

finale (until then, symphonies had been strictly instrumental). That finale, which sets the ode “To Joy” by the poet and playwright Friedrich Schiller, would become an anthem of international unity, extolling the brotherhood of all mankind. A famous performance came in December 1989, when Leonard Bernstein led an orchestra and chorus of musicians from six countries — including several players from the New York Philharmonic — in concerts in East and West Berlin to mark the demolition of the Berlin Wall. For the occasion, Bernstein changed the word “joy” in the text to “freedom.”

This concert sets such venerable music alongside the World Premiere of works by two participants in the New York Philharmonic’s **Very Young Composers** (VYC) program. Created by VYC Director Jon Deak, a composer and former New York Philharmonic Associate Principal Bass, VYC is an afterschool program that provides children ages 9 to 15 the opportunity to explore musical ideas and transform them into finished compositions, to be performed by professional musicians. Participants hone their creations by collaborating with Philharmonic

Teaching Artists in workshops and rehearsals, culminating in astonishing works of art that reveal the power of children’s imaginations.

Works by Very Young Composers have been performed by the full Orchestra in Young People’s Concerts, annual YPCs for Schools, and, for the first time, last summer at the Concerts in the Parks, Presented by Didi and Oscar Schaffer. Last June, two of these works were heard by 82,000 people in Central Park, Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx, Cunningham Park in Queens, and Prospect Park in Brooklyn, and two more were performed at an indoor concert at Snug Harbor Cultural Center on Staten Island.

**Paloma Dineli Chesky** is an 11-year-old American-Brazilian composer and singer. She began studying piano at the age of five at the Lucy Moses School at Kaufman Music Center, and she has been part of the VYC program since she was nine. Her composition *Peace in All Worlds* was premiered in a chamber music performance following a 2018 Philharmonic concert. She originally wrote **Rising** for small ensemble, and has arranged it for full orchestra for these concerts, in which she also performs as vocalist.

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## New Work by Very Young Composer



### **Rising**

### **Paloma Dineli Chesky**

**Born:** July 3, 2007, in New York City

**Student at:** Professional Performing Arts School, Manhattan

**World Premiere:** these concerts

Paloma says:

*Rising* is one of my all-time favorite compositions. What inspired me to write this piece was going through challenges. I think everybody has faced some difficulties in life, whether losing a loved one, breaking a bone, having a bad grade in school, or even political challenges in your country. *Rising* was written to show that no matter what challenge you are facing you can overcome it and it won't bring you down.

**Mack Scocca-Ho**, age 11, was born in Beijing, but has lived in New York most of his life. He has been involved in the VYC program since early 2018. Mack has been composing since he was three years old, when he began printing out blank staff paper and writing down music. He plays viola and studies piano, in addition to composition. His *Ociantrose* evokes life in the capital of an imaginary country, a city whose name refers to its location near water.

**Steven Stucky's** death three years ago was met with an outpouring of sympathy by composers and musicians across the country, including his many students at Cornell University and The Juilliard School. His loss was sorely felt at the New York Philharmonic, where from 2005 to 2009 he hosted the *Hear and Now* series, which presented new and unfamiliar scores through his onstage commentary and conversations with composers.

The *Elegy* is drawn from Stucky's oratorio **August 4, 1964**, commissioned and premiered by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra

(then led by Jaap van Zweden) to mark the centennial of the birth of Texas native President Lyndon Baines Johnson. The oratorio's title alludes to a day in Johnson's administration when two calamities occurred: the discovery of the bodies of three civil-rights workers who had been abducted and slain while in Mississippi encouraging African American citizens to vote, and the Gulf of Tonkin incident, a confrontation (veiled in disputed circumstances) between American and North Vietnamese forces that led to the escalation of the Vietnam War. On that fateful day Stucky was 14 years old and living in Texas, and he later recalled being very close to and conflicted by the events.

The *Elegy* is the seventh of twelve movements in the oratorio. Stucky wrote that the orchestral movement was intended to break up the pacing of the greater work:

It occurs at an emotional point, when the horrific import of some of what [has been] heard begins to add up. It's business as usual at the White House, except that [President Lyndon] Johnson and [Secretary

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## New Work by Very Young Composer



### Ociantrose

#### Mack Scocca-Ho

**Born:** June 9, 2007, in Beijing, China

**Student at:** Special Music School at the Kaufman Music Center, Manhattan

**World Premiere:** these concerts

Mack says:

Ociantrose is the capital city of Myanolor, one of a group of countries that my friends and I have imagined. This piece celebrates Ociantrose's distinctive identity as a busy but orderly city where order is not imposed by the government, but arises from the residents. The different themes in my piece suggest the variety of people there and the harmony emerging from independence.