Music is one of the most significant forces for good in the world. Fun is one of the most important ingredients in any successful venture. CCCC nurtures enterprising experiences for music-making and fun!

In its inaugural 2018-2019 Season, CCCC took bold steps to become a leader in the field of contemporary classical music by developing and presenting significant new work. We proudly recognize the achievements of our many artists and are thrilled to share this glimpse into our celebration of creativity and community. I offer thanks to the CCCC team, artists, supporters, and audience members who came together to make this first season an extraordinary success.

We bring people together to further music’s flexibility, diversity, and innate power. We are committed to ever-widening participation.

The history of civilization is written in art, whose creation and appreciation is universal across continents, cultures, spiritualties, languages and, at the same time, is intensely personal. I believe that, thanks to your support, CCCC is nurturing and enriching personal journeys.

Please join us regularly at CCCC events to experience a wellspring of excitement and merriment. You are a vitally important part of our artistic vision and journey.

Together, we will discover new ways to appreciate this beautiful and ever-expanding art form.

Augusta Read Thomas
CCCC Founder and Director
Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition

Annual Report

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Special Thanks to our Supporters

The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition is sponsored in part by generous gifts from Carolyn (Kay) Bucksbaum, Gay Stanek, the Sanford J. Grossman Charitable Trust, Debra K. Moskovits, and Ingrid E. Gould and Robert Hsiung.

Special thanks to John Bierbusse for his support and guidance.
Established in 2016, the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition is a dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary environment for the creation, performance, and study of new music. The Center is distinguished by its formation within an uncompromising, relentlessly searching, and ceaselessly innovative scholarly environment that celebrates excellence, presents new possibilities for intellectual dialogue, and helps advance the careers of emerging and established artists.

Made up of an annual concert series, visiting artists, distinguished composers, graduate student-led projects, a Postdoctoral Researcher, and much more, the CCCC is building a reputation as Chicago’s hub for contemporary music.
137 Musicians

43 World Premiere works by established and emerging composers

1,422 Attendees

30 Works by undergraduate, graduate, and PhD student composers were performed

7 CCCC Commissioned Works

10 Concerts of contemporary, improvisational, and experimental music
Contemporary Concert Series

In its sixth decade of presenting contemporary music, beginning with the Contemporary Chamber Players under Ralph Shapey in 1964 and continuing as Contempo in 2002 under Shulamit Ran and in 2015 under Marta Ptaszyńska, the University of Chicago started a new chapter with the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition’s inaugural concert season in 2018-19.

“The University of Chicago’s distinguished tradition of creating and presenting contemporary music is inspiring,” said Augusta Read Thomas. “The most generous way I can think to honor any rich tradition is to work vigorously to continue to keep it thriving, dynamic, and growing with artistic vision, diversity, talented artists, and passion.”

In this inaugural concert season, the CCCC presented ten concerts featuring 43 world premiere works — seven that were commissioned by the Center. The new resident group of musicians, the Grossman Ensemble, was formed and had its concert debut in December. Concert programming included contemporary, experimental, electronic, and improvisational works from a variety of styles — the CCCC has no “house style”.

Concerts took place at the University of Chicago’s Hyde Park campus, as well as in venues across the city (Symphony Center, Hairpin Arts Center, and Constellation). Four of the concerts were presented in partnership with UChicago Presents and offered as a contemporary subscription series. As accessibility is important to the CCCC, ticket prices were kept low and offered for free to students.

“First seasons don’t get much bigger, smarter or more multi-dimensional than this.”
— Howard Reich, Chicago Tribune

Help us create new music

We are committed to creating new works by a variety of composers, from senior luminaries in the field of new music to exceptional junior composers. You can help create new music and support a composer by joining the CCCC’s Commission Club. Leave a legacy in the form of music, or honor a special person or event in your life. Partner with us today! Visit cccc.uchicago.edu for more details.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yarn/Wire</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>174</td>
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<tr>
<td>Works by Enno Poppe, Misato Mochizuki and world premieres by David Clay Mettens and Will Myers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tyshawn Sorey Trio</td>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recent compositions by Tyshawn Sorey with improvised works</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossman Ensemble with Ben Bolter</td>
<td>December 2018</td>
<td>284</td>
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<tr>
<td>World premieres by Shulamit Ran, David Rakowski, Sam Pluta, and CCCC Postdoctoral Researcher Tonia Ko</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Spektral+1, Plus One</td>
<td>January 2019</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Six world premieres by graduate composers performed by Spektral Quartet and six guest artists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civic Orchestra of Chicago with Cliff Colnot</td>
<td>February 2019</td>
<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nine world premiere works by graduate composers were recorded over five sessions <em>(scheduled concert cancelled due to weather)</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossman Ensemble with James Baker</td>
<td>March 2019</td>
<td>230</td>
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<tr>
<td>World premieres by Chen Yi, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Rodrigo Bussad, and Jack Hughes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spaces Inside Spaces with ~Nois</td>
<td>April 2019</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seven world premiere works by graduate composers and CCCC Postdoctoral Researcher Tonia Ko</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chimefest</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>150+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two concerts featured two world premiere works along with talks, presentations, and improvisations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ensemble Dal Niente with Michael Lewanski</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five world premiere works by undergraduate, graduate, and Master of Arts Program in the Humanities composers, along with a work by Tonia Ko</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grossman Ensemble with David Dzubay</td>
<td>June 2019</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World premieres by Steve Lehman, Kate Soper, David Dzubay, and Joungbum Lee</td>
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</table>
In 2018-19 CCCC brought in top-tier contemporary music ensembles from across the country to engage with Chicago audiences, share their repertoire, and provide unique opportunities for collaboration with composers who are crafting new works for these diverse groups.

**Guest Ensembles**

**Spektral Quartet** is known for creating seamless connections across centuries, drawing in the listener with charismatic deliveries, interactive concert formats, an up-close atmosphere, and bold, inquisitive programming. The quartet has served as Ensemble-in-Residence with the Department of Music, helping to lead the Chamber Music Program and provide lessons and coachings for student performers.

In addition to its work at UChicago, the quartet served as a guest ensemble for the graduate student-led project Spektral+1, Plus One.

**Yarn/Wire**

The NYC-based piano and percussion quartet is dedicated to expanding the repertoire written for its instrumentation through commissions and collaborative initiatives that aim to build a new and lasting body of work.

**Tyshawn Sorey Trio**

Sorey is considered to be among the most important young artists at the intersection between composed and improvised music, known for his impossibly virtuosic technique and his mind-boggling ability to effortlessly master even the most difficult written scores.

**~NOIS**

This Chicago-based saxophone quartet defies categorization by working between the boundary of contemporary classical music and experimental improvisation.

**Ensemble Dal Niente**

Ensemble Dal Niente performs new and experimental chamber music with dedication, virtuosity, and an exploratory spirit.

**RAGE THORMBONES**

RAGE THORMBONES is an ongoing collaboration between trombonist/composers Matt Barbier and Weston Olencki that explores the outer reaches of instrumental performance and brass technique.
The Grossman Ensemble, lauded by Howard Reich of the Chicago Tribune for its “considerable polish and aplomb,” successfully workshopped, recorded, and performed the world premiere of 12 works by exemplary professional and student composers.

The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition commissioned seven new works from Shulamit Ran, David Rakowski, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Chen Yi, Kate Soper, Steve Lehman, and David Dzubay. Three special guests — Ben Bolter, James Baker, and David Dzubay — were invited to lead the workshopping process and conduct the ensemble in concert.

Over the course of the year, the Ensemble hosted three open rehearsals in preparation for its concerts, offering unprecedented access into its unique artistic process.

**Creative Process**
For both musicians and composers, the time and resources dedicated to the creation of each work is noteworthy. Each piece receives five days of rehearsal with the composer present before it is performed.

“The way that it’s structured is almost like a laboratory for composers...here we come back once every month in the lead up to concerts in such a way that the composer can really work with us throughout their process.”

— Tim Munro, flute

“For this ensemble, a lot of that marinating happens before the concert. You get a lot of time letting things sit with you before anybody even hears it, and it’s really quite remarkable...The CCCC has done a really tremendous job of kind of reshaping the way you can think about the process of writing music and performing it.”

— Ben Melsky, harp
Grossman Ensemble Roster

The Grossman Ensemble is made possible by support from the Sanford J. Grossman Charitable Trust

Tim Munro, flute
• Flutist, speaker, writer, and teacher
• Member of Eighth Blackbird from 2006-2015 and winner of three GRAMMY awards; Creative Partner with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra
• Oberlin College (AD)

Andrew Nogal, oboe
• Orchestral performer, chamber musician, and interpreter of contemporary music
• Member of Ensemble Dal Niente and guest performer with Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound, and other ensembles
• Northwestern University (BM, MM)

Katie Schoepflin Jimoh, clarinet
• Clarinetist, vocalist, pianist, and composer
• Member of Ensemble Dal Niente, Katet, and faculty at the Walden School
• Indiana University (BM) and McGill University (MM)

Taimur Sullivan, saxophone
• Associate Professor of Saxophone at Northwestern University, and member of PRISM Quartet
• “Soloist Champion” by Meet the Composer for world premiering over 200 solo and chamber works
• Michigan State University (MM)

Matthew Oliphant, horn
• New music and chamber music specialist
• Member of Ensemble Dal Niente and aperiodic, frequent guest performer with ensembles in Chicago
• Northwestern University (BM, MM)
Greg Beyer, percussion
• Fulbright Scholar, composer, educator, and percussionist on faculty at Northern Illinois University
• Member of Ensemble Dal Niente and Arcomusical
• Manhattan School of Music (DMA)

John Corkill, percussion
• Chamber musician and collaborator with new music ensembles around the Chicago area
• Faculty member at University of Chicago and Loyola University
• Northwestern University (BM) and Yale University School of Music (MM)

Ben Melsky, harp
• Harpist dedicated to breaking pre-conceived notions of the harp's capabilities
• Executive Director and member of Ensemble Dal Niente
• Northwestern University (BM, MM, DMA)

Daniel Pesca, piano
• Pianist, composer, and chamber musician; co-director of the Zohn Collective; collaborator with new music ensembles in the US
• Assistant Professor of Music at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County
• Eastman School of Music (DMA)

Spektral Quartet
Maeve Feinberg, violin; Clara Lyon, violin
Doyle Armbrust, viola; Russell Rolen, cello
• Nominated for two GRAMMY Awards; named “Chicagoans of the Year” by The Chicago Tribune in 2017
• Commissioned over 85 composers for new works
• Ensemble-In-Residence at UChicago Department of Music since 2012
Student Experience

The Composition program at the UChicago Department of Music is structured to develop creative and technical abilities in writing music. Students take individual lessons with members of the world-renowned composition faculty and have the opportunity to work with distinguished guest composers. Student and faculty composers meet weekly for composition seminars to discuss issues related to musical materials, imagination, design, aesthetics, and compositional techniques with leaders in the field from across the globe.

The creative work of students is fully integrated into all aspects of the CCCC, and the wealth of public performance opportunities is extraordinary. Students write new works for world-class ensembles such as Yarn/Wire, Grossman Ensemble, Spektral Quartet, Civic Orchestra of Chicago, ~NOIS, Ensemble Dal Niente, and RAGE THORMBONES, that receive beautifully recorded world premieres on the CCCC concert series.

2018-19 Composition Seminar and Colloquia guests included:

- Joël Bons, Atlas Ensemble, Netherlands
- Aaron Holloway-Nahum, Riot Ensemble, England
- Kyong Mee Choi, Roosevelt University
- David Rakowski, Professor of Composition at Brandeis University
- Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Professor of Composition at Eastman School of Music
- Kate Soper, Iva Dee Hiatt Professor of Music at Smith College and co-director/Wet Ink Ensemble
- Tyshawn Sorey, Assistant Professor, Music Department; Affiliate Faculty, Department for African-American Studies at Wesleyan University
- Amy Williams, Associate Professor at the University of Pittsburgh
- Krzysztof Wolek, Professor of Composition at the University of Louisville
- Chen Yi, Lorena Searcy Cravens/Millsap/Missouri Distinguished Endowed Professor in Music Composition at University of Missouri-Kansas
Postdoctoral Researcher

The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition offers an annual yearlong position to an exceptionally promising composer writing contemporary classical music, with facilities and resources to develop new works for performance by the ensembles-in-residence. Researchers also participate in CCCC’s workshops and colloquia; coach musicians on contemporary music performance; and teach one class each year in the University’s College Core curriculum. This singular opportunity allows a composer in the early stages of their career to gain unprecedented exposure and intellectual engagement in the dynamic setting of the University of Chicago’s prestigious music composition program.

Heading into the third year of the program, there have been a total of 125 applicants reflecting strong artistic, national, or educational ties to 33 countries across the globe.

Aaron Helgeson
2017/2018

Tonia Ko
2018/2019

Ashkan Behzadi
2019/2020

CHIME Studio — Computer Music
Sam Pluta, Director

The CHIME (Chicago Integrated Media Experimental) Studio is a space dedicated to creativity in the many realms of electronic music and its integration with other media. CHIME’s recording and surround-sound mixing facility supports the production of new electronic, electro-acoustic, and multimedia works, and encourages the development of new software and hardware environments for musical expression.

The Studio presents the annual CHIMEFEST—a two-day symposium that engages electronics performers and improvisers from around the world. Graduate student composers are invited to present their research alongside professionals and scholars.

“A highlight of my participation was performing electronics improvisation for my colleagues and peers alongside three amazing guests. I’m glad CHIMEFest has a platform to share that part of my music making identity. Presenting my research alongside scholars leading the field pushed me to view my work differently and propelled me to pursue formal scholarship in computer music more seriously.”

— Ted Moore, graduate composer
Graduate Student-Led Projects

CCCC provided funding, along with marketing support and guidance from staff as the graduate student composers were invited to lead the production of their own projects from start to finish. In addition to presenting two successful concerts (Spektral+1, Plus One and Spaces Inside Spaces) the students gained indispensable entrepreneurial, organizational, and budgeting skills through the execution of the projects.

Guest Composers and Conductors

This past season brought a variety of guests to the CCCC — from senior leaders in the field of new music to exceptional emerging artists. Three established new music conductors and seven composers were invited to work with the Grossman Ensemble, spending ten weeks reviewing, workshopping, and rehearsing new works.

“[The CCCC’s process] is close to ideal, in that you really do get to go more deeply into the essence into what you are trying to accomplish. I so hope that this sets a precedent and that other groups begin to follow in the footsteps of this group.”

— Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, composer

Accomplishments

We’re proud of the accomplishments of our faculty and students. Among many awards, Assistant Professor of Music Sam Pluta received a 2019 Guggenheim Fellowship. PhD student Jack Hughes won the 2019 Underwood Commission from the American Composers Orchestra, following the submission of his work Needlepoint, that was created as part of the project with the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Other student composers won awards at the 2018 Ithaca College International Heckscher Composition Prize, 2018 Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Award Competition, 2019 ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composers Awards, and the SOCAN Foundation Award for Young Composers.

Documentation

To help build a lasting body of new music, the CCCC is committed to quality documentation of the premiere works. Four-time GRAMMY Award Winning recording engineer Christopher Willis creates superb archival and commercial-quality edited recordings that can be accessed online, anywhere in the world. High-quality video of rehearsals, interviews with artists, and performances are shared on the CCCC website to reach beyond those in the local area who cannot attend the concerts.
C CCCC Personnel

Augusta Read Thomas
CCCC Founder and Director;
Co-Director,
Grossman Ensemble;
University Professor

Anthony Cheung
Co-Director,
Grossman Ensemble;
Assistant Professor,
Department of Music

Sam Pluta
Co-Director,
Grossman Ensemble;
Assistant Professor,
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UChicago Presents

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Graphic Designer

Margo Strebig
Director of Communications

Christopher Willis
Recording Engineer