

NEW JERSEY SYMPHONY

XIAN ZHANG MUSIC DIRECTOR

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Jersey Symphony announces 2023 Edward T. Cone Composition Institute composers

Tom Morrison *Messages in the Ground*

Kory Reeder *Walls of Brocade Fields*

Sam Wu *Hydrosphere*

Yangfan Xu *Bya*

- New Jersey Symphony to give world premieres of works by emerging composers at NJPAC on Saturday, July 15 in Newark with guest conductor Case Scaglione.
- Program to include the final movement, “Sphere,” from Steven Mackey’s *Concerto for Curved Space*.
- Composers participate in rehearsals and performances with Symphony and in-depth sessions with Institute Director Steven Mackey, guest conductor Case Scaglione, Symphony musicians and industry leaders.
- Institute information: njsymphony.org/institute
- Concert information : njsymphony.org/newscores

NEWARK, NJ—The New Jersey Symphony announces the composers for the ninth Edward T. Cone Composition Institute. The 2023 Institute will take place Sunday, July 9 through Saturday, July 15 in Newark, culminating in a performance of the composers’ works on Saturday, July 15, 2023.

This year’s winning composers include Tom Morrison with his work *Messages in the Ground*, Kory Reeder with his work *Walls of Brocade Fields*, Sam Wu with his work *Hydrosphere* and Yangfan Xu with her work *Bya*.

The four composers will hear their music rehearsed and performed by the Symphony and participate in in-depth feedback sessions with Institute Director Steven Mackey, guest conductor Case Scaglione, New Jersey Symphony musicians and industry leaders.

The Symphony and Maestro Case Scaglione will present the participants’ works along with the final movement, “Sphere,” from Steven Mackey’s *Concerto for Curved Space* in concert at NJPAC’s Victoria Theater in Newark on Saturday, July 15 at 8 pm. Tickets are \$20 and are available for purchase at njsymphony.org/newscores.

By the conclusion of the Institute’s comprehensive experience, participants will have gained invaluable musical and practical feedback about composing for orchestra. They will also have participated in critical discussions about best practices for getting contemporary classical music funded, published and performed.

The New Jersey Symphony Edward T. Cone Composition Institute grew out of musical score-reading sessions the Symphony has held with Princeton University graduate students biennially for more than a decade. The Institute celebrates its namesake Edward T. Cone’s legacy as both a composer and a Princeton University professor.

A collaboration between the New Jersey Symphony and Princeton University Department of Music, major funding support for the New Jersey Symphony’s Edward T. Cone Composition Institute is generously provided by the Edward T. Cone Foundation and Princeton University.

Learn more at njsymphony.org/institute

Tom Morrison

Tom Morrison is a composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music. Morrison draws his inspiration from the experience of place. He has written for leading new music groups, including the Aizuri Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, Latitude49, Sö Percussion, Contemporaneous, Yarn/Wire and Albany Symphony's new music chamber orchestra, Dogs of Desire, among others. Recent projects include new electroacoustic works for Theo Van Dyck and Parker Ramsay and a contribution to Han Chen's "Ligeti Etudes meets 18 Composers" commissioning project. His work has been released on *Drifter* and *Leaving a Room.*, albums by Eric Huckin and Robert Fleitz, respectively. Recently, Morrison contributed the title track to Red Dog Ensemble's debut album, *Neon and Oak*. He won the 2016 Thailand International Composition Festival Competition and first place in the 2021 Symphonia Caritas Competition for first-generation college students. His work can be found at tom-morrison.com.

Morrison is a graduate of The Juilliard School (MM). He is also a graduate of the University of Montana (BM) in Missoula, where he cultivated his love for nature and the environment. He holds an MFA and Ph.D. from Princeton University, where he will be a Post Graduate Researcher in the fall 2023 semester.

Composer's Program Note: *Messages in the Ground*

Messages in the Ground is inspired by Richard Power's novel *The Overstory* and the complex nature of trees and humanity's complex relationship with them. The work is a meditation on the nature of trees and how they communicate with each other. The governing structural idea is simple: the piece begins at the higher end of the orchestra's register and ends at the lower end—it goes from the leaves to the roots.

Kory Reeder

Kory Reeder is an American composer and performer whose music draws inspiration from the visual arts and political theory. It is often introspective and atmospheric, investigating ideas of objectivity, place and immediacy while exploring the social implications of musical interaction with pieces ranging from symphonic works to text scores and computer-assisted improvisations.

Described as "one of the most captivating composers in modern classical music" (*Dallas Observer*), Reeder's music is performed regularly around the world in concert halls, festivals, academic settings, basements and DIY venues. A dedicated collaborator, he has frequently worked with opera, theater and dance programs, as well as noise, free-improv and new media artists on projects ranging from video collaborations to three-hour performance art works. He has been artist-in-residence at Arts Letters and Numbers, The Kimmel Harding Nelson Center for the Arts and Everglades National Park. Reeder also participated in the Composing in the Wilderness program offered by the Fairbanks Summer Arts Festival in collaboration with Alaska Geographic and the National Park Service.

With a catalog of over 100 programmed works, his music has been released on Edition Wandelweiser Records, where one may also find scores of his work, as well as Petrichor Records, Sawyer Editions, Sawyer Spaces, Impulsive Habitat, and Another Timbre, with upcoming releases planned for 2023 on Full Spectrum Records.

Reeder is from Nebraska and currently resides in Texas where he is an active performer. He received his Ph.D. from the University of North Texas and holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Nebraska at Kearney and a Master of Music from Bowling Green State University.

Kory runs and operates Sawyer Editions, a small-batch label specializing in contemporary, experimental, and improvised music, especially of new and unreleased artists. The Sawyer Spaces imprint focuses on field recordings and soundscape composition.

Composer's Program Note: *Walls of Brocade Fields*

In Lincoln, Nebraska, there is the International Quilt Museum and while walking through, I couldn't help but feel a sense of duality: the richly decorated and ornate patterns combine with the somewhat nostalgic quality that can come with the medium. I'm particularly drawn to flowers and brocade fabrics; the fields of intricately designed

flowers lining the walls and filling your vision. This piece is full of overlapping, repeated patterns laid across each other, at times interacting and sometimes more exposed. There are moments in the piece where sounds are encompassing and warm, wrapping the listener in a blanket of sound, others are sparse, open and nearly still. The overlapping tones and phrases create subtle, perhaps fleeting cadences and nearly tonal reminiscences, but underneath all this harmonic wrapping is a unifying pulse that connects the material and keeps the threads together.

Sam Wu

Sam Wu's music deals with the beauty in blurred boundaries. Many of his works center around architecture, urban planning, climate science and the search for exoplanets that harbor life.

Wu's collaborations span five continents, most notably with the orchestras of Philadelphia, Minnesota, Sarasota, Melbourne, Tasmania, Shanghai, New York City Ballet Orchestra, Sydney International Piano Competition, Parker, the Argus, ETHEL and icarus string quartets, the Lontano resident ensemble at Kings College London, the conductors Osmo Vänskä, Benjamin Northey and Lio Kuokman and sheng virtuoso Wu Wei.

Wu has been featured in various media outlets and publications, including *National Geographic channel*, *Business Insider*, *The Houston Chronicle*, *The Harvard Crimson*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Asahi Shimbun* and *The People's Daily*. Wu has also received numerous awards and recognitions. He was selected for the American Composers Orchestra's EarShot readings and the Tasmanian Symphony's Australian Composers' School. Wu also won an ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award, First Prize at the Washington International Competition, Harvard's Robert Levin Prize and Juilliard's Palmer Dixon Prize.

From Melbourne, Australia, Sam holds degrees from Harvard University and The Juilliard School, and is currently a DMA candidate in composition at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. His teachers include Tan Dun, Anthony Brandt, Pierre Jalbert, Chaya Czernowin and Richard Beaudoin.

Composer's Program Note: *Hydrosphere*

Hydrosphere is inspired by the water cycle—a macroscopic, planetary process that shapes oceans and continents.

Water is the source of life as we know it; its eternal cycle nourishes generations across the aeons.

Despite its ubiquity, water is precious—we must protect Gaia's lifeblood.

Yangfan Xu

Yangfan Xu is a Chinese-born US-based composer who comes from a musical family in Lanzhou, Gansu province. Xu was the winner of the Society for New Music's 2021 Israel/Pellman Award. She won the 2021 New Juilliard Ensemble (NJE) Composition Competition, and her commissioned work *Fantastic Creatures of the Mountains and Seas* premiered at the Lincoln Center in a concert by NJE in 2022. Xu also received other major commissions from the New York Choreographic Institute with New York City Ballet, and saxophonist Kenneth Radnofsky. Her compositions have been performed by Friction Quartet, Hauseman Quartet, San Francisco Conservatory of Music New Music Ensemble, Choral Chameleon and Keyed Kontraptions. In October 2023, Xu's music will be performed by the Sydney Contemporary Orchestra in Australia.

Xu received a bachelor's degree in composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music studying with Mason Bates. Before her undergraduate studies, she studied musicology at the high school affiliated with the Central Conservatory of Music in China. Xu earned her master's degree in composition at The Juilliard School, studying under Robert Beaser. She is a current DMA candidate at the New England Conservatory of Music studying under studio teacher Kati Agócs.

Composer's Program Note: *Bya*

"Bya" (འགྲུབ་པ་) is from the Tibetan language. It means "birds." The piece is inspired by my trip to Tibet in 2016. When the pandemic first broke out, the city was put on lockdown, and I started to have recurring dreams about my trip to Tibet. It is the most wonderful land I have ever seen; Tibet is said to be the closest place to heaven on earth. When I saw it with my own eyes, I couldn't agree more. The landscape is so stunning that it feels like a place that is unreal. Yamdrok Lake was the name of the lake I visited. There's a bird island in the middle of the lake where you can see hundreds of different kinds of birds—it was magnificent and mind-blowing.

Bya's opening section is about the general shock I felt when I first arrived in Tibet. The middle slow section, where you can hear the trumpet's extended technique imitating a bird's call, depicts the bird's island and the Yamdrok Lake. The final section of the piece is about a Tibetan tradition known as the sky funeral. When people die, their bodies are placed on top of a temple and the birds eat them. I find the ritual very special to me because it represents an eternal bond between humans and nature.

Steven Mackey

Bright in coloring, ecstatic in inventiveness, lively and profound, Steven Mackey's music spins the tendrils of his improvisatory riffs into large-scale works of grooving, dramatic coherence.

As a teenager growing up in Northern California obsessed with blues-rock guitar, Mackey was in search of the "right wrong notes," those heart-wrenching moments that imbue the music with new, unexpected momentum. Today, his pieces play with that tension of being inside or outside of the harmony and flow forward shimmering with prismatic detail.

Signature early works merged his academic training with the free-spirited physicality of his mother-tongue rock guitar music: *Troubadour Songs* (1991) and *Physical Property* (1992) for string quartet and electric guitar; and *Banana/Dump Truck* (1995), an electrified-cello concerto. Later works explored his deepening fascination in transformation and movement of sound through time: *Dreamhouse* (2003), a rich work for voices and ensemble was nominated for four Grammy awards; *A Beautiful Passing* (2008) for violin and orchestra on the passing of his mother; and *Slide* (2011), a Grammy award-winning music theater piece. In 2021, the LA Philharmonic, Gustavo Dudamel and trumpet soloist Thomas Hooten gave the world premiere of *Shivaree*, a fantasy for trumpet and orchestra. Mackey further expanded his theatrical catalog with his short chamber opera *Moon Tea* about the 1969 meeting between the Apollo 11 astronauts and the Royal Family, premiered by Opera Theatre of Saint Louis in 2021, as well as with his 2022 music theater work *Memoir*, based on the pages of his late mother's memoirs.

The 2022–23 season sees three world premieres: *Concerto for Curved Space* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Andris Nelsons; *Red Wood*, a new environmentally concerned work for The Soraya's Treelogy Project; and *RIOT* with mezzo-soprano Alicia Olatuja, Mackey on electric guitar, New Jersey Symphony, Princeton University Glee Club and conductor Xian Zhang.

Today, Steven Mackey writes for chamber ensemble, orchestra, dance and opera—commissioned by the greatest orchestras around the world. He has served as professor of music at Princeton University for the past 35 years, and in fall 2022, he joined the composition faculty at the Curtis Institute of Music. He has won several awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Guggenheim Fellowship and a Kennedy Center Friedheim Award. He continues to explore an ever-widening world of timbres befitting a complex, 21st-century culture, while always striving to make music that unites the head and heart, that is visceral, that gets us moving.

Case Scaglione

Case Scaglione is currently in his fifth season as a Chief Conductor of the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn in Germany and in his fourth season as a Music Director of Orchestre national d'Île de France. He has previously served as Associate Conductor with the New York Philharmonic and as Music Director of the Young

Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra of Los Angeles. Case was the driving force behind the artistic growth and diversification of the organization, founding their educational outreach initiative '360° Music.'

Across 2021–22 season, Case's repertoire focus with Orchestre national d'Île de France was predominantly on music by Strauss, Wagner, Mahler, Dvořák and Béla Bartók. This season, together with Orchestre national d'Île de France, Case also explores music by Beethoven, Ravel, Mahler, Sibelius, Britten and Anna Clyne.

During 2022–23 season, as was the case with the previous ones, Case and Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn continue to appear regularly at Stuttgart's Liederhalle, Kloster Schöntal, Ludwigsburg, Queen Elisabeth's Hall in Antwerp, Munich's Prinzregententheater, Forum am Schlosspark in Ludwigsburg. Composers of classical and early Romantic periods, as well as 20th Century and contemporary ones feature prominently throughout Case's 2022–23 season with the Württembergisches Kammerorchester Heilbronn.

Amongst last season's guest conducting highlights are appearances in the United Kingdom at Liverpool's Philharmonic Hall with Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; Hamburg with the NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchestra; Spain with Castilla y León Symphony Orchestra in Valladolid and at Madrid's Teatro Monumental with RTVE Symphony Orchestra; In the United States with the Utah Symphony and returns to Phoenix Symphony. Last season, Case also made highly acclaimed debut at the Opéra national de Paris in a production of Elektra by Richard Strauss.

In the 2022–23 season, Case makes his Irish debut with the RTE Symphony Orchestra, a Monaco debut with the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo, Swedish debut with the Gävle Symphony Orchestra, Polish debut with the Szczecin Philharmonic, Danish debut with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra. Case also returns to Spain for a second collaboration with the Castilla Y Leon at the Musika-Música Festival in Bilbao and to Norway for collaboration with the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra.

Previously in North America, Case successfully collaborated with the New York Philharmonic and the Houston, Dallas, Detroit, San Diego and Baltimore symphony orchestras. In Asia, he has led concerts with the China Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Shanghai and Guangzhou symphony orchestras, in addition to regular returns to the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra.

Case enjoys close relationships with many of the world's leading soloists, including Joshua Bell, Yulianna Avdeeva, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, Behzod Abduraimov and Khatia Buniatishvili. Case has been mentored by some of the most prominent conductors on the world stage today, including Alan Gilbert, Jaap van Zweden and David Zinman.

New Jersey Symphony

The Emmy and Grammy Award-winning New Jersey Symphony, celebrating its Centennial Season in 2022–23, is redefining what it means to be a nationally leading, relevant orchestra in the 21st century. We are renewing our deeply rooted commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion by championing new, and often local, artists; engaging audiences for whom the inspiring depth and breadth of classical music will be new; and incorporating the broadest possible representation in all aspects of our organization—all to better reflect and serve our vibrant communities. Since 2021, Music Director Xian Zhang has worked together with composer, violinist, educator and social-justice advocate Daniel Bernard Roumain, the orchestra's resident artistic catalyst, to offer programming that connects with diverse communities in Newark and throughout New Jersey.

Internationally renowned Chinese American conductor Xian Zhang began her tenure as the New Jersey Symphony's current Music Director in 2016. Since her arrival at the New Jersey Symphony, Zhang has revitalized programming with an industry-leading commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion in mainstage concerts. The centennial season opened in October with concerts featuring Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with soloist Yefim Bronfman; Jessie Montgomery's *Banner*; Nimbus Dance performing original choreography to Copland's *Appalachian Spring* Suite; Strauss' *Burleske* for Piano and Orchestra with soloist Michelle Cann; Brahms' Fourth Symphony; and Dorothy Chang's *Northern Star*. The centennial season will conclude in June 2023 with Zhang leading the orchestra

and violinist Joshua Bell in Bruch's Violin Concerto No. 1, Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* and a commissioned world premiere by Daniel Bernard Roumain.

For more information about the New Jersey Symphony, visit www.njsymphony.org or email information@njsymphony.org. Tickets are available for purchase by phone 1.800.ALLEGRO (255.3476) or on the Orchestra's website.

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