

# Juilliard



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Inaugural *Composing Inclusion* Composer Commissions Announced**

**Partnership between The Juilliard School's Preparatory Division,  
New York Philharmonic, and American Composers Forum,  
with Funding from Sphinx Venture Fund**

**Side-by-side Premieres by the New York Philharmonic and Juilliard's  
Preparatory Division students in Spring 2023, 2024**

**NEW YORK**—Nine composers have been selected for *Composing Inclusion*, a new partnership between **The Juilliard School's Preparatory Division**, the **New York Philharmonic** and **American Composers Forum**, and made possible with a \$100,000 [Sphinx Venture Fund](#) grant. Composers **Jasmine Barnes**, **Nicolas Lell Benavides**, **Jordyn Davis**, **James Díaz**, **Thomas Flippin**, **Lauren McCall**, **Patricia Martinez**, **Andrés Soto**, and **Elijah J. Thomas** will develop new works for orchestra or chamber ensembles over the course of a year through four workshops and rehearsals that engage multiple generations and members of the New York musical community. **Trevor Weston**, composer and Juilliard Preparatory Division faculty, serves as advisor to the project's partners and composers.

The inaugural two-year partnership brings together different musical levels, perspectives, ages, and communities in the creation and performance of new music. The composers, who identify as Black and/or Latin, will create "flexible" or adaptable scores in collaboration with both young and seasoned musicians. Over the course of the 2022-23 season, orchestral scores will be created by James Díaz and Jordyn Davis for a May 6, 2023 premiere as part of the New York Philharmonic's [Young People's Concert](#) at David Geffen Hall. Composers Thomas Flippin and Lauren McCall will write for string and percussion ensembles, respectively, with premieres in Spring 2023. For the 2023-24 season and school year, composers Nicolas Lell Benavides, Patricia Martinez, and Andrés Soto will write full orchestra works; composers Jasmine Barnes and Elijah J. Thomas will create brass and wind ensemble works, premiering in Spring 2024 (dates TBD).

Trevor Weston will participate in planning with the partners, facilitate meetings between each composer cohort, and serve as a contact person for the composers. Weston will lead off the co-commissions with his own new work commissioned by all three organizational partners. The premiere will take place alongside the *Composing Inclusion* awardees at the Young People's Concert on Saturday, May 6, 2023, which will be conducted by Los Angeles Philharmonic's Associate Conductor Paolo Bortolameolli.

American Composers Forum (ACF) oversaw the application and selection process, which attracted 71 applications. They were reviewed by **Weston Sprott**, Dean and Director of the Juilliard Preparatory Division, **Gary Padmore**, New York Philharmonic Vice President, Education and Community Engagement; **Vanessa Rose**, ACF's Executive Director; **Trevor Weston**; and **Jacinta Clusellas**, composer and teaching artist for the New York Philharmonic. Twenty-two finalists advanced to an interview round that also included **Jessica Mays**, composer and manager of the Philharmonic's Very Young Composers Program and **Anthony McGill**, Artistic Advisor for Juilliard's Music Advancement Program and Principal Clarinet, New York Philharmonic.

In a very competitive process, the partners celebrate the awardees and all of the finalists, including: [Eric Delgado](#), [Tyson Davis](#), [J.E. Hernández](#), [Victor Márquez-Barríos](#), [William May](#), [Patricio Molina](#), [Reinaldo Moya](#), [Daniel Aaron Ramirez](#), [Ivan Enrique Rodriguez](#), [Darian Thomas](#), and [Kerwin Young](#).

The collaboration was initiated by **Weston Sprott, Dean and Director of the Juilliard Preparatory Division**. "It's wonderful to see this vision coming to fruition, and I'm so excited for the opportunity that is in store for our students," said Sprott. "I look forward to seeing this fantastic group of composers working with our students and the New York Philharmonic to make unique and substantive additions to the repertoire."

"The work of these incredible musical creators will send an important message about who should be represented and how that can happen within a concert experience," added **Gary Padmore, New York Philharmonic Vice President, Education and Community Engagement**. "This will be a transformative experience for the Philharmonic and our community, as we celebrate the inauguration of this initiative in our new David Geffen Hall."

"Reading their stories, listening to their music, and getting to know so many talented composers through this process has been a moving experience, and has underscored for us the importance of this investment in underrepresented composers of today," said **Vanessa Rose**, Executive

Director of American Composers Forum. “We look forward to supporting the artists’ collaborative creation with the student and professional musicians, and inspiring more people.”

**Afa Dworkin**, President and Artistic Director of the Sphinx Organization, shared “Sphinx is excited to see a meaningful collaboration between major institutions driving systemic change for our performance canon. Congratulations to the wonderful composers and thank you to Dean Sprott (Sphinx Advisory Board and Medals of Excellence recipient) for his defining vision behind this important initiative!”

### **About the Composers**



**Jasmine Arielle Barnes** is a promising composer/vocalist who has performed and had her music performed all over the world. She is a multifaceted composer who embraces any writing style of music using a variety of instrumentation and specializes in writing for the voice. A full-time composer, Barnes is managed by UIA talent and is a second year resident artist for American Lyric Theater. Barnes has held residencies as a composer fellow at Chautauqua Opera (2021 season), as well as a residency with All Classical Portland. She has held the privilege of being commissioned by numerous organizations such as The Washington National Opera, Aspen Summer Music Festival, LA Opera, Bare Opera, CityMusic Cleveland, LyricFest Philadelphia, Baltimore Choral Arts, Resonance Ensemble, Tapestry Choir, Burleigh Music Festival, Symphony Number One, Baltimore Musicales, amongst others.



Originally from New Mexico, composer **Nicolas Lell Benavides**’ music frequently explores the intersection of place and cultural themes of Latinidad in the Southwest. He has worked with groups such as the Washington National Opera, The Glimmerglass Festival, West Edge Opera, Nashville Opera, MassOpera, Friction Quartet, Khemia Ensemble, and Left Coast Chamber Ensemble.

Upcoming projects include an opera with librettist Laura Barati as part of MassOpera’s New Opera Workshop with support from Opera America, a premiere of Tres minutos with librettist Marella Martin Koch through Music of Remembrance and support from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Clovis Foundation, and a new commission through West Edge Opera’s Aperture to develop a full-length work about civil rights icon Dolores Huerta. His upcoming album, Canto

Caló, will feature Friction Quartet and mezzo-soprano Melinda Martinez Becker, with support from ACF’s Innova Recordings, the Alice M. Ditson Fund, and New Music USA.

*Photo credit: Vivian Sach*



**Jordyn Davis** (b. 1995) is an award-winning bassist, composer, songwriter, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist from Detroit, Michigan. In May 2019, Davis became the first African-American woman to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition from Michigan State University as well as the first Michigan State student to receive a Bachelor's Degree in Music Composition and Jazz Studies concurrently. She has also performed and worked with artists such as Micheal Dease, Brian Stokes Mitchell, Wycliffe Gordon and The Black Excellence Trombone Choir, Ingrid Jensen, Etienne Charles, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Craig Harris, Maria Schneider, Jerome Jennings and William Delisfort. Additionally, she is the proud leader of her own band "Composetheway."

Since recently completing a Master's Degree in Jazz Studies at Michigan State University, she has moved to Brooklyn, New York, is one of two inaugural Jazz Leader Fellowship recipients from the Brooklyn Conservatory of Music, has been featured on the PBS Limited Series "Music for Social Justice," and is a teaching artist for the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

*Photo credit: Liberty Fets*



"Called "stark, haunting elegance" with "intimate focus" by [The Washington Post](#), the music of Colombian-born composer/sound maker **James Díaz** strives to create unique sonic textures, sound masses, and interactive environments. Deeply influenced by the concept of psychedelia, his music also draws from elements of graphic design, Latin-America landscapes, and photography.

Serving as the 2019 composer-in-residence for the Medellin Philharmonic, James premiered "RETRO", his concerto for orchestra and electronics. His music has been performed by orchestras such as the WDR Sinfonieorchester, Basel Sinfonietta, National Symphony of Colombia, American Composers Orchestra, Medellin Philharmonic, Xalapa Symphony Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, Bogotá Philharmonic, Orchestra of St. Luke's, and EAFIT Symphony, and by ensembles such as Longleash, Yarn/Wire, Sō Percussion, and National Sawdust Ensemble, among others. James is currently working on his studio

album "[speaking in a foreign language]" with violinist Julia Suh."

*Photo Credit: James Díaz*



**Thomas Flippin** is a guitarist/composer immersed in contemporary American classical music. Through his classical guitar ensemble, Duo Noire, as well as his work on the theorbo, banjo, and electric guitar, Flippin has premiered dozens of new works across the United States. Concert highlights include Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's *Mostly Mozart Festival*, American Repertory Theater, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Sawdust, Whitney Museum Biennial, and The Art Institute of Chicago. Flippin's work is currently being toured by renowned American classical guitarist Benjamin Verdery. Flippin's quartet for Duo Noire and members of The Cleveland Orchestra received a premiere recording in Severance Hall.

Several of his works are published by the Guitar Foundation of America. Flippin graduated with honors from the University of Chicago, where he received the Olga and Paul Menn prize for undergraduate music composition. He holds a Master's and Artist Diploma from the Yale University School of Music.

*Photo Credit: John Rogers*



**Lauren McCall** is a composer and music educator from Atlanta, Georgia. She studied for her master's degree in music composition at the Vermont College of Fine Arts, and she is a Ph.D. student studying music technology at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Lauren has had compositions performed around North America and Europe. This includes her piece for piano, *Shake the Earth*, which was performed in Morehead, Kentucky, at Morehead State University's Contemporary Piano Festival, along with being performed in Eugene, Oregon, at the Oregon Bach Festival Composers' Symposium.

Lauren enjoys collaborating with technologists, musicians, and artists including Maggie Kane, owner of Streetcat.media, and the Alter Ego Chamber Opera. Recently she was also a Fromm Fellow with the Fifth House Ensemble. Along with composing, Lauren enjoys playing classical music and jazz on the clarinet and piano, spending time in nature, spending time with family and friends, and traveling.

*Photo credit: Alexandria McCall*



**Patricia Martinez** (AR) is an active composer, interdisciplinary artist and performer. Her creative interests are focused on new music composition and interdisciplinary projects, especially contemporary music theatre, new opera, symphonic and chamber works. Her works won important prizes such as JukeBoxx New Music Award; Argentine Government's; Casa de las Américas; International Young Composers' Meeting; American Prize or Ibermúsicas/Iberescena.

She received commissions, grants and residences including: International Music Theatre Competition/Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt; Bludener Tage zeitgemäßer Musik; Music Current; American Composers Forum; Ensemble Recherche/Goethe-Institut; Teatr Wielki w Warszawie or

Experimental Center of The Colón Theater. She participated at events and Festivals in America, Europe, and South Africa, including: MATA Festival, Donaueschinger Musiktage, Darmstädter Ferienkurse or ISCM. Patricia is a professor of composition at the CSMCBA, UNQ and the UNAM. She holds a Doctoral and Master degree in Music Composition (Stanford University) and she completed the annual course in Computer Music (Ircam).

*Photo credit: Bárbara Scotto*



**Andrés Soto** is a Costa Rican composer with an active career both in the world of concert music and in the entertainment industry. He has written music for several feature films, documentaries, shorts and video games, while also maintaining a prolific output of orchestral works commissioned by many ensembles around the world.

In 2022, the Nashville Symphony gave the North American premiere of his piece “Heredia por Media Calle” and in 2021 the Florida Orchestra played his orchestral tone poem “Bailongo”, both conducted by Enrico López-Yáñez. Other projects this year include an album recorded at Capitol Records for Universal Music, an upcoming video game with an ecological message, and music for the prestigious Pageant of the Masters in Laguna Beach, CA. His interest in education has led him

to give guest lectures and masterclasses at several universities and institutions in the US, Latin America, and Spain. His orchestral music is published by Symphonica Productions.

*Photo credit: Ignacio Guevara*



**Elijah J. Thomas (he/him/his)** is a Black Philadelphia-born, Harlem-based multi-instrumentalist, educator and composer/experimentalist. He has studied improvisation with Dick Oatts, Tim Warfield, Jr. and Walter Bell, and composition with Dr. Cynthia Folio, Kevin Rodgers, and Dr. Maurice Wright. Elijah creates “enuff music”: music for Black healing and spiritual transcendence.

Elijah has held numerous teaching positions and has led four recorded projects: *enuff music, vol. i* (EP, released with Off Latch Press), *Our Search* (LP), *Three Contemplations for Jason Moran* (EP) and *The Unity of Sound* with The NeW Quintet

(LP). Elijah is Musical Director of the global street band performance organization HONK! NYC, whose mission is to “make events that reclaim, reuse, and redefine public space and connect communities through music-making, pageantry, audience participation, and education.”

*Photo credit: Zamani Feelings*



**Trevor Weston's** honors include; the George Ladd Prix de Paris from the University of California, Berkeley, a Goddard Lieberman Fellowship and the Arts and Letters Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and residencies from the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts and the MacDowell Colony. Carnegie Hall co-commissioned Weston's *Flying Fish*, with the American Composers Orchestra, for its 125 Commissions Project. The Bang on a Can All-Stars premiered Weston's *Dig It*, for the Ecstatic Music Festival in NYC. Weston's work *Juba for Strings* won the 2019 Sonori/New Orleans Chamber Orchestra Composition Competition. Weston won the first Emerging Black Composers Project sponsored by the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and the San Francisco Symphony. Dr. Weston is currently Professor of Music and Chair of the Music Department at Drew University in Madison, NJ and an instructor for the MAP and Pre-College programs at the Juilliard School, NYC.

*Photo credit: Bill Cardoni*

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### **About The Juilliard School**

Founded in 1905, The Juilliard School is a world leader in performing arts education. The school's mission is to provide the highest caliber of artistic education for gifted musicians, dancers, and actors, composers, choreographers, and playwrights from around the world so that they may achieve their fullest potential as artists, leaders, and global citizens. Juilliard is guided in all its work by the core values of excellence; creativity; and equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB).

Located at Lincoln Center in New York City, Juilliard offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in dance, drama (acting and playwriting), and music (classical, jazz, historical performance, and vocal arts). Currently more than 800 artists from 43 states and 44 countries and regions are enrolled in Juilliard's College Division, where they appear in more than 700 annual performances in the school's five theaters; at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully and David Geffen halls and at Carnegie Hall; as well as at other venues around New York City, the country, and the world. The continuum of learning at Juilliard also includes nearly 400 students from elementary through high school enrolled in the Preparatory Division, including its Music Advancement Program (MAP), which serves students from diverse backgrounds often underrepresented in the classical music field. More than 800 students are enrolled in Juilliard Extension, the flagship continuing education program taught both in person and remotely by a dedicated faculty of performers, creators, and scholars. Beyond its New York campus, Juilliard is defining new directions in performing arts education for a range of learners and enthusiasts through a global K-12 educational curricula and graduate studies at The Tianjin Juilliard School in China.

### **About the New York Philharmonic**

The New York Philharmonic connects with up to 50 million music lovers each season through live concerts in New York and around the world, as well as broadcasts, recordings, and education programs. The 2022–23 season marks a new chapter in the life of America's longest living orchestra with the opening of the reimagined David Geffen Hall and programming that engages with today's cultural conversations through explorations of *HOME*, *LIBERATION*, *SPIRIT*, and *EARTH*, in addition to the premieres of 16 works. This marks the return from the pandemic, when the NY Phil launched NY Phil Bandwagon, presenting free performances across the city, and 2021–22 concerts at other New York City venues.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered important works, from Dvořák's *New World* Symphony to Tania León's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Stride*. The Orchestra has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, streams performances on NYPhil+, and shares its extensive history free online through the New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the oldest in the world. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19, succeeding titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.

### **About American Composers Forum**

ACF supports and advocates for individuals and groups creating music today by demonstrating the vitality and relevance of their art. We connect artists with collaborators, organizations, audiences, and resources. Through storytelling, publications, recordings, hosted gatherings, and industry leadership, we activate equitable opportunities for artists. We provide direct funding and mentorship to a broad and diverse field of music creators, highlighting those who have been historically excluded from participation.

Founded in 1973 by composers Libby Larsen and Stephen Paulus as the Minnesota Composers Forum, the organization continues to invest in its Minnesota home while connecting artists and advocates across the United States, including its territories and the sovereign Native nations. ACF frames our work with a focus on racial equity and includes within that scope, but does not limit it to: diverse gender identities, musical approaches and perspectives, religions, ages, (dis)abilities, cultures, backgrounds, sexual orientations, and broad definitions of being “American.” Visit [www.composersforum.org](http://www.composersforum.org) for more information.

### **About The Sphinx Organization**

The Sphinx Organization is the social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx’s four program areas – Education & Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership – form a pipeline that develops and supports diversity and inclusion in classical music at every level: music education, artists performing on stage, the repertoire and programming being performed, the communities represented in audiences, and the artistic and administrative leadership within the field.

Sphinx programs reach more than 100,000 students and artists, as well as live and broadcast audiences of more than two million annually. Read more about Sphinx’s programs at [www.SphinxMusic.org](http://www.SphinxMusic.org).

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