

# Brian Ciach, Composer/Pianist/Educator

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Award-winning composer-pianist and passionate music educator: teaching experience includes applied instruction and extensive classroom, as well as inclusive curriculum development. Expertise in composition, music theory, aural skills, electronic music, and piano performance. Teaching focuses on empowering and inspiring students by featuring the work of their musical icons in the studio/classroom, helping composers reach their unique musical voice, and writing music that aims to push boundaries in both acoustic and electro-acoustic realms.

## Education

Indiana University, Bloomington  
Doctor of Music in Music Composition, 2011  
Minor Fields: Piano, Music Theory, Computer Music  
Study Abroad: FUBiS, Berlin, Germany

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Master of Music in Music Composition, 2004

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Master of Music in Piano Performance, 2004

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA  
Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance, *summa cum laude*, 2002

### Principal Composition Teachers:

Samuel Adler, Don Freund, John Gibson (e-music), Sven-David Sandström, Richard Wernick

### Principal Music Theory Teachers:

Cynthia Folio, Robert Hattan, Julian Hook, John Johnson, Blair Johnston, Jan Krzywicki

## College Teaching Experience

San José State University, Lecturer, CA, 2019-present

- Teaching Applied Composition, Music Theory/Aural Skills sequence, Counterpoint, Orchestration, Graduate Seminar in Music Theory Analysis
- Nominated for Outstanding Lecturer Award (University-wide, 2023)
- Faculty Special Consultant for revising theory/aurals curriculum toward equity and inclusion

- Performing semesterly piano premieres and those of students in concerts like Downtown Soundscapes, an outdoor concert of student electronic music performed/improvised upon by faculty musicians
- Showcased student music theory compositions inspired by the pandemic/social justice movements in the college-wide event, Pandemic Pandemonium so that students feel more connected with the class material and with one another
- Inspired students with “Pop Song Solfege” assignments in aurals courses, where they sang favorite songs so that the artists they identify with are deemed relevant in class
- Created and administered the online graduate music theory placement exams using Artusi, and continue to use this software in classes

Santa Clara University, Adjunct Instructor, CA, 2016-18

- Taught Applied Composition and Music Theory fundamentals, Aural Skills to adults from a predominantly Spanish-speaking community
- Guided adult students from no music theory knowledge to reasonable competency within the time frame of two years
- Motivated students to create unique cell phone ring tones in Logic Pro so that their class projects had practical applications

Murray State University, Assistant Professor, KY, 2012-14

- Taught Applied Composition, Electronic Music, Music Theory/Aural Skills, Form and Analysis, Counterpoint, Orchestration, and Music Fundamentals
- Redesigned and updated software/hardware for the electronic music studio, so that students could have a new and exciting creative space to work in
- Premiered several of my own piano compositions as well as student works, and helped facilitate the student composer concert series, featuring new acoustic and electronic music

Ball State University, Adjunct Instructor, Muncie, IN, 2012

- Taught Applied Composition and Orchestration
- Students created arrangements and successfully conducted readings of their pieces with a class ensemble
- Strengthened student knowledge of orchestration, new repertoire, helped students gain conducting and rehearsal experience, and provided recordings of readings

Indiana University, Associate Instructor, Bloomington, IN, 2007-10

- Taught graduate sight-singing review, aural theory review courses, and the undergraduate theory and aural skills sequence
- Helped “unlock” aural skills for graduate students, who simply lacked practical working methods for executing certain activities, like dictation and sight-singing
- Learned a great deal about how to teach by working in parallel with professors in the theory department
- Enjoyed developing a rapport with fellow graduate students, leading to musical collaborations and commissions

West Chester University, Adjunct Instructor, PA, 2004-06

- Taught Applied Composition and the entire Music Theory/Aural Skills sequence
- Taught a Graduate Seminar in Music Theory Pedagogy with textbook comparisons, curriculum design, teaching methods, and provided students teaching opportunities
- Developed unique and compelling curricula for 20<sup>th</sup>-Century theory/aurals courses
- Performed a piano recital of new music by the composition faculty, which featured the world premiere of my *Berg Variations*

## **Courses Taught**

### **Graduate**

Seminar in Music Theory Analysis

Pedagogy of Music Theory

Dictation Review

Sight-Singing Review

### **Undergraduate**

Applied Composition

Piano

Music Theory (entire sequence, revised curriculum)

Aural Skills (entire sequence, revised curriculum)

Counterpoint

Orchestration

Form and Analysis

Intro to Music Synthesis

## **Guest Lecturer**

### **International**

The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Israel

Buchmann-Mehta School of Music, Tel Aviv University, Israel

### **US**

NASM (National Association of Schools of Music) National Conference, St. Louis, MO

Music Association of California Community Colleges, State Conference, Berkeley, CA

San José State University, CA

Indiana University, Bloomington

Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

Ball State University, Muncie, IN

Murray State University, KY

## **Adjudicator**

Music Association of California Community Colleges, Composition Competition, 2023

Kentucky Music Teachers Association Commissioned Composer Competition, 2022-23

California State Music Teachers Association Student Piano Competition, 2021

San Jose State University Student Concerto Competition, CA, 2018  
New Music on the Bayou Summer Festival, Composition Prize, Monroe, LA, 2018

### **Music Technology Skills**

Max/MSP	Logic Pro
Reactor	Sibelius
RTcmix	Dorico
Digital Performer	Finale
Pro Tools	Auralia/Musition/Artusi

### **Music Festivals**

#### **International**

EAR (Electro Acoustic Room) International Music Festival, Lugano, Switzerland  
MITO (Milan-Torino) *SettembreMusica* International Music Festival, Italy  
FUBiS (International Summer University of Free University Berlin), Germany  
soundSCAPE International Contemporary Music Festival, Pavia, Italy  
International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, Knoxville, TN  
International Tuba and Euphonium Conference, Bloomington, IN

#### **Electronic Music Festivals, US**

SEAMUS, Sweetwater Sound, Fort Wayne, IN  
22<sup>nd</sup> Ussachevsky Festival of Electroacoustic Music, Pomona College, Claremont, CA  
Ball State New Music Festival 42 & 39, Muncie, IN  
Midwest Composers Symposium, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI  
Hot Air Music Festival, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, CA  
New Music on the Bayou Summer Festival, Monroe, LA

#### **Acoustic Music Festivals, US**

Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute, Minneapolis, MN  
Mizzou New Music Summer Festival, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO  
48-Hour Opera Festival, San Francisco, CA  
The American Liszt Society Bicentennial Festival, University of Georgia, Athens, GA

### **Score Publications**

#### **Solo instrument and electronic music**

Chaconne for cello and electronic music, Potenza Music, 2020

#### **Piano solo**

Fourth Piano Sonata, Potenza Music, 2018, in circulation: Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, United Kingdom, 2018

#### **Tuba and piano**

*California Ballad* for piano and tuba, Potenza Music, 2017

*Kentucky Folk Pieces* arranged for piano and tuba, Potenza Music, 2017  
*Dance King* for piano and tuba, Potenza Music, 2015  
*Mountain Song* for piano and tuba, Potenza Music, 2015

### **Orchestra**

*The Einstein Slide* for chamber orchestra, Potenza Music, 2018  
*Collective Uncommon: Seven Orchestral Studies on Medical Oddities*, nomus21, 2017

### **Recordings**

*Fifth Piano Sonata, "The Phoenix"* by Brian Ciach, self-released, 2023  
*The Art of Fugue Completion Project*, by Bach-Ciach, YouTube, 2022  
*Mountain Song: Works for tuba and piano by Brian Ciach*, Potenza Music, 2020  
*Variations Promethean*, for piano and electronic music, self-released, 2019  
*Parting Song*, for piano trio, performed by Trio Siciliano, U07 Records, 2018  
*Fourth Sonata*, for piano, self-released, 2016  
*Third Sonata*, for piano, self-released, 2014  
*Contemporary Music from Panama*, for piano, music of Emiliano Pardo-Tristán, Fermata Publications, 2003

### **Piano Improvisation Albums**

*Doppelgänger*, (piano and electronics) self-released, 2012  
*Constant Carousel (Fifths on the Fifth)*, (piano improvisation), self-released, 2012  
*The Fourths of July (Fourth on the Fourth)*, (piano improvisation), self-released, 2012  
*The Land of All is Well (Thirds on the Third)*, (piano improvisation), self-released, 2012

### **Commissions**

#### **Ensembles**

Alarm Will Sound  
IU New Music Ensemble  
Altisonus Vocal Ensemble  
Chorus Delicti Wien  
IU Percussion Ensemble  
Square Peg, Round Hole  
Cisum Percussion

#### **Soloists**

Charles Abramovic (piano)  
Linda Chatterton (flute)  
Paul Carlson (tuba)  
Amanda Deboer (voice)  
Kurt Gorman (trumpet)  
Duane Large (guitar)  
Matthew McCright (piano)

### **Notable Performers of Original Works**

#### **Ensembles**

Minnesota Orchestra  
Alarm Will Sound  
Alterity Chamber Orchestra  
Chorus Delicti Wien  
Miró Quartet  
Ensemble TaG

#### **Soloists**

Charles Abramovic (piano)  
Mario Brunello (cello)  
Paul Carlson (tuba)  
Linda Chatterton (flute)  
Sharon Harms (voice)  
Lawrence Indik (voice)

Trio Siciliano

Duane Large (guitar)

### **Selected Performance Venues of Original Works**

#### **International**

St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square, London, England

National Concert Hall, Dublin, Ireland

Teatro Dal Verme, Milan, Italy

Neue Synagoge, Berlin, Germany

Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland

Lugano Conservatory of Music, Switzerland

Peterskirche, Vienna, Austria

#### **US**

Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, MN

Custom Made Theater, San Francisco, CA

Osher Salon, San Francisco Conservatory of Music, CA

Academy of Vocal Arts, Philadelphia, PA

Andrea Clearfield's Music Salon, Philadelphia, PA

The Abbey, Orlando, FL

Sweetwater Sound, Fort Wayne, IN

### **Awards & Honors**

#### **International**

American Liszt Society Bicentennial Composition Competition, First Prize, Athens, GA, 2011

Black Bayou Composition Award, Winner, New Music on the Bayou Festival, 2017

#### **US**

Outstanding Lecturer Nomination – SJSU, 2023

The American Prize, First Prize in Composition – Vocal Chamber Music, 2019

The American Prize, First Prize in Composition – Orchestra, 2018

ASCAPPLUS Awards, 2012-15

Subito Music Corporation Inaugural Composer Fellow, Verona, NJ, 2012

Indiana University Dean's Prize in Orchestral Composition, Bloomington, 2011

Indiana University Georgina Joshi Commission Prize, Bloomington, 2010

The Presser Music Award, Indiana University, 2008

### **Professional Memberships**

SMT (Society for Music Theory), 2020-present

SEAMUS (Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States), 2008-present

SCI (Society of Composers, Inc.), 2008-present

ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers), 2007-present

CFA (California Faculty Association), 2020-present

## Acoustic Works

### Piano

*The Book of Muses* (Modal Preludes & Fugues)  
*Pandemic Sonatine* (piano, face masks, Covid card)  
*Shrine* (Sixth Sonata)  
Fifth Sonata, "The Phoenix"  
*Variations Promethean*  
Fourth Sonata, "The Great Scream"  
Third Sonata  
*Two Berlin Preludes*  
Second Sonata  
First Sonata  
*Berg Variations*

### Other solo instruments

*Night Song*, for tuba  
*Free*, for marimba  
*Five Pieces for Guitar*

## Chamber

### Woodwinds

*Kentucky Folk Pieces*, for flute (or tuba) and piano  
*Eastside Madrigals*, for woodwind quartet

### Brass

*Dance King*, for piano and tuba  
*California Ballad*, for piano and tuba  
*Mountain Song*, for piano and tuba

### Percussion

*Fifteen Artisanal Ringtones*, for percussion trio  
*Blank Slate*, for four percussionists (found instruments)  
*Strange Assortments*, for 6 percussionists

### Strings

String Quintet, for string quartet and contrabass  
String Quartet  
*Trio in B*, for piano, violin and cello  
*Three-minute Trio* for violin, viola, and cello

## Vocal

*Road Trip*, for soprano and chamber orchestra  
*Mölna Elegy*, for soprano and four percussionists  
*Japanese Rhapsody*, for soprano, string quartet, and bassoon  
*Three settings cummings*, for bass-baritone and piano  
*Happiness*, for mezzo soprano and piano

## Choral

*Rorate Caeli*, for SATB a cappella choir

*Gaudete Omnes*, for SATB a cappella choir  
*Whitman Carol*, for SATB a cappella choir

### **Opera**

*Full Moon Bender* | *A werewolf opera*, for two sopranos and piano

### **Concertante**

*Dreamcatcher*, for guitar and chamber orchestra  
Violin Concerto, for violin and orchestra  
Piano Concerto, for piano and orchestra

### **Orchestral**

*The Einstein Slide*, for chamber orchestra  
*Collective Uncommon: Seven Orchestral Studies on Medical Oddities*, for large orchestra

## **Electronic Music**

### **Solo instrument and electronics**

*Shrine*, (Sixth Sonata), for Piano, Seaboard, and Seapler (Max/MSP)  
*Variations Promethean*, for piano and pre-recorded electronic music  
Chaconne, for cello and pre-recorded electronic music  
*Doppelgänger*, for piano and electronics (improvisation)

### **Fixed stereo audio**

*Ich bin*, a fantasy based on a famous JFK speech  
*Water Clocks*, a fantasy depicting a bell tower consumed by water  
*Se vuoi, musique concrète* with reference to Puccini's *La Bohème*  
*15 Original Ringtones*, for cell phones