



the national orchestral composition discovery network

# news release

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## EarShot and Sarasota Orchestra Present

### Brand New Orchestral Works by Four Emerging Composers

**Krists Auznieks, Nicky Sohn, Sam Wu, Kitty Xiao**

**Saturday, March 16, 2019 at 8pm  
Holley Hall | 709 N Tamiami Trail | Sarasota, FL**

**Tickets: \$15 - \$30 and more information available at  
[www.sarasotaorchestra.org](http://www.sarasotaorchestra.org)**

**EarShot: [bit.ly/earshotnetwork](http://bit.ly/earshotnetwork)**

Sarasota, FL – On **Saturday, March 16, 2019 at 8pm**, EarShot (the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network) and the **Sarasota Orchestra** present the readings of new works by four emerging composers at **Holley Hall** (709 N Tamiami Trail). Led by Los Angeles based conductor **Christopher Rountree**, the New Music Readings will be the culmination of a series of private readings, feedback sessions, and work with mentor composers **Robert Beaser, Laura Karpman, and Chinary Ung**.

The selected composers and their works, chosen from a national call for scores that yielded 127 applicants, are **Krists Auznieks** (*Crossing*), **Nicky Sohn** (*Bird Up*), **Sam Wu** (*Wind Map*), and **Kitty Xiao** (*Ink and Wash*).

Additional activities include professional development panels with the mentor composers and guests **William J. Lackey** of **American Composers Forum**, **Stephen Miles** of **New College of Florida**, and select staff from the **Sarasota Orchestra** administrative team.

“Sarasota Orchestra is thrilled to be a partner for the ACO’s Earshot initiative and a leader on the national forefront of orchestras raising the profile of emerging composers,” said Sarasota Orchestra President/CEO Joseph McKenna. “As one of only three professional orchestras in the country awarded this opportunity in the 2018-2019 season, we recognize that we are doing something special for Sarasota and our entire region’s arts community. This incredible experience is a testament to the power of our mission to engage, educate and enrich through live performance.”

**EarShot**, an initiative of **American Composers Orchestra** (ACO) in partnership with **American Composers Forum, League of American Orchestras**, and **New Music USA**, is the nation’s first ongoing program for identifying and promoting the most promising orchestral composers on the national stage. ACO’s artistic and administrative staff collaborates with participating orchestras, assisting with planning, program design, and execution. EarShot residencies include mentorship from the most accomplished orchestral composers in the country, orchestra readings, and musician and conductor feedback sessions. The program is customized to each host orchestra’s aesthetic, demographic, community, and educational interests.

Additional EarShot readings this season occurred with Grand Rapids Symphony (September 26-30, 2018) and are upcoming with Detroit Symphony Orchestra (March 2-9, 2019) and American Composers Orchestra (Underwood New Music Readings, May 23-24, 2019).

## About the Selected Composers and Their Music

### **Krists Auznieks** (*Crossing*)

The music of **Krists Auznieks** (b.1992) has been performed at The Walt Disney Concert Hall (Los Angeles), The Royal Danish Theatre, Beijing National Arts Centre, Shanghai City Theatre, Amsterdam's Muziekgebouw, The Southbank Center (London), Théâtre Maisonneuve (Montreal), The Kitchen (NYC), National Sawdust (NYC), Chassé Theater (The Netherlands), Cultuurcentrum Hasselt (Belgium), Théâtre De Nîmes (France) and featured in Gaudeamus Muziekweek (Holland), Aspen Music Festival, American Music Festival (Albany, NY), MATA 2017 (NYC), Arctic Arts Festival (Norway), UNESCO International Rostrum of Composers in Finland, European Capital of Culture Aarhus 2017 Festival (Denmark), and Chelsea Music Festival (NYC). He has worked with Sandbox Percussion (NYC), David Kweksilber Big Band (Holland), Antico Moderno (Boston), Yale Philharmonia, Orkest de Ereprijs (Holland), pianists Robert Fleitz and David Fung, and guitarist Jiji. Recent works include *Crossing* for orchestra, commissioned by Aspen Music Festival and Robert Spano, premiered by Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra and Patrick Summers, as well as works for Capella Amsterdam, Latvian Radio Choir, Albany Symphony musicians (NY), Yale Percussion Group, and two massive concert-length works for Contemporaneous (NYC) and Sinfonietta Riga (Latvia).

Currently pursuing doctorate at Yale School of Music with Aaron Jay Kernis and David Lang, his most recent recognitions include Jacob Druckman Prize from Aspen Music Festival, Latvian National Grand Music Award for the best new work of the year, The Woods Chandler Memorial Prize from Yale, fellowships from Aspen Music Festival, NEXT Festival of Emerging Artists (NYC), Bennington Chamber Music Conference, and Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, winning works at The Chicago Ensemble's Discover America XI and Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra competitions. His quintet "Piano" was featured in *The New York Times* among the week's best classical music moments. His opera *NeoArctic*, co-written with British techno producer Andy Stott, won Danish Reumert Prize and will have its US premiere at The Kennedy Center in 2019.

The title of Auznieks' work envisages a "crossing" into another state of mind, suggested and catalyzed by rhetorical and musical devices. "I hope *Crossing* can become a leap from the familiar physical world and how memory operates in it," says Auznieks, "to some other imaginary, utopian, idealistic world." The work centers on motivic transformations that function as an analogy to Proustian notions of memory. "The same motifs are heard, re-heard, and misheard," Auznieks points out. As Feldman once observed, "The whole lesson of Proust is not to look for experiences in the object, but within ourselves." Auznieks aims for this work to similarly elicit a parallel experience within the listener.

### **Nicky Sohn** (*Bird Up*)

From ballet to opera to Korean traditional-orchestra, the wide-ranging talent of composer **Nicky Sohn** (b. 1992) is sought after across the United States, Europe, and Asia. Characterized by her jazz-inspired, rhythmically driven themes, Sohn's work has received praise from international press for being "dynamic and full of vitality" (*The Korea Defense Daily*), having "colorful orchestration" (*NewsBrite*), and for its "elegant wonder" (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*), among many others. As a result, Sohn has enjoyed commissions from the world's preeminent performing arts institutions, including sold-out performances at the Stuttgart Ballet in Germany, The National Orchestra of Korea, and the New York Choreographic Institute at New York City Ballet.

In 2019, Sohn will attend the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy as Gerald Fischer Fellow, where she will work with Grammy-winning soprano Jessica Rivera. Other projects include commissions from the Aspen Philharmonic Orchestra as the sole winner of the Jacob Druckman Prize, as well as the Chelsea Music Festival.

Festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival and School, Les Ecoles d'Art Américaines de Fontainebleau, Ars Nova with Unsuk Chin and the Seoul Philharmonic, and the Summer Festival of the Moscow Conservatory of Music, among others. Residencies have included the Avalon Music Consort in Sweden, Washington Square Winds in New York City, and Project: 音 Sound 음 in Korea.

Nicky Sohn currently shares her time between Berlin, New York City, and her hometown of Seoul, and holds a Master of Music Diploma from The Juilliard School. Her early years are marked by a voracious eagerness to learn. Already a student of piano at the age of two, she began seriously studying composition at the age of seven. At fourteen, Sohn completed her high school diploma, and would go on to receive both a Bachelor of Music degree and a Diploma of Piano Performance from the Mannes College of Music. She is grateful to her pedagogues, which include Robert Beaser, Chris Theofanidis, Derek Bermel, and Richard Danielpour.

*Bird Up* encapsulates the composer's perspective on the erratic nature of New York City, as seen through the lens of the bizarre and chaotic humor in the Eric Andre Show. Throughout several years of living in the absurd and unpredictable environment that is New York, the composer found that his skits were a clever match to the everyday unpredictability of the city. The skit that inspires this piece reflects the extreme end of the chaos that New Yorkers often encounter with a humorous twist, Eric Andre dresses up as a bird and confronts strangers on the street. The composer develops the piece around direct inspiration from the show, the primary motivic material of the piece is derived from the opening chords of the tv show. Incorporating this motive in several modes, the piece gradually transforms, reflecting the humor of the ever changing yet constantly absurd reality of the show and New York City.

## **Sam Wu (*Wind Map*)**

The music of **Sam Wu** (b. 1995) deals with the beauty in blurred boundaries. From Shanghai, China, Wu attends The Juilliard School for his M.M., after receiving an A.B., with honors, from Harvard University. His teachers include Tan Dun, Robert Beaser, Chaya Czernowin, Richard Beaudoin, and Derek Bermel.

Winner of Harvard's Robert Levin, Francis Boott, Bach Society, Wister Prizes, Artist Development Fellowship, Oklahoma City University's Project21 Prize (Second Place), and the Interlochen Fine Arts Award. Sam was also a finalist for the Cortona Prize and ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards.

Wu's music has been performed across North America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. His collaborators include the Melbourne, China National, Shenzhen, Xi'an, Suzhou Symphonies, Shanghai, Moscow, Boston Youth Philharmonics, National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing, Shanghai International Arts Festival, Sydney University Confucius Institute, Asia Society, members of the Parker and Ansonia Quartets, Princeton Pianists' Ensemble, Radcliffe Choral Society, Harvard Ballet Company, and *pipa* master Wu Man.

Wu also has been featured on the National Geographic Channel, Business Insider, Harvard Crimson, Yale Daily, Asahi Shimbun, People's Daily, China Daily USA, SinoVision, CCTV, and ICS, among others.

*Wind Map* was composed with inspiration from a graphic visualization of global wind patterns. Wu notes, "Massive amounts of weather data are fed into a supercomputer that then produces a live (or pseudo-live) 'wind map.' The swirls and swoops are color-coded: areas of blue and green are relatively calm, while red and purple usually imply devastating conditions in a tropical system. There is something particularly poetic about seeing our atmosphere on such a macro scale; the same colors that are converted from numerical data also suggest Van Gogh-esque brushstrokes. The confluence of the empirical and the aesthetic in the 'wind map' has proved wildly inspiring for the composition of this piece."

## **Kitty Xiao (*Ink and Wash*)**

**Kitty Xiao** (b. 1989) is an Australian composer, pianist, and collaborative artist based in Rochester, New York. She is currently completing a Master of Music (Composition) at the Eastman School of Music as a graduate award recipient, studying composition with Robert Morris and piano with Tony Caramia.

Xiao is founder, composer and pianist of Nimbus Trio and released her first album *Novum* in 2016 as a represented artist of Move Records label. In 2017 Kitty formed the Six Piano Collective and is Artistic Director of the Six Piano Project. The same year she launched a new concert series *NoiseSense*.

Commissions include Arts Centre Melbourne's *5x5x5*, *Plexus*, *Elysium Dance*, Brighton Fashion Week London, Six Piano Project, Nimbus Trio, Tilde New Music Festival, Gamelan DanAnda, the Augmented Trumpet, Orlando Contemporary Chamber Orchestra, Panoramic Voices, Australian Art Orchestra CMI, *Clan Analogue*; her work being featured on their recent album *Coordinates* and Australian short/feature films. Her works have been part of the Adelaide Fringe, Melbourne Festival, Mapping Melbourne Festival, performed at Deakin Edge, Melbourne Recital Centre, Elder Hall University of Adelaide, broadcast

on 3MBS, 4MBS, ABC Classic FM, PBS, KUTX 98.9 (U.S). She has performed in the UK, US and Europe as a soloist, with Kirolian Piano Trio, Trinity Laban's new music ensemble, her work recorded at Cacophony Records by Grammy award winner Erik Wofford and her music performed at Kilbourn Hall, The Museum of Human Achievement, The Blanton Museum of Art. Kitty was resident composer of 2017 Tilde New Music Academy, 2016 Keep Composer's Weird in Austin, and 2016 Australian Art Orchestra CMI.

Xiao holds a Master of Music (Performance) from Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in London as a full recipient of the Alfred Kitchin Scholarship, Master of Teaching (Music Education) from The University of Melbourne, Bachelor of Music from The University of Melbourne and was a scholarship recipient at Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School.

Of her piece, Xiao notes, "*Ink and Wash* is influenced by Chinese calligraphy, in particular the work of contemporary Chinese, New York based artist Gu Wenda. His works, *Negative and Positive Characters* and *Tranquility Comes from Meditation*, liberate themselves from traditional technical and aesthetic structures.

For me, the works confront repression and the power of the human spirit. These ideas are expressed sonically in various strokes and lines of light and shade, attack and decay, from singular gestures to the mass."

## **About Sarasota Orchestra**

Now celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> season, Sarasota Orchestra has been engaging music lovers from around the region and visitors from around the world. The Orchestra performs more than 125 classical, Pops, education and community engagement concerts each year and thrives as the oldest continuing orchestra in the state of Florida. Youth programs provide concert experiences for about 10,000 students per year and includes an extensive youth orchestra program of seven ensembles and 350 students. The Sarasota Music Festival is a world-renowned performance and teaching festival that attracts young musicians and faculty from across the globe each June.

## **About American Composers Orchestra**

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra is dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promotion of music by American composers. ACO makes the creation of new opportunities for American composers and new American orchestral music its central purpose. Through concerts at Carnegie Hall and other venues, recordings, internet and radio broadcasts, educational programs, New Music Readings, and commissions, ACO identifies today's brightest emerging composers, champions prominent established composers as well as those lesser-known, and increases regional, national, and international awareness of the infinite variety of American orchestral music, reflecting geographic, stylistic, and temporal diversity. ACO also serves as an incubator of ideas, research, and talent, as a catalyst for growth and change among orchestras, and as an advocate for American composers and their music. ACO programs seek to innovate and experiment, educate students and the public, and open the orchestra to diverse new influences and audiences. For more information, visit [www.americancomposers.org](http://www.americancomposers.org).

## **About American Composers Forum**

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, ACF provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, ACF fosters a demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, performers, and music patrons. For more information, visit [www.composersforum.org](http://www.composersforum.org).

## **About the League of American Orchestras**

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning Symphony magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world

about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. For more information, visit [www.americanorchestras.org](http://www.americanorchestras.org).

## About New Music USA

New Music USA supports and promotes new music created in the United States using the power of virtual networks and people to foster connection, deepen knowledge, encourage appreciation, and provide financial support for a diverse constituency of practitioners and appreciators. New Music USA engages with a broad constituency of artists and audiences with our programs and editorial work, providing in-depth coverage of the field through [NewMusicBox.org](http://NewMusicBox.org) and Counterstream Radio and supporting the field with around one million dollars in grants annually. Through membership in networks such as the International Society for Contemporary Music and the International Association of Music Information Centers, New Music USA represents the United States new music scene around the world. For more information, visit [www.newmusicusa.org](http://www.newmusicusa.org).

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*This press release is available online at [www.americancomposers.org/press-media](http://www.americancomposers.org/press-media)*

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