



Contact: Carolyn Wise  
Cell: 202-630-9473  
Email: [info@thecapitalhearings.com](mailto:info@thecapitalhearings.com)

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## D.C.-Area Composer Wins North American Young Composers Competition

### ***Group to Give World Premiere Performance of “The Astronomer” in Technology-Themed A Cappella Concert on October 10th in Washington, D.C.***

August 4, 2015, Washington, D.C. – D.C.-based a *cappella* ensemble **The Capital Hearings** announced today it has selected William Yanesh, 26, of Silver Spring, MD, as the winner of its second Young Composers Competition. The Capital Hearings will premiere Yanesh’s winning composition, “The Astronomer,” during the group’s fifth annual fall concert, *Spark of Genius*, in Washington, D.C., on October 10, 2015. Featuring the group’s signature blend of classical, jazz, and contemporary a *cappella*, the concert will explore the ways in which technology impacts our lives.

The competition was open to composers ages 40 and under and attracted entries from throughout the United States and Canada. Yanesh’s piece, written for mixed a *cappella* voices, sets to music the poem “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer” by celebrated American poet Walt Whitman.

*“I had heard that The Capital Hearings were especially interested in ‘crossover’ works, and as someone with a classical background currently working as a musical theater composer, I hoped my style would jibe with that,” Yanesh explained. “When I read that the competition theme was Technology and Innovation, my immediate thought was of Whitman’s poem ‘No Labor-Saving Machine.’ I was intrigued by Whitman’s attitude toward technology, and this led me to read his other poems on similar subject matter, and eventually to ‘When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer.’ I was simultaneously repulsed by the narrator’s apparent technophobia and moved by his appreciation of the universe.”*

*“The success of our Young Composers Competition, now in its second year, reflects The Capital Hearings’ ongoing commitment to the creation and performance of new music,” noted Dileep Srihari, the group’s music director. “We’re especially excited to premiere ‘The Astronomer’ just a few blocks from the former U.S. Patent Office building – now the National Portrait Gallery – where Whitman served as a nurse when it was used as a hospital during the Civil War.”*

**William Yanesh** is a composer, arranger, and music director based in the Washington, D.C. area. A graduate of the Carnegie Mellon University (Pittsburgh, PA) music composition program, he has composed music for several theatrical productions, and his orchestrations were last heard in Shakespeare Theatre’s (Washington, D.C.) production of *Man of La Mancha*. As a conductor and music director, his credits include: *Elmer Gantry* and *The Last Five Years* (Helen Hayes Award nomination for Outstanding Music Direction) at Signature Theatre (Arlington, VA); *The Nutcracker* and *Ordinary Days* at Round House Theatre (Bethesda, MD); and *Spring Awakening* at the University of Maryland (College Park, MD). Yanesh also composed the music for Adventure Theatre MTC’s (Glen Echo, MD) new production of *Caps for Sale*, which will have a 17-city national tour before its 2016 run at New York City’s famed New Victory Theater.

**The Capital Hearings** have been entertaining Washington-area audiences with their unique brand of cross-genre a *cappella* since 2010. The group’s wide-ranging repertoire of classical favorites, vocal jazz, and contemporary arrangements has established it as D.C.’s most versatile a *cappella* ensemble.

The Capital Hearings present

**SPARK OF GENIUS:**

**Technology and Innovation**

**Saturday, October 10, 2015 | 8:00 PM**

First Congregational United Church of Christ (945 G Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001)

Tickets and Additional Information: [www.TheCapitalHearings.com](http://www.TheCapitalHearings.com)

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