

AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM, PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

PROGRAMS REPORT

JULY - DECEMBER 2014



Subito

October 2014 Grantees



Dan Blacksberg



Gene Coleman



Andrew Davis



Heidi Jacob

Dan Blacksberg will record the “Klezmer Trombone Record,” a CD of original klezmer music. This will be Dan Blacksberg’s first album as a leader, and the first klezmer recording ever to feature the trombone as the lead instrument. Subito funds will support musicians’ rehearsal time, recording and mixing costs.

Gene Coleman will record recent and new works in Philadelphia and Chicago with Ensemble N_JP. The new works will be created during a residency at the University of Louisville in March of 2015. Several local Philadelphia musicians will be involved in the project. Subito funds will support the recording costs.

Andrew Davis will record two pieces for violin and piano and solo piano at Hi5 Recordings with engineer Ben Reismann. The recordings will appear on his forthcoming debut album. Subito funds will cover musician fees, recording, and mixing and mastering.

Heidi Jacob will make a new recording titled “Beneath the Winter Light” to be released on Parma Records. The recording will feature five of Heidi Jacob’s works composed between 2006 and 2012. Subito funds will be applied towards the cost of manufacturing, distribution, marketing, and promotion.



Josh Lawrence



Matthew Levy



Rene Orth



Peter Paulsen

Josh Lawrence will finish post-production work on The Fresh Cut Orchestra's second album "From the Vine, Vol. 2" to be released on Ropeadope Records. Subito funding will support the mixing and mastering of the album by Grammy award-winning engineer Glenn Barratt.

Matthew Levy will create and produce a recording of a new micro-concerto for electric guitar (with double bass, percussion, and string quartet). Performing musicians will include Ben Monder, Francois Zayas, Chris Tordini, and Dianne Monroe. The recording will be included in a forthcoming album release featuring new works. Subito funds will be applied to performing artist fees, studio fees, and engineer fees.

Rene Orth will produce a new one-act chamber opera "Emptying the House" (with a libretto written by Mark Campbell), which will be premiered in the spring of 2015 at the Curtis Institute of Music. Subito funds will support artist fees and stage director fees.

Peter Paulsen will create a film documentary titled "The Making of a Song Cycle." It will focus on the making of his three movement work titled "Songs of Late Summer" as well as its subsequent live performance. Subito funds will be applied to rehearsal and performance fees for musicians, video and audio recording fees, and travel expenses.



Kala Pierson



Kile Smith



Joshua Stamper



Alyssa Weinberg

Kala Pierson will attend a two-week residency in the Grand Piano Studio of the Visby International Center for Composers (ISCM Gotland Section) in Gotland, Sweden. During the residency, she will focus on completing a baritone and piano piece titled, “Surge.” The work will be recorded and released in late 2015. Subito funds will be applied towards travel expenses.

Kile Smith will compose a musical finale that will be premiered at Lyric Fest’s Shakespeare-focused concert for youth and families. The new piece will be written for a vocal trio. Subito support will cover piano moving and tuning, and audio and video recordings of the rehearsals and performance.

Joshua Stamper will create RIVERS (a work for music and video), which will be released in 2015. RIVERS explores many facets of rivers and their impact on topography and human beings by focusing on the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers, and the dramatic impact they have had on Philadelphia. Originally conceived as a community-based project, RIVERS will now also become a 15-minute documentary video. Subito funding will cover the performing musicians and dancers as well as cinematographer fees.

Alyssa Weinberg will produce a concert with her ensemble Duende, a new interdisciplinary ensemble, which focuses on evening-length works for music and dance. Duende’s debut pop-up performance (March 2015) will take place in a non-traditional venue in Philadelphia. Subito funds will support production related costs such as venue, audio and visual fees, set design, and costumes.

Community Partners

Project Report 2014

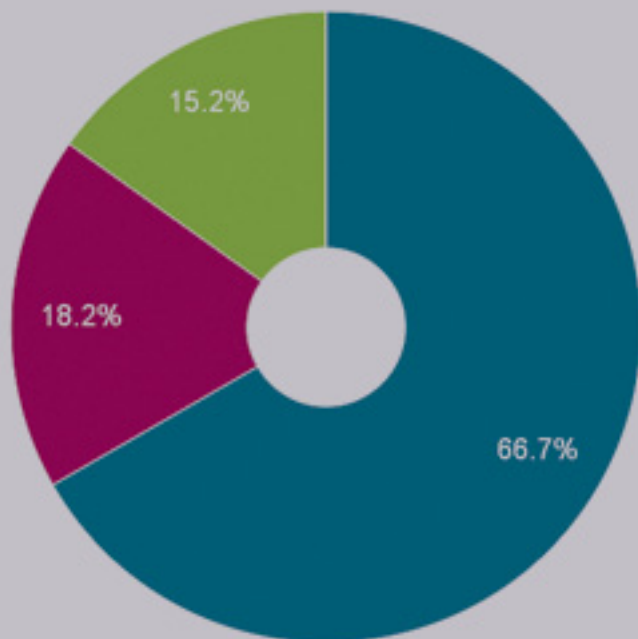
If You Could Hear These Walls

June to October 2014

Our collaboration with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program was a pilot project that sought to explore new possibilities with our community outreach program. We modified the existing Community Partners model (which was entirely composer-produced) so that ACF Philadelphia and a collaborative partner (Mural Arts) completely managed production and planning while the composers focused on creating music and residency activities. The fourteen composer residencies culminated in October with a concert at each mural site. We were fortunate to have an engaged audience at each event; they consisted largely of people who lived nearby. The staff at Mural Arts offered dedication and critical support throughout the entire project. All of the composers and numerous musicians brought a sincerity and passion to these communities that was visibly discernable to anyone who was able to witness the residencies or the concert. Although the composers' outreach efforts occurred largely behind the scenes, we were able to capture the impact through a documentary video, to be premiered at International House Philadelphia on July 12, 2015.

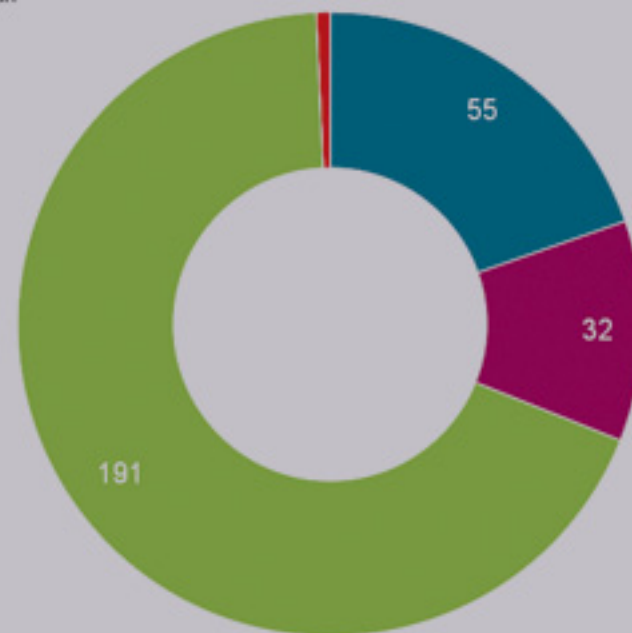
Demographics: Total Community Outreach

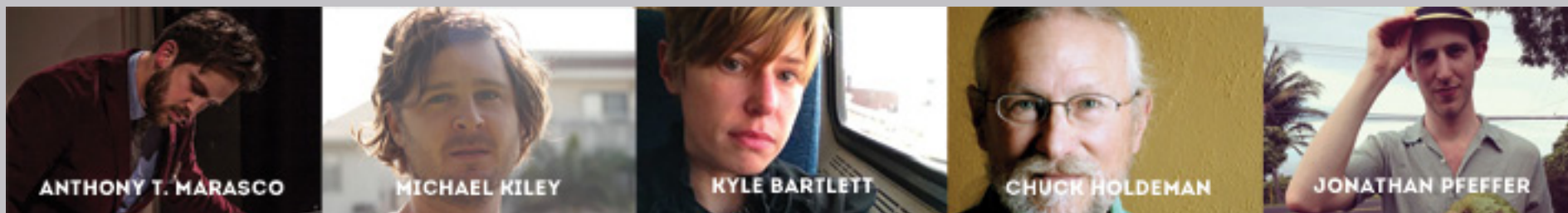
- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian



Demographics: Total Concert Attendance

- African American
- Asian
- Caucasian
- Latino





Southeast by Southeast

The composers who Southeast by Southeast (1927 S. 7th Street) approached a very vibrant community comprised of refugees from Bhutan, Burma, and Nepal. While language was certainly a barrier (most of the community members do not speak English) the composers were able to locate the community at large in one meeting place: the Southeast by Southeast storefront community center. This community center still exists years after its planned closure thanks to the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts' continuing efforts. The community center is constantly accessed by the community and provides valuable services that both unite the community and help them transition to a new life in a foreign country.

All five of the composers involved community members directly into their pieces. As a result, the music they wrote was partly inspired by the mural and partly by the people. The community members not only contributed to the musical materials for the composers pieces (as with Bartlett, Marasco, and Pfeffer) but some took the stage to perform the compositions (as with Kiley and Holdeman). And two community members in particular, Than Than and Esther Moo (pictured performing on the next page) wrote lyrics for the music that Michael Kiley composed. These two young community members received vocal pedagogy, music theory, and songwriting lessons from Michael. According to Michael, months after the project, Than Than and Esther Moo "are still really excited by what they were able to do."

Through community translators and substantial help from artist Shira Walinsky, the composers were able to have conversations with these refugees, though ultimately it was the language of music that bridged the gap and connected different cultures.

The concert at the Southeast by Southeast mural took place on Saturday, October 11th. Concert production began with setup on a cool and rainy morning. Mural Arts staff had obtained a street closure for both 7th and Emily Streets, the blocks nearest to the mural. After a screen printing activity at the community center and a walking tour (part of the DesignPhiladelphia 2014 festival) the concert began. Members of the surrounding community ventured outside their homes to listen and to watch the performers, some of whom they knew personally, and either huddled under tents or stood for a while on the sidewalk. Before each piece, the composers spoke about their outreach, the mural, and how both had inspired the music they created.



The program consisted of the following compositions:

Chuck Holdeman's *Mural Music*

Kyle Bartlett's *Bright Counterpoint*

Anthony T Marasco's *Sensitive Ecosystem*

Michael Kiley's *With Happiness for You, World*

**Jonathan Pfeffer's piece Colony Collapse was recorded and included in the documentary.*

Photography by Steve Weinik





Peace is a Haiku Song

The mural at 1425 Christian Street contains an inspiring message of peace, communicated through art and poetry. The poetry features words from Maya Angelou, Sonja Sanchez, Alice Walker, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The five composers who chose this mural took this theme as well as their personal responses to the mural and brought the composition process to local community members. Bobby Zankel held composition workshops with the Clef Club youth ensemble. After working with these young musicians, Zankel said of them:

“The young people are remarkably attentive, tremendous, curious, very determined...The unique and highly personal concepts that I shared with them did not scare them off or seem too obscure.”

Ami Yares held sessions on songwriting with youth through at nearby Mighty Writers. Using the mural’s theme, he guided students through the process and helped them transform their own thoughts and words into music. Lucas Brown took the Remnant Choir at the Ebenezer 7th Day Adventist Church through his composition process and the music he composed for the project. Of his time with the community, Lucas said:

“The energy was fantastic and I felt a real connection by singing with them...that illustrated my theme about building relationships through music more than any conversation ever could.”

Evan Solot and Andrew Bleckner both engaged the Singing City choir and the local community at Bainbridge House. Evan Solot continued his earlier relationship with poet Sonja Sanchez in this project. Her voice and presence added a more powerful inspiration to the music that Evan and Andrew composed. Sonja also spoke at the community outreach session and attended the concert.

The day of the concert was full of activity. The weather was crisp, the light intensely bright, and there was a constant buzz of activity from the stage and sound crew as well as the tens of musicians arriving on the scene to setup and perform. The stage, fully extended, presented an impressive structure in which the musicians began to assemble. But then after several hours of continual set-up, performers and audience members suddenly focused and became hushed. The first two pieces featured fifty-voice Singing City Choir, who spilled off the stage and completely filled the space between it and the parking lot fence. With the aid of sound reinforcement, the choir projected over the afternoon noises of the city and transformed the words of Sonja Sanchez into a musical expression. As the concert continued, each composer's interpretation of peace gradually coalesced into a clam and reflective state. The mural artists and poet Sonja Sanchez were in attendance and agreed that the music had brought new life to their work.

The program consisted of the following compositions:

Andrew Bleckner's *A White Butterfly*

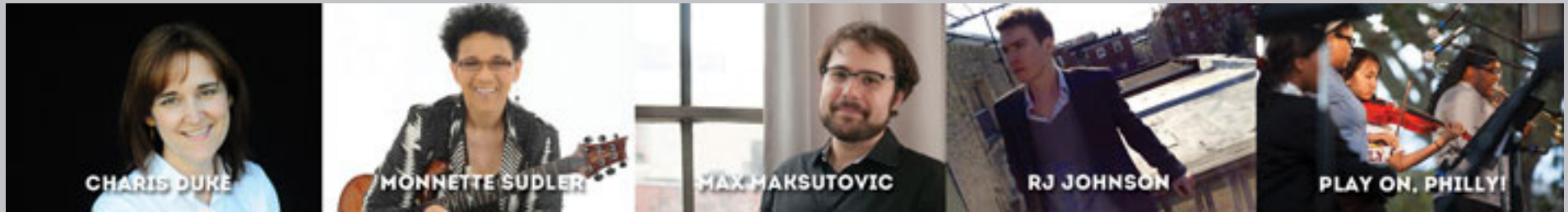
Evan Solot's *Peace is a Haiku Song*

Bobby Zankel's *The Great Vow*

Ami Yares's *Yes, You Can Hear These Walls, But Are You Listening?*

Lucas Brown's *Meditation on Peace*





Henry Ossawa Tanner: Letters of Influence

Another mural with an impressive and inspiring story, it constantly reminds all who gaze upon it of the rich history and significant achievements of painter Henry Ossawa Tanner. Not only this, but the way in which it was created, a collaboration between one artist and troubled inner-city youths, is a less known and far less celebrated story. Both offered profound inspiration for the composers. The music revisited these stories and the composers who ventured into nearby communities at Girard College and George Meade School were able to share them with the young students.

Composers Monnette Sudler, Max Maksutovic, and RJ Johnson met with a large group of students at Girard College. Monnette Sudler, addressing nearly 100 students, introduced them to Henry Ossawa Tanner and his legacy. She also explained the project, the piece she had created and how she went about composing it. Finally, she gave them an overview of the instruments featured in her piece and provided a few students with an opportunity to play with them. Of her time with the students, Girard College teacher Paul Eaton said:

"The children were excited and inspired...The students asked when you were coming back!"

Max Maksutovic addressed the same group and discussed the piece he wrote in response to the mural. He also introduced them to the music of the Balkans courtesy of a lively demo by the West Philadelphia Orchestra. RJ Johnson addressed a smaller class of older students with his jazz trio. After explaining how he transformed his inspiration of the mural into an original composition, he demonstrated his process in realtime with the musicians he brought along.

Charis Duke met with the community at George Meade school, introducing students to her music, the mural, and also providing one-on-one experiences with orchestral instruments. She also had the students create their own instruments from found materials.

Compared to the previous mural concerts, and despite its location just outside the walls of Girard College, the performance here had more of a neighborhood community feel, which was owed to the curiosity of residents in the neighborhood and especially on North College Avenue where we had setup the stage. In addition to being a part of the audience, local community members shared their thoughts and even their own food! There was an eclectic mix of musical styles, like all of the previous concerts. As a special addition to the celebration of this mural, we invited student composers at Play On, Philly! (POP) to write and perform small compositions in response to Henry Ossawa Tanner.



The program featured the following compositions:

Monnette Sudler's *A Musical Journey: Henry O. Tanner Speaks*

Maximilian Maksutovic's *L'image*

RJ Johnson's *Monastrell*

Charis Duke's *Out of the Blue*

A Selection of Play On, Philly! compositions by: Laila Hamiter, Yani Turner, Makeda Wubayeh, Empress Graham, Moly Narom, Tessa Calbert, Christina Rooks, and Nwai Alfa



Photography by Steve Weinik

