Juilliard Heads East
The Juilliard School isn't just in Manhattan anymore. This fall, the conservatory announced plans for the Tianjin Juilliard School, its first campus in China. In addition to offering a U.S.-accredited master’s degree, the Tianjin Juilliard School will offer instrumental lessons for people of all ages and abilities, weekly public performances, and an exhibit space. The school is slated to open in 2018 in a facility designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, the team responsible for the expansion of Juilliard's New York home. The Tianjin plans are part of Juilliard's strategy to become accessible to a wider public. Preliminary approval from China's Ministry of Education paves the way for Juilliard and its partners—the Tianjin Conservatory of Music, the Tianjin Binhai New Area CBD Administrative Commission, and the Tianjin Innovative Finance Investment Company (TIF)—to develop the Tianjin facility.

A Concert Hall Grows in Brooklyn
No, it's not a sci-fi film set—it's a former sawdust factory in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. And now it's a center for contemporary music called National Sawdust. The space had its eagerly awaited opening in October with five performances celebrating composer Terry Riley. The 350-seat flexible space, designed by Bureau V and Arup Theatrical Consultants, cost $16 million to build. The project was spearheaded by former tax attorney and avocational composer/organist Kevin Dolan, who bought the factory in 2012; composer Paola Prestini serves as artistic and executive director. National Sawdust has hosted composers such as Anna Clyne, John Zorn, and Matthew Aucoin, as well as pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, American Contemporary Music Ensemble, and soprano Renée Fleming. This season, the New York Philharmonic is holding several of its "Contact!" new-music series performances there, and it will be one of eight venues for the Philharmonic's 2016 Biennial in June. There's an in-house bar, and soon to arrive are custom-built chairs and a restaurant.

First of Fifty
New Music for America, a consortium that aims to bring a commissioned work by a major American composer to orchestras in all 50 states, bore its first fruit last fall with the initial performances of Christopher Theofanidis's Dreamtime Ancestors. Music Director Steven Karidoyanes led the Plymouth (Mass.) Philharmonic Orchestra in the world premiere on October 3; Theofanidis, at left in photo, spoke from the stage about the genesis of his seventeen-minute tone poem inspired by an Australian aboriginal myth. Dreamtime Ancestors was given regional premieres by New Mexico's Las Cruces Symphony on October 18 and by the Mission Chamber Orchestra (San Jose, Calif.) on November 8; a third regional premiere, by the Bentonville-based Arkansas Philharmonic Orchestra, is scheduled for April 16. Chairing the NMFA consortium is Robert Rosoff, formerly executive director of the Glens Falls (N.Y.) Symphony Orchestra and a key figure in Ford Made in America, the commissioning project that led to state performances of works by Joan Tower in 2006 and Joseph Schwantner in 2008.