

Mark Applebaum: *Bio*

Mark Applebaum (b. 1967, Chicago) is Associate Professor of Composition at Stanford University where he received the 2003 *Walter J. Gores Award*, the university's highest distinction for excellence in teaching. He was named the *Leland & Edith Smith Faculty Scholar*, an honor awarded to a member of the Music faculty; and *Hazy Family University Fellow in Undergraduate Education*, one of Stanford's distinguished fellowships recognizing teaching commitment.

He received his Ph.D. in composition from the University of California at San Diego where he studied principally with Brian Ferneyhough. His solo, chamber, choral, orchestral, operatic, and electroacoustic work has been performed throughout North and South America, Europe, Africa, Australia, and Asia with notable performances at the Darmstadt Sessions, IRCAM in Paris, and the Kennedy Center.

Many of his pieces are characterized by challenges to the conventional boundaries of musical ontology: works for three conductors and no players, a concerto for florist and orchestra, pieces for instruments made of junk, notational specifications that appear on the faces of custom wristwatches, works for an invented sign language choreographed to sound, amplified Dadaist rituals, works for artists drawing in unison on amplified easels, multi-channel audio pieces in which alter egos argue about how to make an audio piece, and a 72-foot long graphic score displayed in a museum and accompanied by no instructions for its interpretation. His *TED Talk*—about boredom—has been seen by more than one million viewers.

He has received commissions from Betty Freeman, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, the Fromm Foundation, the Vienna Modern Festival, the Kronos Quartet, the Paul Dresher Ensemble, the St. Lawrence String Quartet, the Meridian Arts Ensemble, the GRM in Paris, the Baryshnikov Arts Center in New York, Meet the Composer, and numerous others. He has been featured composer at many festivals throughout the world, including *Other Minds* in San Francisco, *Sonorities* in Belfast, *Instruments/Interfaces* in Basel, *Pro Arte* in St. Petersburg, *Comprovisations* in Montreal, the *Quiet Music Festival* in Cork, and *Stockholm New Music*.

In 2013 the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players premiered his composition *Rabbit Hole*, an elaborate, nearly silent chamber ensemble work based on obsessive page turns. In 2011 the La Jolla Symphony premiered his *Concerto for Florist and Orchestra* (earning him unexpected attention from *San Diego Home & Garden* magazine). Most recently he served as the 2015 *Composer-In-Residence* at Spoleto USA where he conducted the premiere of his commissioned work *Control Freak* for singer and septet.

His scores—as visual art—have been displayed and discussed at Stanford's Cantor Arts Center, the Schneider Museum of Art in Ashland, Oregon, the Orpheus Music Research Institute's *Score & Music Conference* in Ghent, and *Time Stands Still: Notation in Music Practice* at Wesleyan University. A detailed article on formal structures in his enormous *The Metaphysics of Notation* will be published in Oxford Press' forthcoming volume *Music and Shape*.

Sixty-one percussionists co-commissioned his recent piece *Composition Machine #1*. In Australia he served as featured composer for the SPEAK Percussion 2015 *Emerging Artists Program* which presented the piece in simultaneous renderings throughout various physical spaces by seven percussionists during a dedicated evening. He also undertook a major residency at the Australian National Academy of Music, the Melbourne Conservatory, and the Victoria College of the Arts.

Percussion music has been an abiding interest for Applebaum. His piece *Straitjacket* for percussion soloist and percussion quartet was commissioned by Steven Schick and the Banff Centre in Canada for the inaugural *Roots & Rhizomes Percussion Residency* and subsequently performed at the

66th American Music Festival at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C. *30*, a work for twelve percussionists made up of three independent but interlocking pieces for soloist, quartet, and septet, was co-commissioned by 21 distinguished percussion ensembles from Juilliard to Queensland. The recent *Clicktrack* for twelve percussionists uses a novel system of synchronization through recordings of poems spoken by the ensemble players, and can be performed by amateur or professional musicians alike. It was the 2015 commission for the University of Wisconsin River Falls *49th Annual Commissioned Composer Project* in a distinguished lineage that begins with Persichetti and includes Cage, Wolf, Feldman, Oliveros, Brant, Zorn, Braxton, Chou Wen-Chung, Julia Wolff, and John Luther Adams, among others. Applebaum has been honored twice with portrait concerts at *PASIC* (the Percussive Arts Society International Convention), and his piece *Aphasia* has been championed by dozens of percussionists in seventeen countries in nearly 200 performances since 2011.

Applebaum has engaged in many intermedia collaborations, including neural artists, film-makers, florists, animators, architects, choreographers, and laptop DJs. He has designed and constructed numerous sound-sculptures—instruments made of junk, hardware, and found objects—whose arresting sounds expand the range of available timbres and are further modified in concert by a battery of live electronics. He is also an accomplished jazz pianist who has performed from Sumatra to Ouagadougou and who concertizes internationally with his father, Bob Applebaum, in the Applebaum Jazz Piano Duo. His concert music appears on the Innova, Tzadik, Capstone, Blue Leaf, SEAMUS, New Focus, ChampD’Action, and Evergreen labels.

In 2012 Applebaum convened the first-ever national conference to examine and reform the state of music composition pedagogy in higher education, and co-edited a published volume of the proceedings in *Contemporary Music Review*.

Following the untimely passing of his sister, and recognizing the importance of community engagement, Applebaum and his wife Joan Friedman endowed the *Carolyn Applebaum Memorial Prize* at Stanford University and at Carleton College, prizes awarded not for student academic or artistic achievement, but rather to recognize individuals whose efforts have made the most positive impact on the artistic agency and capacity of *other* students. It is an award for helping to engender a robust and engaged arts community.

A member of the Carleton College class of 1989, Applebaum graduated *magna cum laude*, received the Larsen Award for Distinction in the Creative and Performing Arts, and travelled to Mexico City to interview Conlon Nancarrow for his senior thesis. He returned to Carleton in 1996 as the *Dayton-Hudson Visiting Scholar* before assuming a tenure track position at Mississippi State University in 1997.

In 2000 he joined the faculty at Stanford where he is the founding director of [sic]—the Stanford Improvisation Collective. He has subsequently taught classes in Antwerp, Singapore, Paris, Amsterdam, Oxford (as visiting fellow at Brasenose College), Santiago (as visiting professor at the University of Chile), and at Hope House—a California halfway house for women parolees with chemical dependencies. He has given lectures at the Library of Congress, the Hewlett Foundation, and some 75 universities around the world. He gave the keynote address at the *LAB Conecta 2014* in Mexico City, Latin America’s largest media conference, and has served as Master Artist at the Atlantic Center for the Arts and Artist-In-Residence at the *Center for Creativity and the Arts* at California State University, Fresno. At present he serves on the board of the Other Minds new music organization and as a trustee of Carleton College.