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PRESS RELEASE

ASHKAN BEHZADI NAMED 2019-20 CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITION POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCHER

(Chicago) – The [Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition](#) (CCCC) is pleased to announce **Ashkan Behzadi** as the 2019-20 Postdoctoral Researcher at the rank of Instructor in the Division of the Humanities. Behzadi will develop new works to be performed by the CCCC's resident Grossman Ensemble, as well as other guest artists during the upcoming season. He will also teach an undergraduate course, provide music lessons, and participate in the Center's workshops and events.

"Ashkan is an imaginative composer of energetic, colorful music, which is refined, original, and compelling. His use of microtonal pitch and extended techniques for the instruments is thoroughly considered and carefully notated. Some of his music explores connections with philosophy," said Augusta Read Thomas, Founder and Director of the CCCC. "We look forward to welcoming him to the Center, where he will contribute to the open-minded, receptive, and supportive culture of our thriving composition community."

Iranian-Canadian composer Ashkan Behzadi's music structurally conveys a miniaturist lyrical craft by demonstrating great attention to details, but ultimately, it aims to invoke the collective-memory of folklore music using allusion and pastiche. The question of genre-identity and genre-blurring along with the relationship between modern lyric and contemporary music are at the core of his aesthetic and artistic research.

Behzadi earned an undergraduate degree in architecture from Tehran University before graduating from McGill University with a degree in composition and music theory. Behzadi is currently finishing his PhD in composition at Columbia University where he has studied with Fred Lerdahl, George Lewis, and Georg Friedrich Haas.

His works have been commissioned and performed by various international ensembles, including TAK Ensemble, Oerknal Ensemble, JACK Quartet, Divertimento Ensemble, Ensemble Alternance, Ensemble UnitedBerlin, Exaudi, Yarn/Wire, Ekmeles, Wet Ink, Talea Ensemble, and le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne (NEM) and also featured at such festivals and concert series as ACIMC Contemporary Music Festival, Dialoge Festival at Stiftung Mozarteum Salzburg, Rondo 2017 in Milan, Manifeste 2014 at IRCAM, CIRMMT new music series, and the New Wave festival in Toronto.

“There are moments in the life of every composer that she/he might think, ‘This is it! This is, if not the ideal, almost the ideal situation that every composer should be able to work in: to reflect, research, experiment, and to make music surrounded by a vibrant collective of composers and in a close productive relationship with our musician colleagues,’” said Behzadi. “I am truly honored that next year I will be part of the vivid community of the Department of Music at the University of Chicago and will have the opportunity to closely work with the versatile musicians of the Grossman Ensemble. I cannot wait to be in the city of Chicago this fall, and to contribute to the rich contemporary music scene in an exhilarating year of critical reflection, exploration, and composition.”

Behzadi will compose two new works including a piece for the Grossman Ensemble premiering on Friday, March 13, 2020. Behzadi will serve as the third Postdoctoral Researcher of the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition. The current Researcher, Tonia Ko, will complete her fellowship in June. For more information visit ccc.uchicago.edu.

ABOUT THE CHICAGO CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY COMPOSITON

The Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition at the University of Chicago is a dynamic, collaborative, and interdisciplinary environment for the creation, performance and study of new music and for the advancement of the careers of emerging and established composers, performers, and scholars. Distinguished by its formation within an uncompromising, relentlessly searching, and ceaselessly innovative scholarly environment that celebrates excellence and presents new possibilities for intellectual dialogue, the Chicago Center for Contemporary Composition comprises ten integrated entities: annual concert series with the resident Grossman Ensemble, CHIME, visiting ensembles, distinguished guest composers, performances, recordings, research, graduate student-led projects, workshops, and postdoctoral research positions.

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