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Composers Now, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.



2020 Composers Now Festival Opening Event

Hosted by Tania León, Artistic Director
2020 Composers Now Visionary Award
Carman Moore



Friday, January 31, 2020 at 7:00 pm
National Opera Center, Marc A. Scorca Hall
New York City

Program

Recipient of the 2020 Composers Now Visionary Award

Carman Moore (b. 1936)

Video: excerpt from Moore's *The Mystery of Tao* (2001)

Recipient of the Composers Now First Commission Award

Ilaria Loisa Hawley (b. 2009)

Quando L'acqua riflette (When the Water Reflects) (2020)

[World premiere]

Face the Music: Isabella Carucci, flute; Yusei Hata, melodica; Oriana Hawley, viola;
John Wallar, triangle

Directed by Vasudevan Panicker

Niloufar Nourbakhsh (b. 1992)

Veiled (2018)

[Commissioned by Forward Music Project]

Amanda Gookin, cello and electronics

Robert Dick (b. 1950)

Book of Shadows (2015)

Robert Dick, bass flute

Darian Donovan Thomas (b. 1993)

Fluid (2016)

Darian Donovan Thomas, violin and electronics

Lisa Bielawa (b. 1968)

Video: *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch's Accuser* (2017)

Episode 5: The Cow Song

[Produced in partnership with the Grand Central Art Center in California]

Libretto by Erik Ehn

Directed by Charles Otte

Noah Becker (b. 1995)

Jamaica, Después (Hibiscus, After) (2019)

Retumbra: Noah Becker, clarinet; Jonah Udall, resonator guitar; Steve Williams,
upright bass

Notes on the Program

Quando L'acqua riflette is about a trip I took to Venice. I was trying to capture one extremely special moment there, when the sun sets, leaving the lights to reflect on the water. (You may hear a build up where this moment is being implied.) In English, the title of this work means "When the Water Reflects". Since Venice is disappearing, I thought I should try to capture the wonderful feelings and moments I had there, in music. I hope you enjoy.

Veiled - It takes a lot of courage to stand up against something that everyone has accepted as normal. Personally as an Iranian Woman, my reaction comes from things I have witnessed happen to the women in my personal life, and to a larger scale, from growing up in a country that actively veils women's presence. For me, it's important to transform anger into a collective force that is both beautiful and resilient. *Veiled* is a tribute to Iranian women that made such transformations possible.

Book of Shadows is for unaccompanied bass flutist. I set out to write an overtly beautiful piece that does not look backward to past styles. Using the idea of shadows as the departure point, I thought about shadows on the bed of a quickly moving stream, shadows on a world with three suns, shadows encountered by a wanderer within a Dali landscape. Going further, I imagined actually entering a painting by Salvador Dali and walking, flying, and perhaps melting while observing the surrealistic shapes and their shadows. This work was commissioned by Leonard Garrison through the University of Idaho. Thank you, Leonard!

Fluid is the first movement of a violin suite in three movements. In this version orchestrated for violin and electronics, the work meditates on sounds of water and rivers, focusing on the San Antonio river named Yanaguana, which roughly translates to "refreshing waters." This piece was originally written for the San Antonio River Authority.

Vireo is a made-for-TV-and-online opera that features the work of over 350 musicians including opera star Deborah Voigt, Kronos Quartet, violinist Jennifer Koh, cellist Joshua Roman, the Trinity Youth Chorus, and Alarm Will Sound. It premiered June 2017 on both KCET in Southern California and Link TV nationwide, with additional screenings across the country. All 12 episodes are streaming at kcet.org/vireo.

The eponymous heroine Vireo, played by soprano Rowen Sabala, is a fourteen-year-old girl genius entangled in the historic obsession with female visionaries as witch-hunters, early psychiatrists, and modern artists have defined them. Based on Bielawa's own research at Yale, then freely adapted and re-imagined by librettist Ehn, *Vireo* is a composite history of the way in which teenage-girl visionaries' writings and rantings have been manipulated, incorporated, and interpreted by the communities of men surrounding them throughout history.

In Episode 5, Vireo and her mother (played by Maria Lazarova) reveal that, although the local witch has been killed, farm animals are still dying, and at Vireo's home, a Cow (played by Kirsten Sollek) steps forward to give its perspective on the situation.

Jamaica, Después (Hibiscus, After) is inspired by the *flor de jamaica* (hibiscus flower), a rich purple-ruby-red in color, which is commonly used in Central America to steep *agua de jamaica* tea. The flower colors and flavors the tea, giving itself back to the water which once nourished it. When the process is complete, the flower deepens in hue and wilts regally.

About the Composers

Carman Moore's credits include commissions and performances by the N.Y. Philharmonic (*Wildfires and Field Songs*), Cleveland Orchestra, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (*The Mystery of Tao*), the Dayton Opera Company, the Orchestra of the Sorbonne, and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra (*Gospel Fuse*), among others. His multimedia *Mass for the 21st Century* for which he created both words and music was commissioned by Lincoln Center and premiered outdoors in 1994 before audiences of thousands. He has taught at the Yale University School of Music, Queens and Brooklyn Colleges, Carnegie-Mellon University, and Manhattanville College. He and the Skymusic Ensemble, which he founded and conducts, were long-time Artists in Residence at New York's St. John the Divine Cathedral. His *MADIBA* honoring the late Nelson Mandela was commissioned and premiered by the American Composers Orchestra in 2015 at Carnegie Hall. *MADIBA* was then performed with ballet choreographed by Jeremy McQueen at the Kennedy Center in April 2017. His *Concerto for Ornette* was premiered in 2013 at Juilliard by The New Juilliard Ensemble Orchestra. In 2013 he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. Featuring his Skymusic Ensemble, in September 2017 Moore conducted his score to the Museum of Modern Art

"Dante's Inferno/Among Friends" show honoring artist Robert Rauschenberg. Mr. Moore has recently co-created and performed with Danish singer Lotte Arnsbjerg a multi-media song cycle concerned with the scourge of child sexual abuse, *Girl of Diamond Mountain*, its spin-off *The Art of Transformation*, concerned with rising from victimhood to empowerment... and their new nature-exalting show *Embracing the Root*. carmanmoore.com

Born in 2009, **Ilaria Loisa Hawley** is the recipient of a 2019 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award and the inaugural recipient of Claire Chase's Pnea Foundation Young Flutist Award. Ilaria's music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic and Face the Music, and she is a composition student of Mathew Fuerst and a flute student of Zara Lawler. She attends PS 314 Muscota New School and enjoys drawing, drama, reading, rock climbing, and making earrings.

Described as "stark" by WNPR and "darkly lyrical" by The New York Times, a winner of the Second International Hildegard competition and a 2019 recipient of OPERA America's Discovery Grant, **Niloufar Nourbakhsh's** music has been performed at numerous festivals and venues including Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Kennedy Center. A founding member and co-director of Iranian Female Composers Association, Nourbakhsh is a strong advocate of music education. She is currently a Teaching Artist Associate for composition students of N.Y. Philharmonic's Young Composers program and teaches piano at Brooklyn Music School, while finishing her doctorate at Stony Brook University. niloufarnourbakhsh.com

Robert Dick is known globally as the composer/performer who has redefined the sonic and musical possibilities of the flute. His solo performances have been likened to the experience of hearing a full orchestra. Dick's flute music has been played by legions of flutists worldwide and his compositions have been recognized with a Guggenheim Fellowship, two NEA Composer Fellowships, a Koussevitzky Foundation Commission, and many more. In addition to his flute music, Dick likes to write chamber music and has a lifelong interest in low-tech musique concrète. robertdick.net

Darian Donovan Thomas is a Brooklyn based interdisciplinary artist interested in the intersections of medium, genre, and audience. He uses violin, electronics, and extra-musical materials in his works to discuss matters of racism in the US, uphold ancient indigenous stories, and create abstract nature-scapes. Darian is a Bang on a Can Summer Festival Composition Fellow, Sō Percussion Summer Institute Fellow, and New Amsterdam Records Composer Lab Fellow. darianthomas.myportfolio.com

Lisa Bielawa is a Rome Prize winner in Musical Composition, the recipient of the 2017 Music Award from the American Academy of Arts & Letters and was named a William Randolph Hearst Visiting Artist Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society for 2018. Kulturprojekte Berlin recently premiered her work *Mauer Broadcast*, a series of pop-up choral performances for the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. Her music has also been premiered at the NY PHIL BIENNIAL, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, SHIFT Festival, and Naumburg Orchestral Concerts. She began touring as the vocalist with the Philip Glass Ensemble in 1992. In 2019, she became the inaugural Composer-in-Residence/Chief Curator of the Philip Glass Institute at The New School. She received a 2018 Los Angeles Area Emmy nomination for her made-for-TV-and-online opera *Vireo: The Spiritual Biography of a Witch's Accuser*, created with librettist Erik Ehn and director Charles Otte. lisabielawa.net

Noah Becker is a composer, clarinetist, and alto saxophonist living and working in New York. His music addresses the interplay of the vibrations of sound, and how we relate to them physiologically—through our bodies as resonant listeners, and our minds as co-creators of music and art. noahbeckermusic.com

About Face the Music

Face the Music is Kaufman Music Center's contemporary music education program for teenagers, and the country's only youth program dedicated to studying and performing post-genre music by living composers. Praised for "stunning performances" by The New York Times, Face the Music features a collection of ensembles and lessons for young composers.

Vasudevan (Vasu) Panicker is Director of Face the Music at Kaufman Music Center, the nation's only youth ensemble program dedicated to music by living composers. As a born-and-raised New Yorker, Vasu attended LaGuardia Arts High School, Manhattan School of Music Pre-College Division, City University of New York (B.S., Contemporary Music Studies), and the Aaron Copland School of Music (Advanced Certificate). Vasu hopes to guide students in defining both their own life-missions and the part that music will play in their lives, in service of building a better society through the arts.

Composers Now empowers living composers, celebrates the diversity of their voices, and honors the significance of their contributions to the cultural fabric of society.

We are pleased to inaugurate this recent and new initiative:

First Commission: select pre-college aged composers from notable New York music programs - e.g., Luna Composition Lab, New York Philharmonic Very Young Composers - receive a Composers Now commission and world premiere at the Festival Opening Event.

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Cover photos: Darian Donovan Thomas by Bria Woods, Noah Becker by Natalie Deryn Johnson, Ilaria Loisa Hawley by Anthony Hawley, Niloufar Nourbakhsh by Michael Yu, Carman Moore by Pearl Perkins, Robert Dick by Günter Horn, Lisa Bielawa by Carlin Ma, Face the Music (ensemble photo) by Richard Termine, Vasudevan Panicker by Reuben Radding.