NYYS Orchestra

Devin Reilly: *In the Shadow of Tall Giants*
Monday, March 9, 2020, at 7:30 & 9:30 PM at Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center
NYYS Jazz

Patrick O' Malley: *Obliviana*
Sunday, May 24, 2020 at 2 PM at Stern/Perelman at Carnegie Hall
NYYS Orchestra

Nina Shekhar: *tikka*
Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:30 PM at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall
NYYS Chamber Music

Greg Weis: *The Pen is Mightier*
Monday, May 11, 2020 at 7:00 PM at TheTimesCenter
NYYS Jazz

For tickets and info, please visit www.nyys.org/events.

First Music is funded in part by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs and New York State Council on the Arts.

Composer Biographies

ORCHESTRA

Jonathan Cziner (b. 1991) is an American composer based in New York City. His music combines colorful harmony and texture with nostalgic lyricism, creating a sound-world that ranges from mysterious to vibrant. A 2018 Charles Ives Scholarship recipient from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Cziner's works have been performed in the United States and Europe by ensembles including the Minnesota Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO), Juilliard Orchestra, and New Juilliard Ensemble. His orchestral work *Resonant Bells*, premiered by David Robertson and the NJSO, was awarded the William Schuman Prize for

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most outstanding score at the BMI Student Composer Awards as well as the 2018 Palmer Dixon Prize, awarded to the most outstanding work composed at the Juilliard School. *flowers of fire*, was written to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the World War I armistice and was premiered by the Juilliard Orchestra with soprano Kathleen O'Mara and Maestro Jeffery Milarsky in February 2019. Cziner received a Bachelor of Music degree at NYU studying with Justin Dello Joio, and completed his Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Robert Beaser. He is currently in the midst of his studies in Juilliard's C.V. Starr doctoral program.

Praised for his work that "weave(s) a trance-like mystical aura" (*Zamir Chorale*), **Ari Sussman** (b. 1993) is a Philadelphia-born and Ann Arbor-based pianist, clawhammer banjoist, and composer of vocal, chamber, orchestral, choral, and electronic music. Kabbalah, nature, cosmology, meditation, metaphysics, the human condition, and human interactions are among Sussman's non-musical influences and interests. As a result, his music illustrates equivocal worlds of sounds that are ambient, euphonious, and ethereal in nature. Sussman is a two-time finalist for the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Award and was a recipient of a 2018 BMI Student Composer Award and the 2019 Leonard Bernstein Fellowship in composition from the Tanglewood Music Center. He received his Bachelor of Music and Master of Music with honors in composition from the New England Conservatory of Music where he received the Donald Martino Award for Excellence in Composition. He is currently pursuing the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition at the University of Michigan. His musical mentors include Michael Gandolfi, Kati Agócs, Evan Chambers, and Kristin Kuster.

Liza Sobel (b. 1990) is a composer and soprano based in Chicago. Her compositions are often influenced by current social issues. Recent inspirations include anxiety and stress in today's society, the negative impact of social media and its link with depression and suicide, and sexual assault. Sobel's music has been performed at Carnegie Hall, Le Poisson Rouge, Symphony Space, Bang on a Can, the Aspen Music Festival, Eighth Blackbird's Creative Lab, Aldeburgh Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme, Brevard Music Institute, and Bowdoin Music Festival. Performers that have played her music include the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Spektral String Quartet, Cygnus Ensemble, Third Coast Percussion, Nouveau Classical Project, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, orkest de ereprijs, West Point Woodwind Quintet, and New Brunswick Chamber Orchestra. Sobel's *Ticking Time Bomb* was selected for the 2020 Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute. Her *Requiem* won the American Prize in the choral division and was a finalist in the BMI Young Composers Award. Liza Sobel was a Fulbright scholar to the UK and is a doctoral candidate in composition at Northwestern University. She previously studied at Rutgers University's Mason Gross Conservatory (MA), Cornell University (BA with honors), and Manhattan School of Music.

CHAMBER MUSIC

Born in Zurich, Switzerland, **Anteo Fabris** (b. 1991) is a multilingual, binational composer, active across the globe and in a multitude of media. He has worked in theatre as a composer and sound designer at the Yale Cabaret, he has written for orchestras such as the Yale Philharmonia and the American Composers Orchestra, and he has studied computer-generated music and automation as a research fellow at the Yale Center for Collaborative Arts and Media. Fabris is also a chief member of the Modern Love DJ Collective, an 11-year-old organization credited for promoting underground music from all over the world and hosting New Haven's most illustrious monthly dance nights. His music has been premiered in Zurich, London, Paris, Hamburg, San Francisco, Boston and New York City.

JAZZ

Benjamin Morris (b. 1993) is a composer and pianist who lives equally in the worlds of jazz and contemporary classical music. His projects, which include chamber and large ensemble music, theater music,

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film scores, and electroacoustic and intermedia works, blur the lines between these two worlds. He recently lived in Oslo, Norway studying jazz on a Fulbright Grant, composing a work for extended big band and video inspired by his Norwegian heritage. His compositions have been performed around the world by ensembles and musicians including the American Composers Orchestra, the NOW Ensemble, the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, Jazz at Lincoln Center Trombonist Vincent Gardner, unassisted fold, Imani Winds, The Living Earth Show, and the NDR Big Band. Morris' accolades include performing at the Newport Jazz Festival, attending the Aspen Music Festival, studying traditional music at the National Gugak Center in Korea, and receiving both the ASCAP Morton Gould and Herb Alpert Young Composer Awards, a commission from the American Composers Orchestra Jazz Composers Institute, and a Downbeat Award for best original graduate composition. A passionate educator, Morris completed his studies at Rice University and the University of Miami and is currently pursuing a DMA at the University of Colorado, Boulder.

Matthew Waterman (b. 1997) is a trombonist, composer, and theatre artist from Bloomington, Indiana. In May 2019, he graduated from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music with a BSOF in jazz studies and theatre. He was the 2019 recipient of the BMI Foundation's David N. Baker Scholarship for Jazz Composition, and was selected to participate in Betty Carter's Jazz Ahead 2019, a two-week residency at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., for young jazz composer-performers. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in jazz composition at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. His compositions combine elements of jazz, classical, Afro-Cuban, avant-garde, and popular traditions. Outside of music, Waterman's passions include animals, politics, writing, acting, and directing. He has acted in about a dozen collegiate and professional theatre productions, and served as director, dramaturg, or music director for several others. He has studied acting at the Moscow Art Theatre and taught English while studying Arabic at the Excellence Center in Palestine. For several years each, he wrote theatre reviews for south-central Indiana's *Herald-Times* and opinion columns for the *Indiana Daily Student*.

Drew Zaremba (b. 1991) is quickly earning a worldwide reputation as a passionate conductor, award-winning writer, and fiery performer. As a writer, he has composed and arranged pieces for the BBC Orchestra, Metropole Orkest, Dallas Symphony Orchestra, Wycliffe Gordon, Randy Brecker, Lee Loughane of Chicago, Chuck Findley, Eddie Gomez, the Vietnam Classical Players, the Pyramid Jazz Orchestra in Kanazawa, and Erin Dickins of the Manhattan Transfer. Zaremba joined the esteemed faculty of the University of Northern Colorado in 2018 to teach jazz composition and arranging. One of Zaremba's most ambitious projects was writing a concert of music entitled "Crossing Chinese Opera with Jazz" during a two month residency in Zhuhai, China. Zaremba has published music through Sierra Music, UNC Jazz press, and has recorded twenty of his pieces with the University of North Texas One and Two O'Clock Lab Bands. In 2015, he was awarded First Prize in the Sherman/Barsanti Inspiration Award at the UNT for his premier concert with his orchestra, the Unity Orchestra, which featured Eddie Gomez. Zaremba received the Sammy Nestico Award for his original composition in 2018, which includes a follow-up commission with the world-renowned Airmen of Note. As a performer, he was named a winner for Downbeat's Best Undergraduate Soloist in 2012 on saxophone, second place in the Vandoren Emerging Artist Competition in 2014, and also had the privilege to play lead alto in the Disneyland All-American College Band in 2012.

About the New York Youth Symphony:

The New York Youth Symphony educates and inspires young musicians through its **Orchestra, Jazz, Chamber Music, Composition, Musical Theater Composition, Apprentice Conducting, and First Music** commissioning programs. This season includes seven world premieres of new works commissioned through the First Music program, composed for the Orchestra, Jazz, and Chamber Music ensembles.

Founded in 1963, the NYYS is internationally recognized for its award-winning and innovative educational programs for talented young musicians. As the premier independent music education organization for

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ensemble training in the New York metropolitan area, the NYYS has provided over 6,000 music students unparalleled opportunities to perform at world-class venues including Carnegie Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center, National Sawdust, Joe's Pub, and TheTimesCenter, and to study with world-renowned artists. Beyond the instruction from accomplished musicians, students gain valuable life skills — commitment, discipline, focus, collaboration — and friendships that last a lifetime.

The NYYS is committed to partnering with traditionally underrepresented communities to create pathways for young people to find their way to music, and to a life in music. These community partnerships go beyond the stage to in-school residencies, free community concerts, and family involvement, and make music accessible to a wider and more diverse audience. The NYYS partners with organizations including the **Harmony Program, Harlem School for the Arts, SongSpace, Maestra, the Youth Orchestra of St. Luke's, Interlochen Arts Academy, BMI and ASCAP**, plus offers fellowships to its current students and alumni/ae through the **Vargas-Vetter/Ukena, Van Lier, and Orpheus Arts Management** programs.

Executive Director **Shauna Quill** explains, "The New York Youth Symphony is proud of its 57-year history of providing outstanding music education to students through its six outstanding programs. We are committed to broadening access to the arts through our partnerships across the city as well as through fellowships which support students as they navigate the pathway towards college and perhaps a career in the arts. NYYS students and alumni become part of a community of musical citizens who engage with the arts for a lifetime."

NEW YORK YOUTH SYMPHONY 2019-2020 PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

Tickets & Information: www.nyys.org/events

ORCHESTRA

Michael Repper, Music Director

Season Opening Concert

Stern/Perelman at Carnegie Hall

Sunday, November 17, 2019 at 2 PM

Joan Tower: *Fanfare for the Uncommon Woman* No. 1 (Carnegie Hall premiere)

Beethoven: Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, op. 15 with **Harmony Zhu**, piano (Roy & Shirley Durst Debut Artist)

Marco-Adrián Ramos: *Rehén de tus labios, o Escena de telenovela* (First Music commission and world premiere)

Rimsky-Korsakov: *Scheherazade*, op. 35

The McCrindle Concert

Stern/Perelman at Carnegie Hall

Sunday, March 1, 2020 at 2 PM

Dvořák: Concerto for Cello and Orchestra in B minor, op. 104 with **Sterling Elliott**, cello

Tanner Porter: *The Sycamore and the Oak* (First Music commission and world premiere)

Respighi: *Pines of Rome*

The Spring Concert

Stern/Perelman at Carnegie Hall

Sunday, May 24, 2020 at 2 PM

Patrick O' Malley: *Obliviana* (First Music commission and world premiere)

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Florence Price: Piano Concerto in One Movement with **Michelle Cann**, piano (Carnegie Hall premiere, Roy & Shirley Durst Debut Artist)
Mahler: Symphony No. 1, "Titan"

JAZZ

Andy Clausen, Director

Fun Ride: Swinging Through the Ages

Tuesday, December 3, 2019, at 7:30 & 9:30 PM at **Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center**

Matt Horanzy: *One Batch, Two Batch* (First Music commission and world premiere)

Soloist: **Matt Wilson**, drums

Celebrating Charlie Parker @ 100

Monday, March 9, 2020, at 7:30 & 9:30 PM at **Dizzy's Club, Jazz at Lincoln Center**

Devin Reilly: *In the Shadow of Tall Giants* (First Music commission and world premiere)

Soloist: **Steve Wilson**, saxophone

Dreams of New Orleans

Monday, May 11, 2020 at 7:00 PM at **TheTimesCenter**

Greg Weis: *The Pen is Mightier* (First Music commission and world premiere)

Soloist: **Wycliffe Gordon**, trombone, trumpet, vocals

CHAMBER MUSIC

Dr. Lisa Tipton, Director

An Evening of Chamber Music

Monday, April 27, and Monday May 4, 2020 at 7:30 PM at **Scandinavia House**

An Evening Among Friends

Tuesday, May 5, 2020 at 7:30 PM at **Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall**

Nina Shekhar: *tikka* (First Music commission and world premiere)

COMPOSITION

Dr. Kyle Blaha, Director

Composition Date 2020

Thursday, May 14, 2020, at 7:00 PM at **National Sawdust** in Brooklyn

Featuring original student compositions performed by members of all NYYS programs

MUSICAL THEATER COMPOSITION

Anna Jacobs, Director

Musical Theater Composition Songwriter Showcase 2020

Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 7:00PM at **Joe's Pub**

Featuring original works, performed by NYYS students, and students from the Harlem School of the Arts

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