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Sioux City Symphony Orchestra Names Max Vinetz 2026 Composer of the Year Following Record Field of 145 Applicants

SIOUX CITY, IOWA — The Sioux City Symphony Orchestra has named composer Max Vinetz its 2026 Composer of the Year, selected from a record field of 145 applicants, the largest in the program's history. Vinetz was previously named a Composer of the Year Finalist in 2025 and returned this year to earn the program's top honor.

The award carries a \$5,000 prize and a performance by the orchestra. The Sioux City Symphony Orchestra will perform Vinetz's orchestral work, *Swell*, during its Season Finale concert on Saturday, April 17, 2027 at the Orpheum Theatre, under the direction of Music Director Ryan Haskins. Vinetz will travel to Sioux City in April for a weeklong residency that will include educational programming, community conversations, rehearsals, and opportunities to engage with audiences throughout the greater Siouxland region.

"It's an immense honor and privilege to be recognized as the Sioux City Composer of the Year. I am looking forward to sharing my music and connecting with the audience of the greater Siouxland area. As a long-time follower of this opportunity, I couldn't be more excited to visit in the coming season," said Vinetz.

"Every year, our hope is to discover a composer whose music we simply can't stop thinking about. Max's music continued to rise to the top throughout the selection process. It has an honesty, imagination, and emotional depth that immediately connected with all of us," said Music Director Ryan Haskins.

"What makes this program so meaningful is that it doesn't end with selecting a score. We have the privilege of bringing the composer to Sioux City, sharing their music with our audiences, introducing them to our students, and making them part of our musical community. Those are the kinds of artistic relationships that help shape the future of our orchestra," Haskins added.

The selection process was led by composer Clint Needham, Artistic Advisor to the Composer of the Year program, together with Music Director Ryan Haskins and the Composer of the Year selection committee. Applications were reviewed through a competitive national process that considered artistic voice, orchestral craft, originality, and the strength of each composer's submitted work.

Vinetz joins a roster of Composer of the Year recipients that includes Alice Hong (2025), Jaylin Vinson (2024), Bobby Ge (2023), Ryan Lindveit (2020), Hilary Purrington (2019), and Patrick O'Malley (2018).

ABOUT MAX VINETZ

With music described as “accomplished and appealing” (San Diego Story) and “shimmering...euphoric” (Chicago Classical Review), Max Vinetz is an award-winning composer whose music thrives at the intersection of improvisatory, popular, and traditional classical forms, exploring how these convergences shape and reflect identity transformation over time. His work often focuses on the perception of rhythmic and timbral events, weaving intricate relationships between narrative, musical objects, and sonic artifacts across various media.

Vinetz is a recipient of a Fromm Foundation Commission, a Koussevitzky Commission from the Library of Congress, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Jacob Druckman Prize from the Aspen Music Festival, ASCAP’s Leo Kaplan Award, ASCAP’s Leonard Bernstein Award, three ASCAP Morton Gould awards, the Paul and Christiane Cooper Prize, and the Gardner Prize from the American Viola Society. His music has been featured at festivals including the Mizzou International Composers Festival, the Five Boroughs Music Festival, Brevard Music Center, and the Red Note New Music Festival.

His works have been performed and recorded by the JACK Quartet, Alarm Will Sound, the Arditti Quartet, the Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Sō Percussion, Ensemble Dal Niente, the Mivos Quartet, and the Yale Symphony Orchestra, among many others. Upcoming projects include commissions for the Aruna Quartet and the New York New Music Ensemble, and an album of string quartets in collaboration with the Bergamot Quartet.

Vinetz holds degrees from Yale University (BA), the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University (MM), and Princeton University (MFA, PhD), and counts Steve Mackey, Donnacha Dennehy, Christopher Theofanidis, Dan Trueman, and Tyondai Braxton among his important teachers and mentors. He maintains a private studio of composition students and resides in Brooklyn, New York.

ABOUT THE COMPOSER OF THE YEAR PROGRAM

The Sioux City Symphony Orchestra’s Composer of the Year program celebrates exceptional living composers in the early stages of their professional careers while creating meaningful connections between composers, musicians, audiences, students, and the broader community. Each year’s recipient receives a \$5,000 prize and is invited to Sioux City for a residency that includes the performance of an orchestral work, educational outreach, public engagement, and opportunities for audiences to experience the creative process firsthand. Recipients are also featured through SCSO.LIVE, the orchestra’s digital broadcast platform. Now in its second decade, the program continues the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra’s commitment to supporting living composers and expanding the orchestral repertoire for future generations.

Tickets and season information are available at siouxcitysymphony.org.

ABOUT THE SIOUX CITY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

With roots dating to 1915, the Sioux City Symphony Orchestra is a 90-member professional orchestra serving Sioux City and the greater Siouxland region through inspiring performances, innovative artistic programming, and extensive music education initiatives. Under the leadership of Music Director Ryan Haskins, the orchestra is committed to enriching lives through music, championing living composers, developing the next generation of musicians, and creating meaningful artistic experiences that bring communities together.

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