

# metropolis ensemble



## CONRAD TAO / PIANO

Conrad Tao has appeared worldwide as a pianist and composer, and has been dubbed a musician of “probing intellect and open-hearted vision” by *The New York Times*, a “thoughtful and mature composer” by NPR, and “ferociously talented” by *Time Out New York*. In June of 2011, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the Department of Education named Tao a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts awarded him a YoungArts gold medal in music. Later that year, Tao was named a Gilmore Young Artist, an honor awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation. In May of 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant, and in 2018 was named a Lincoln Center Emerging Artist.

Tao begins his 2018-19 season with the World Premiere of his composition, *Everything Must Go*, commissioned and performed by the New York Philharmonic. Tao also inaugurates *Nightcap*, a new series at the New York Philharmonic where performers curate a late-night concert, joined by dancer-

choreographer Caleb Teicher and Charmaine Lee for an evening of multidisciplinary performances.

He makes his LA Opera debut in the West Coast premiere of David Lang's new work, *the loser*, where he plays the onstage role of the apparition and memory of Glenn Gould. In January 2019, Tao and dancer-choreographer Caleb Teicher continue to develop *More Forever*, their evening-length multidisciplinary work which explores American vernacular dance traditions, as part of Guggenheim's Works & Process series.

Tao continues to perform concertos with orchestras around the world including returns to the Swedish Radio Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, the Baltimore Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, and Orchestra dell'Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia with Antonio Pappano. Conrad also performs duo chamber music concerts with violinist Stefan Jackiw, including a debut performance at 92Y, ensemble engagements with the JCT Trio in Seoul, South Korea; Lincoln, Nebraska; and Interlochen, Michigan, as well as solo recital programs.

This season comes after his Lincoln Center recital debut, a residency with the Utah Symphony, and debut engagements with the Atlanta Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, and Seattle Symphony, and return engagements with the Berner Symphoniker, the Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra Verdi Milano, and the Malaysian Philharmonic. Last season, Tao performed in his own recital and composed a new work for Paul Huang and Orion Weiss at Washington Performing Arts Society, and opened the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra's season with the world premiere of a newly commissioned work, *Over*. Additionally, Tao developed a multimedia work, *Ceremony*, with vocalist Charmaine Lee.

In June of 2013, Tao kicked off the inaugural UNPLAY Festival at the powerHouse Arena in Brooklyn, which he curated and produced. The festival, designated a "critics' pick" by *Time Out New York* and hailed by *The New York Times* for its "clever organization" and "endlessly engaging" performances, featured Conrad with guest artists performing a wide variety of new works. Across three nights encompassing electroacoustic music, performance art, youth ensembles, and much more, UNPLAY explored the fleeting ephemera of the Internet, the possibility of a 21st-century canon, and music's role in social activism and critique. That month, Tao, a Warner Classics recording artist, also released *Voyages*, his first full-length for the label, declared a "spiky debut" by *The New Yorker's* Alex Ross. Of the album, NPR wrote: "Tao proves himself to

be a musician of deep intellectual and emotional means – as the thoughtful programming on this album...proclaims." His next album, *Pictures*, which slots works by David Lang, Toru Takemitsu, Elliott Carter, and Tao himself alongside Mussorgsky's familiar and beloved *Pictures at an Exhibition*, was hailed by *The New York Times* as "a fascinating album [by] a thoughtful artist and dynamic performer...played with enormous imagination, color and command."

Tao's career as composer has garnered an eight consecutive ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and the Carlos Surinach Prize from BMI. In the 2013-14 season, while serving as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's artist-in-residence, Tao premiered his orchestral composition, *The world is very different now*. Commissioned in observance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, the work was described by *The New York Times* as "shapely and powerful." Most recently, the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia commissioned a new work for piano, orchestra, and electronics, *An Adjustment*, which received its premiere in September 2015 with Tao at the piano. *The Philadelphia Inquirer* declared the piece abundant in "compositional magic," a "most imaginative [integration of] spiritual post-Romanticism and '90s club music."

Tao was born in Urbana, Illinois, in 1994. He has studied piano with Emilio del Rosario in Chicago and Yoheved Kaplinsky in New York, and composition with Christopher Theofanidis.