



*Biography*

Dubbed a musician of "probing intellect and open-hearted vision" by the *New York Times*, Conrad Tao has, for nearly a decade, enjoyed a varied career as pianist and composer. Born in Urbana, Illinois to parents of Chinese descent, he was found playing children's songs on the piano at 18 months of age, gave his first piano recital at age four, and four years later made his concerto debut performing Mozart's Piano Concerto in A Major, K. 414. In June 2011, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars and the Department of Education named Conrad a Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts awarded him a YoungArts gold medal in music. Later that year, Conrad was named a Gilmore Young Artist, an honour awarded every two years highlighting the most promising American pianists of the new generation. Conrad was also the only classical musician on *Forbes'* 2011 "30 Under 30" list of people changing the world. In May 2012, he was awarded the prestigious Avery Fisher Career Grant.

On his 19th birthday in June 2013, Conrad inaugurated his UNPLAY Festival at the powerHouse Arena in Brooklyn. The festival, designated a "critics' pick" by *Time Out New York* and hailed by the *New York Times* for its "[impressively]...clever organization" and "endlessly engaging" performances, featured Conrad with guest artists performing a wide variety of new works. Across three nights encompassing electroacoustic music, performance art, youth ensembles, and much more, UNPLAY explored the fleeting ephemera of the Internet, the possibility of a 21st-century canon, and music's role in social activism and critique. That same week, Conrad, an exclusive Warner Classics recording artist, released *Voyages*, his debut full-length recording for the label, about which NPR wrote, "Tao proves himself to be a musician of deep intellectual and emotional means – as the thoughtful programming on this album...proclaims."

In November 2013, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra will premiere Conrad's new orchestral composition, "The World Is Very Different Now", commissioned in observance of the 50th anniversary of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. This work is the latest in his accomplished career as a composer, which has featured eight consecutive ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards, the Carlos Surinach Prize from BMI, and an oeuvre that already includes everything from symphonic music to string quartets to electroacoustic work to popular music.

During the 2013-2014 season, Conrad continues his career as a pianist, with two tours of South America featuring Benjamin Britten's Piano Concerto; two tours of Europe including his debut with the Swedish Radio Orchestra, and a recital at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw; a third consecutive annual recital at Carnegie's Weill Hall; and performances in North America with the Detroit Symphony, the Colorado Symphony, the St Louis Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, the Utah Symphony, and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada, among others. Conrad has performed with the Hong Kong Philharmonic, Bern Symphony, Dallas Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, Symphony of the Americas, Oklahoma City Philharmonic, North Carolina Symphony, Poznan Philharmonic, Amsterdam Chamber, and Mexico City Philharmonic orchestras. He is also a Laureate of the Festspiele Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

Conrad currently attends the Columbia University/Juilliard School joint degree programme and studies piano with Professors Yoheved Kaplinsky and Choong Mo Kang at Juilliard. He studies composition with Professor Christopher Theofanidis of Yale University.

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*Last updated October 2013. Please destroy any previously dated materials.  
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