SF SYMPHONY

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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY ANNOUNCES CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE SEVENTH ANNUAL EMERGING BLACK COMPOSERS PROJECT

The competition looks to further identify and promote inventive Black composers, of any music genre, under the age of 35

SAN FRANCISCO, CA—The San Francisco Symphony announced today that applications are now open for the seventh annual Emerging Black Composers Project (EBCP) Michael Morgan Prize.

The winner of the 2027 Michael Morgan Prize will receive a $15,000 award for a new music commission that will receive its world premiere with the San Francisco Symphony during the 2028–29 season. The winner will also receive mentorship from Edwin Outwater, music director of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (SFCM); Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, Resident Conductor of Engagement and Education at the San Francisco Symphony and chair of the EBCP selection committee; and Jason Hainsworth, Executive Director of Roots, Jazz, and American Music and Associate Dean of Community Development at SFCM.

Applicants to this year's project will also be considered for three additional commissioning prizes awarded by the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, New Century Chamber Orchestra, and International Contemporary Ensemble.

The Emerging Black Composers Project is administered by the San Francisco Symphony; the San Francisco Conservatory of Music is a supporting partner to the program.

The award was named the Michael Morgan Prize in 2023 in honor of the late maestro, the EBCP's first chair and co-founder.

"I never tire of hearing new music and discovering how different composers approach the world around them," said Bartholomew-Poyser. "Every year, the Emerging Black Composers Project gives us the chance to encounter incredible new-to-us composers with something distinctive to

say, and it's a true pleasure to help create opportunities for these artists. We've heard some amazing new music from our composer laureates over the past six years, and I can't wait to hear what this year's applicants bring to the table."

The 2027 recipient award will mark the 17th commission from the Emerging Black Composers Project and its partnerships since it launched in 2020.

"Each year, the Emerging Black Composers Project expands its reach, attracting new partners and refining and growing the support network for its composers," said Outwater. "The dedication and love from this project is deep and grows with each passing year. We hope that applications continue to grow as well, and more and more composers take advantage of this incredible opportunity. Just applying gets your music seen and heard by a dedicated and supportive group of musicians."

The Emerging Black Composers Project is a 10-year commitment to spotlight early-career Black American composers and their music. It was launched in 2020 with the first-place commission awarded in June 2021 to Trevor Weston, with additional prizes awarded to Sumi Tonooka, Shawn Okpebholo, and Jonathan Bingham. Additional winners of the project include Jens Ibsen, Xavier Muzik, Kyle Rivera, Tyler Taylor, and Christopher Thompson. Rivera, winner of the Michael Morgan Prize in 2025, will have his work premiered by conductor Juraj Valčuha and the San Francisco Symphony, February 11–13, 2027. Thompson, winner of the 2026 prize, will have his work premiered with the San Francisco Symphony during the 2027–28 season.

In addition to the Michael Morgan Prize and in partnership with the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Cabrillo Emerging Black Composers Prize is an independent award that will be chosen from this same pool of applicants. This additional winner will receive a cash prize for the composition of a new five- to seven-minute symphonic work to receive its world premiere by the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra during an upcoming Cabrillo Festival season. The winner will also serve as composer-in-residence at the festival.

Applications for the Emerging Black Composers Project are judged through an anonymous process by a committee of leaders in the field including Daniel Bartholomew-Poyser, Andrea Case, Patrick Castillo, Kyle Dickson, Cristian Măcelaru, Edwin Outwater, Valerie Sainte-Agathe, Nina Shekhar, Trevor Weston, and Jeffrey Zeigler.

Applicants are encouraged to apply today. This year's EBCP submission deadline is February 1, 2027; winners will be announced in spring 2027.

The Emerging Black Composers Project is underwritten by Michèle and Laurence Corash.

How to apply

Black American composers (US citizens or permanent residents) aged 35 or under during 2026 who have completed a degree program in composition or music performance, or have equivalent experience, are encouraged to apply.

Applicants must submit a resume along with three scores and recordings of past or current compositions reflective of their work by 11:59pm PT on February 1, 2027.

For further information or to apply, visit sfsymphony.org/ebcp.

Emerging Black Composers Project Fellows

Michael Morgan Prize
Trevor Weston (2021)
Jens Ibsen (2022)
Xavier Muzik (2023)
Tyler Taylor (2024)
Kyle Rivera (2025)
Christopher Thompson (2026)

Cabrillo Festival EBCP Winners
Nathaniel Heyder (2023)
Tyson Gholston Davis (2024)
Jackson A. Waters (2025)

Additional Prizes
Shawn E. Okpebholo (2021 Oakland Symphony EBCP Commission Winner)
Sumi Tonooka (2021 San Francisco Conservatory EBCP Commission Winner)
Jonathan Bingham (2021 National Brass Ensemble Commission Winner)
Quenton Xavier Blache (2023 Gautier Capuçon Commission Winner)
Jordyn Davis (2024 SFCM Roots & Jazz American Music EBCP Commission Winner)
Henry Dorn (2025 New Century Chamber Orchestra Commission Winner)

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The Emerging Black Composers Project is generously supported by Michèle and Laurence Corash.

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