

**Shi-An Costello** (b. 1987) is a musician with deep roots in contemporary art practices. A versatile pianist, composer and sound artist, Shi-An has been described as a “precise, engaged, welcoming performer, unafraid of deep ambiguities” (The Reader), “in such spare textures and hushed dynamics, the smallest development seems seismic” (Chicago Classical Review), and on his piano interpretations of Shostakovich and Schumann, “a tour de force ... steely and granitic [Preludes and Fugues, Op. 87]” and “dreamy and sensitive [Davidsbündlertanze]” (Boston Musical Intelligencer).

An active **recitalist**, Shi-An has appeared in recent years at Musée de beaux-arts de Montréal, Chapelle Historique du Bon-Pasteur, Oscar Peterson Hall, Chicago Cultural Center, Harris Theater, Logan Center for the Arts, and the Live and Salon Series of PianoForte Studios; he has been guest artist at Scotia Chamber Music Festival, both Ear Taxi Festivals, Laboratoire de Musique Contemporaine de Montréal, and the Women’s Composers Festival of Hartford, among others.

As a versatile **soloist and collaborator**, Shi-An has performed with members of Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Honolulu, Thunder Bay and Minnesota Symphonies, Lyric Opera of Chicago, International Contemporary Ensemble, Dal Niente and Sound Icon, and has performed under the batons of Jean-Michael Lavoie, Andrew Crust, Shalom Bard and Cristian Gort, among others. Shi-An has served as founding pianist of Morton Feldman Chamber Players from 2013-2017 and ensemble pianist of McGill University’s Contemporary Music Ensemble from 2010-2012. Additionally, Shi-An has appeared with Fulcrum Point New Music Project, Warhol Dervish, Architek Percussion, NON:Op and Kim Kashkashian’s Music For Food benefit concerts.

A passionate **educator**, Shi-An has been invited to give performances and masterclasses at institutions across North America, including Boston Conservatory at Berklee, University of Calgary, University of Toronto, University of Chicago, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Northwestern University, Conservatoire de Musique de Montréal, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and Brandeis University.

Active in **youth education** as well, Shi-An can be found working as an accompanist with the young artists of Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Chicago Jazz Philharmonic, Lyric Opera of New York’s vocal competitions, the percussion area of Schulich School of Music at McGill University, instrumental performance programs at DePaul University and Roosevelt University, the Music Theater Training Academy of New Music School, Illinois High School Association Music Competitions, and the Walgreens/Midwest Young Artists and DePaul Concerto Competitions.

Shi-An's discography includes 4 albums released between 2018 and 2021: two with Blue Griffin (*Rounded Binary* in 2018, *Posthumous* in 2020), and two independent releases (*Water* and *Alloy*, both in 2021). He can also be heard on *Flight of the Butterflies* (IMAX 2012) and *Softly - A GIANT STEP* (Zahra Partovi 2017), Radio Canada's Espace Musique and So Many Wrong Notes Podcast.

Hailed by Philippe Leroux as "Shi-An finds the depth in every note" and the late Frederic Rzewski as "a winner," Shi-An, as a pianist, has worked personally with over 150 composers from all over the world in solo, ensemble and chamber settings. Shi-An has **commissioned new works** by Viet Cuong, Danny Clay, Igor Santos, Alex Temple, AJ Santillan, Morgan Krauss, Jimmie Leblanc, David Reminick, Marielle Groven, Kurt Isaacson, and has worked personally with composers Philippe Leroux, Frederic Rzewski, Jerome Kitzke, Serge Provost, Keeril Makan, Marti Epstein, Anthony Cheung, James O'Callaghan, Eliza Brown, Ana Paola Santillan Alcocer, and many other brilliant musical minds from around the world.

Since March of 2020, Shi-An has broadened his artistic focus to include **composing**. Costello's music tends towards the idea of 'transcription,' real and imaginary, and the failed attempts to recover lost or forgotten sound, touching on thematic ideas like existentialism, race/ethnicity, and the natural world. Recent commissions include ~waves~ (Chronic Duo for the Asian American Jazz Festival of Chicago, 2020), *Household Sounds of Chicago* (High Concept Labs/Walder Foundation's Chicago Takes Ten, 2021), *Music for Anthem for 1* (artist G. Funo O'Kain, 2021), *Three Oblong Studies* (The \_\_\_\_\_ Experiment, 2021), *It just moves* (Sandra Binion's The Beauty of Something Ripped at Alliance Française de Chicago, 2022), *diminishing 5ths* and *searching for home* (Missing Piece's Tonewood and Earth/Land projects, 2022, 2023), *Mass* (masso quartet's inter-acts, 2023), *human v. nature* (Cacie Miller's Composing the Climate doctoral dissertation and performance 2023), music for various independent films, and solo works for Marina Kifferstein, Magnus Villanueva and Jonathan Hannau. A proud mixed race Asian American of Taiwanese, Chinese and Irish descent, Shi-An recently composed and performed *the orient*, a large scale solo piano work about race and heritage, presented in collaboration with Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Chicago as part of the 2023 Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, and a winner of an 2023 Illinois Arts Council Individual Artist Support Award.

Other highlights as a composer, pre-pandemic, include commissions from Access Contemporary Music, Sarah Albu and Brianna Matzke's The Response Project and performances of his music at Tribeca New Music New York, Mise-en Place New York, Asian Improv Arts Midwest, Contemporary Arts Center (Cincinnati), Université de Montréal, Pollack Hall and Redpath Hall of McGill University, Dalhousie University, University of Buffalo and University of Richmond and has been programmed by groups

all over the world, such as Thin Edge New Music Collective, International Contemporary Ensemble, ThingNY, Timepoint Ensemble and Conservatoire de musique de Lausanne.

A dedicated **arts advocate and administrator**, Costello serves on the Board of Directors of New Music Chicago and The \_\_\_\_\_ Experiment. Previously, Costello founded and directed the Morton Feldman Chamber Players (MFCP) from 2013-2017, founded and served as artistic director of Vox Humana collective of speaking musicians from 2011-2013, and co-founded and served as president of Cadre composer collective at Columbia College from 2008-2010. He has also curated events at Experimental Sound Studio, Narloch Piano Studio, Marvin Duchow Music Library of McGill University, and Cathédrale Christ Church (Montreal).

Costello previously held position as Visiting Artist and Piano Faculty at Boston Conservatory at Berklee and New Music School. He holds degrees in Music Composition and Performance from Columbia College and the Schulich School of Music of McGill University. In his youth, Shi-An studied piano, theory and orchestral transcription under Vladimir Leyetchkiss, one of the last pupils of the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus, and a trombone student under Richard Schmitt, former principal of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Costello currently lives in Chicago, IL.

Costello has received generous project support from the Conseil des Arts du Canada, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Chicago Department of Cultural and Special Events, Cliff Dwellers Club, Avaloch Farm Institute, Illinois Arts Council Agency, Amphion Foundation, and the Walder Foundation.

(Last Update: February 2025)