

# **NJSO presents new works by composers of the NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute: Jonathan Cziner, Natalie Dietterich, Aaron Hendrix, Brian Shank**

**Concert follows week of musical- and career-enriching sessions with industry leaders**

**Program also features work by Institute Director Steven Mackey**

**David Robertson conducts**

**Sat, July 14, at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton**

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra presents dynamic new works from the composers of the 2018 NJSO Edward T. Cone Composition Institute—Jonathan Cziner, Natalie Dietterich, Aaron Hendrix and Brian Shank—on Saturday, July 14, at 8 pm at Richardson Auditorium in Princeton.

From July 9–14 at Princeton University, the four emerging composers will have their works rehearsed and performed by the NJSO, participate in masterclasses with Institute Director Steven Mackey, receive feedback from conductor David Robertson and NJSO musicians and have career-enriching sessions with music-industry leaders.

The NJSO and Robertson perform Cziner's *Resonant Bells*, Dietterich's *Aeolian Dust*, Hendrix's *Night Train* and Shank's *Into the Rose Garden*. The concert program, "Scores: New Orchestral Works," also includes "Echoes" from Mackey's *Mnemosyne's Pool*.

Mackey says: "The Cone Institute takes a holistic approach to the elements that go into a successful career as a composer. Beyond the opportunity to polish their orchestral works with professional musicians, the composers will meet with industry leaders for insight into the practical elements of publishing and promoting their music."

All tickets for the Institute concert—"Scores: New Orchestral Works"—are \$15 and are available at [njsymphony.org/scores](http://njsymphony.org/scores). A free reception for all concertgoers follows the concert, featuring a special cone-inspired flavor of ice cream from Princeton's The Bent Spoon.

*A collaboration between the NJSO and Princeton University Department of Music, the Institute is funded in part by the Edward T. Cone Foundation and Princeton University.*

## **JONATHAN CZINER**

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 dark and mysterious to vibrant. Drawing on a wide variety of inspirations, Cziner's writing engages the senses and the emotions, fully immersing listeners in the musical experience.

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 pianist Steven Masi, Dallas Symphony principal harpist Emily Levin, the New Juilliard Ensemble, Atlantic Music Festival Contemporary Ensemble and violin duo Les Deux. His work *Transient Bodies for Sinfonietta*, commissioned by the New Juilliard Ensemble, received the 2017 Palmer Dixon Prize, given to the year's most outstanding composition at The Juilliard School. Other recent commissions include *Once New* for the Lyric

Chamber Society, Fantasy Chorale for the American Guild of Organists and *Nebulous* for the Dallas Harp Quartet, with performances at Carnegie Hall, Alice Tully Hall and (Le) Poisson Rouge in New York City.

Cziner received a Bachelor of Music degree at New York University, studying with Justin Dello Joio. He completed his Master of Music degree at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Robert Beaser and is currently a candidate in Juilliard's prestigious C.V. Starr doctoral program.

#### **Cziner's notes on *Resonant Bells***

"We live in unsettling times. Bells by nature can be advisory or prophetic, and in a world that is wracked with turbulence, the words of Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Bells' ring true. *Resonant Bells* captures the essence of alarm bells and the implication of warning that echoes in the ears of those who hear them. The piece opens mysteriously, with the announcement of a repeating note rhythmic motto. After a vertical unfolding of harmony and an expansion of the repeating note figure, the music explodes, introducing us to premonitory tolling bells made up of an amalgamation of vibraphone, chimes, glockenspiel and celesta. A dramatic, possibly even heroic lyrical passage builds the work to its first climax, which is thwarted by the bells, this time orchestrated in winds and brass in addition to the original percussion. After the dust settles, a transitional passage comprised of meandering woodwind solos is interspersed with a new iteration of the original repeating motto. The music pushes forward into a dizzying scherzando section, which is at times playful, at times demonic. After much whirling and twirling, the chaos erupts at last into an apocalyptic reprise of the lyrical passage now intertwined with the scherzando material. Any hope of altering course is once and for all derailed by the tolling of the bells, now in the entire orchestra. The piece closes with an elegiac chamber-like setting of the lyrical passage, and in the final moments, returns us to the very opening, as if to remind us that we were warned."

#### **NATALIE DIETTERICH**

Natalie Dietterich is an American composer and vocalist from Harleysville, Pennsylvania. Her visceral work mines patterns and is often tangential to social issues. Recently, her music has been performed by the Shanghai Symphony, wild Up as part of the LA Philharmonic's National Composers Intensive and The Crossing as part of the Big Sky New Music Initiative, and as a fellow at the Bang on a Can Summer Institute. Dietterich has been awarded residencies at the Avaloch Farm Music Institute, Norfolk Chamber Music Festival and Arts, Letters and Numbers. She is the recipient of a 2018 New York Youth Symphony First Music Commission and Morton Gould Young Composer Awards' 2016 Leo Kaplan Award; she has received honorable mention for awards from BMI, ASCAP and The American Prize, among others. Dietterich is a graduate of the Yale School of Music with an M.M. and M.M.A. in composition and of West Chester University with a dual degree in composition and violin. She starts her Ph.D. in composition at Princeton University this fall.

#### **Dietterich's notes on *Aeolian Dust***

"The idea of aeolian, or atmospheric, dust could be considered an analog to the passage of time within a world where unrelated events coexist and have potential to become something bigger than themselves, or perhaps simply occupy a space together with nothing to bridge them but the moment in which they occur."

#### **AARON HENDRIX**

A Houston native, Aaron Hendrix recently completed his master's degree in composition at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers. He completed his undergraduate studies at Houston Baptist University, where he graduated first in his class with a double major in composition (studying with Ann Gebuhr) and piano performance (studying with Melissa Marse and Shannon Hesse).

His portfolio includes commissions and performances by various Houston-based ensembles, including the Scordatura New Music Society, Fidelis String Quartet and HBU's Schola Cantorum. More recently, his music has been performed by Michigan's University Symphony Orchestra and the Ann Arbor new-music collective Converge.

While at Michigan, he co-founded //meridian, an eight-voice, new-music chorale; he currently serves as composer-in-residence of the ensemble.

### **Hendrix's notes on *Night Train***

“According to my mom, the love and fascination I have for trains began before I could speak. Whether this is a slight ‘motherly exaggeration’ or simply a reflection on how long it took me to start talking, I am uncertain. Regardless, the context provided by this adorable anecdote is helpful here.

“A railroad line runs parallel to the neighborhood I grew up in, and this proximity put it within earshot of three different crossings. My house sat directly in line with the second of these. Though trains run this route at all hours, I rarely noticed them during the day, their sounds swallowed by the ambient noise of a world awake. At night, however, with most sonic rivals at rest, a passing train could announce its presence unhindered.

“Dreamlike and hazy at first, the horn seemed to float directionless as the train passed the first crossing, distance and darkness imbuing it with an almost haunting profundity. However, the call grew steadily louder and more distinct—haze replaced by inevitability—as the powerful machine approached the second crossing. A moment or two of silence followed, then a final heralding for the third crossing, distant once again, and fading.

“Some of my fondest childhood memories involve waking in the middle of the night to this familiarity. Each time a train approached the nearest crossing felt like an increasingly urgent summons to climb aboard and dream.

“This is where the piece begins: with the dreamlike image of a distant but rapidly approaching train. When it reaches us, we are swept along with it, experiencing both excitement and trepidation as the train speeds off into the dark unknown. Suddenly, the train begins to accelerate, hurtling almost out of control. At the last second, we are transported safely back to our original dream state, and the train continues off into the night.

“This piece is about my many childhood trips aboard the Night Train. Whether real, imagined or dreamed, I am not completely sure, and the music never really decides. I like to think maybe a little of all three.”

### **BRIAN SHANK**

Brian Shank is a composer and percussionist who divides his time equally between what he considers to be two wholly complementary disciplines. An active performer since an early age, composing took an increasingly important role in his life while studying percussion at Juilliard in his early 20s. His expressive compositional style is inspired by the rich harmonic language of France’s Impressionists and later 20th-century masters.

Presently, he studies harmony, counterpoint, composition and orchestration with Dr. Philip Lasser in the French tradition. While concert music is his focus, he has composed music for the ballet company Tom Gold Dance and for various theater productions, including a production of *A Clockwork Orange* directed by Tony Award-winning actor Alex Sharp.

As a performer, his stylistic interests are widely varied and include jazz, contemporary performance, electronic and electro-acoustic music, and various world music instruments. He performs as a percussionist with the Æon Chamber Ensemble, Andy Clausen’s Split Stream Big Band; he is the drummer and co-founder of the jazz group The Joe Mohan Trio.

Shank began his musical training in percussion, studying with John Antonio and Richard Albagli in Albany, and he undertook significant studies of music history with Albagli at the same time. He received a Distinguished Graduate Award from the Juilliard Pre-College Division and holds a degree from The Juilliard School in percussion performance under professors Daniel Druckman, Gordon Gottlieb and Joseph Pereira.

He is Percussion Faculty at the Luzerne Music Center and a teaching artist with the Bridge Arts Ensemble. Originally from Saratoga, New York, Shank lives in New York City.

### **Shank's notes on *Into the Rose Garden***

"This piece for orchestra takes its inspiration from a shared image of two of the great English-speaking poets of the past century: T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats. Both address the image of rose specifically in regard to the relationship between time and possibility.

"In his poem 'To the Rose upon the Rood of Time,' Yeats asks of the rose to allow him to leave aside 'mortal hopes that toil and pass' and to instead 'hear the strange things said/By God to the bright hearts of those long dead/and learn to chaunt a tongue men do not know.'

Eliot in turn uses the image at the very outset of his 'Four Quartets.' His use shares the same spirit and power as Yeats' when he declares that all possibilities of past events are not lost, but in fact exist somewhere: 'Down a passage which we did not take/Towards the door we never opened/Into the rose-garden.'

"The sonic material present in this piece emerged from the reflection on eternal possibility and the courage it would take to open such a door."

### **STEVEN MACKEY, INSTITUTE DIRECTOR**

Steven Mackey was born in 1956 to American parents stationed in Frankfurt, Germany. He is regarded as one of the leading composers of his generation and has composed for orchestra, chamber ensemble, dance and opera. His first musical passion was playing the electric guitar in rock bands based in northern California. He blazed a trail in the 1980s and 90s by including the electric guitar and vernacular music influence in his concert music, and he regularly performs his own works, including two electric guitar concertos and numerous solo and chamber works. He is also active as an improvising musician and performs with his band Big Farm.

Mackey's music has been performed by leading musical institutions throughout the world, including the Los Angeles, BBC and New York philharmonics; San Francisco and Chicago symphonies; Philadelphia and Concertgebouw orchestras and Brentano, Kronos and Arditti string quartets, among others. He has received numerous awards, including a Grammy Award in 2012 for his album *Lonely Motel: Music from Slide*.

### **DAVID ROBERTSON, CONDUCTOR**

David Robertson—conductor, artist, thinker and American musical visionary—occupies some of the most prominent platforms on the international music scene. A highly sought-after podium figure in the worlds of opera, orchestral music and new music, Robertson is celebrated worldwide as a champion of contemporary composers, an ingenious and adventurous programmer and a masterful communicator whose passionate advocacy for the art form is widely recognized. A consummate and deeply collaborative musician, Robertson is hailed for his intensely committed music making.

2017–18 is Robertson's valedictory season as music director of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and his fifth season as chief conductor and artistic director of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He has served as artistic leader to many musical institutions, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestre National de Lyon, and, as a protégé of Pierre Boulez, the Ensemble Intercontemporain. He has frequent projects at the world's most prestigious opera houses, including The Metropolitan Opera, La Scala, Bayerische Staatsoper, Théâtre du Châtelet, San Francisco Opera and more.

During his 13-year tenure with the SLSO, Robertson has solidified the orchestra's standing as one of the nation's most enduring and innovative. His established and fruitful relationships with artists across a wide spectrum is evidenced by the orchestra's ongoing collaboration with composer John Adams. The 2014 release of *City Noir* (Nonesuch Records)—comprising works by Adams performed by the SLSO with Robertson—won the Grammy Award for Best Orchestral Performance. Robertson is the recipient of numerous musical and artistic awards; in 2010, he was made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres.

He is devoted to supporting young musicians and has worked with students at the festivals of Aspen, Tanglewood and Lucerne and at the Paris Conservatoire, the Juilliard School, Music Academy of the West and National Orchestra Institute. In 2014, he led the coast-to-coast US tour of the National Youth Orchestra of Carnegie Hall.

Additional information about the Institute is available at [njsymphony.org/institute](http://njsymphony.org/institute).

**SCORES: NEW ORCHESTRAL WORKS**

Saturday, July 14 at 8 pm | Richardson Auditorium in Princeton

DAVID ROBERTSON conductor  
STEVEN MACKEY Institute director and host  
NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*Program includes:*

JONATHAN CZINER *Resonant Bells*  
NATALIE DIETTERICH *Aeolian Dust*  
AARON HENDRIX *Night Train*  
BRIAN SHANK *Into the Rose Garden*  
STEVEN MACKEY "Echoes" from *Mnemosyne's Pool*

General-admission tickets are \$15 and are available for purchase online at [njsymphony.org/scores](http://njsymphony.org/scores) or by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476).

A free ice cream reception follows the concert, featuring a special cone-inspired flavor from The Bent Spoon.

*The Institute is presented in collaboration with the Princeton University Department of Music and generously funded in part by the Edward T. Cone Foundation and Princeton University.*

**NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

Named "a vital, artistically significant musical organization" by *The Wall Street Journal*, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra embodies that vitality through its statewide presence and critically acclaimed performances, education partnerships and unparalleled access to music and the Orchestra's superb musicians.

Music Director Xian Zhang—a "dynamic podium presence" *The New York Times* has praised for her "technical abilities, musicianship and maturity"—continues her acclaimed leadership of the NJSO. The Orchestra presents classical, pops and family programs, as well as outdoor summer concerts and special events. Embracing its legacy as a statewide orchestra, the NJSO is the resident orchestra of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and regularly performs at State Theatre New Jersey in New Brunswick, Count Basie Center for the Arts in Red Bank, Richardson Auditorium in Princeton, Mayo Performing Arts Center in Morristown and bergenPAC in Englewood. Partnerships with New Jersey arts organizations, universities and civic organizations remain a key element of the Orchestra's statewide identity.

In addition to its lauded artistic programming, the NJSO presents a suite of education and community engagement programs that promote meaningful, lifelong engagement with live music. Programs include school-time Concerts for Young People; NJSO Youth Orchestras family of student ensembles, led by José Luis Domínguez; and El Sistema-inspired NJSO CHAMPS (Character, Achievement and Music Project). NJSO musicians annually perform original chamber music programs at community events in a variety of settings statewide through the NJSO Community Partners Program.

For more information about the NJSO, visit [njsymphony.org](http://njsymphony.org) or email [information@njsymphony.org](mailto:information@njsymphony.org). Tickets are available for purchase by phone at 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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