

CARNEGIE HALL

AMERICAN Mavericks

Break the rules!

Prepare your students for the *American Mavericks* concerts at Carnegie Hall with these eight weekly challenges. Once you complete a challenge, discuss it in class and share your creative responses with Anthea Jackson (ajackson@carnegiehall.org) and on Facebook or Twitter

Visit americanmavericks.org for more detailed information about the composers.

Visit carnegiehall.org/mavericks for more information about the March 27 and March 28 concerts.

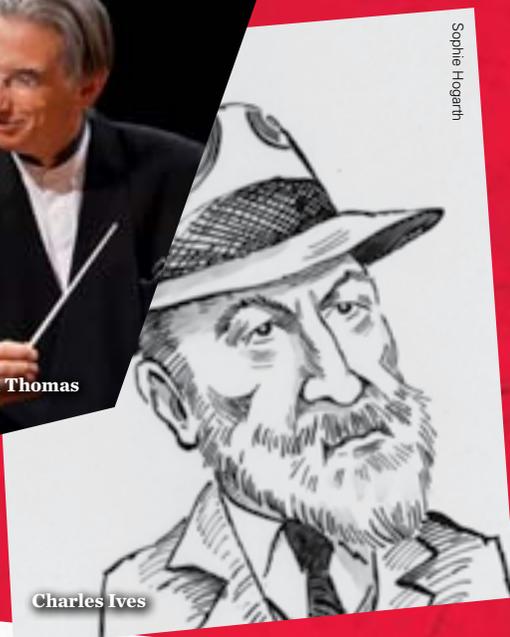
For student tickets:
carnegiehall.org/students

For groups of 20 or more:
groupsales@carnegiehall.org



Chris Vanberg

Michael Tilson Thomas



Sophie Hogarth

Charles Ives



The National Endowment for the Arts is the lead donor of *American Mavericks*.

Break the Rules Challenge 1: Make music out of something surprising.

Henry Cowell extended the conventional expectations of how an instrument can be played by asking pianists, for example, to pluck the strings inside the instrument or use their forearms to create thick clusters of notes. With Cowell's spirit of innovation in mind, choose a conventional orchestral instrument and create a piece of music with it in a decidedly unconventional way.

Break the Rules Challenge 2: Create your own rugged mountain landscape.

Carl Ruggles famously declared, "I paint music." In his best-known composition, *Sun-Treader*, he uses jagged polyrhythms and densely weighted chords to create broad, dissonant mountains of harmony that "suggest a rugged American landscape." Choose a moment from *Sun-Treader* or another work by Ruggles and represent it visually.

**Break the Rules Challenge 3:
Wait, what did you two just say?**

Charles Ives was inspired, original, aggressive, and hard-nosed, yet sentimental. He loved musical collage, creating pieces in which, for instance, the orchestra performs an atonal fanfare at the same time as a hymn, march, or dance tune. With a friend, perform a reading of two very different texts—read at the same time, but at different speeds and volumes—in which one of the texts is highly complicated and the other is straightforward. Then add a piece of popular music to the reading.

**Break the Rules Challenge 4:
Big, intricate, and luminous!**

Morton Feldman's pieces often unfold slowly over great lengths. He was an avid collector and friend of the New York abstract expressionists, and also had a great love for the intricate designs of Turkish and Persian rugs. Select a work by Feldman and create a piece of visual art that reflects the layered, large-scale but subtly intricate structure of the music.

**Break the Rules Challenge 5:
Tackle a contemporary issue in a short dramatic reading.**

John Adams writes music that is “not only topical, but spiritually enriching and beautiful.” Though he wrote in a minimalist style early in his career (emphasizing tonal, repeating structures), he has gone on to embrace the entire history of music to create large-scale, passionate, varied works. Think of an important contemporary issue. With a friend, create a short narrative that begins with minimalist-like repetition, then gradually evolves into more complex dialogue while maintaining accessible qualities like simple, clear language.

**Break the Rules Challenge 6:
Employ chance operations in regular interactions.**

John Cage's appreciation for Zen Buddhism led him to create music in which chance played an integral part in his compositional strategies. Rather than fix every element in extreme detail (as composers often do), Cage argued that “music was already in place waiting to happen.” As Cage did in one of his most famous lectures, prepare six statements and choose them at random in your conversations over the course of a few hours.

**Break the Rules Challenge 7:
Be a “visionary” and a “pioneer.”**

Edgard Varèse was fascinated by the intersection of music and noise. When asked if he was a musician, he replied, “No, I am a worker in rhythm, frequencies, and intensities.” Varèse was both a visionary and a pioneer, imagining and realizing the potential of new sound. Listen to *Amériques*, his self-described meditation on the “extraordinary possibilities of our civilization.” Think about what sounds and technologies of today's world could reflect current “extraordinary possibilities.” Create or describe a piece of music by imagining what it would be like to combine those sounds or incorporate technology into the piece in unusual ways.

**Break the Rules Challenge 8:
Describe your maverick moment.**

Attend one or both *American Mavericks* concerts with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony on March 27 and 28 in Stern Auditorium / Perelman Stage and pick the moment or work that redefined your expectations of what a classical music concert should be.