

Christopher Vu, composer and pianist

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Christopher Vu is a Boston-based composer of acoustic and electroacoustic music for concert hall and stage. He is also the artistic director of Pinwheel, a collective of musicians and theatre artists who develop original interdisciplinary works. Son of a concert pianist, Chris draws from his diverse influences and interests as a performer, which include being a professional jazz pianist, a keyboardist in touring funk/rock/pop bands, a featured soloist with Boston Pops in a sold out concert event, and a recurring member of new music groups like the Callithumpian Consort.

Education:

New England Conservatory, MM in Composition, 2019

- Individual studies with **Michael Gandolfi, John Mallia**
- Winner of NEC Honors Ensemble Composition Competition 2018
- 2x Winner of NEC Entrepreneurship Grant (Fall 2018, Spring 2019)

Boston College, BA, Major in Music, Minor in Chemistry, 2017

- Individual studies with **Thomas Oboe Lee, Ralf Gawlick**
- T. Frank Kennedy, S.J., Award for Excellence in the Academic Study of Music
- Montserrat Frontier Fellow

Other private teachers:

Ran Blake, composition, improvisation, 2019-2020

Gilda Lyons, composition, 2018-2019

Jeff D'Antona, jazz piano, Berklee, 2017-2018

Adam Feldman, jazz piano, Boston College, 2014-2017

ToAnh Vu, piano, 2000-2013

Teaching Experience:

New England Conservatory, Teaching Assistant

- **CI 248T – Development of Long-Term Harmonic Memory**, Spring 2019
Assisted Professor Ran Blake. Exploration and analysis of non-diatonic chord progressions. Emphasizes skill building and creativity through the study of triads and repertoire with irregular root motion. Students will apply techniques learned in class through compositional assignments.
- **MHST 551 – Ives, Schoenberg, and Stravinsky**, Fall 2018
Assisted Professor John Heiss. Studies the music of Ives, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, their colleagues, and the general context of their works; developments that led to those works and their influence.

Boston College, Conors Learning Center Tutor for BC Music Department

Appointed by Associate Professor Ralf Gawlick to supplement and reinforce lecture materials either in groups or individually in the Conors Learning Center pertaining to all courses in music theory

- **MUSA 1100 Fundamentals of Music Theory**
- **MUSA 2100 Harmony**
- **MUSA 3100 Chromatic Harmony**

- **MUSA 3106 Counterpoint**
- **MUSA 3110 Form and Analysis**
- **MUSA 3114 Jazz Harmony**
- **MUSA 3130 Orchestration.**

Notable Composition Commissions, Performances (full list of works on pg 5):

- Magic Pearl (upcoming)**, commissioned by **Lincoln Center**, an original shadow puppet production with original music for flute, cello, and percussion, premiered on December 14, 2018. Undergoing continual development with Puppet Showplace Theatre in Brookline, MA.
- Body Stories (upcoming)**, commissioned by award-winning theatre artists Libby Schap and Caitlin Brezinski of **Flying Lessons**. A 4-part series about different people's experiences with their bodies. Premiering late 2020/early 2021.
- Untitled piece (upcoming)**, commissioned by **[sunflower]**. A 30-minute piece for percussion and string quartet. Premiere TBD (COVID-19)
- Points of Departure**, commissioned by Stephen Drury. A fixed media electroacoustic piece accompanied by an audio-reactive jitter created in Max/MSP. Premiered during Virtual SICPP 2020 on July 30, 2020.
- Kairos**, commissioned by Veronica Barron and the Bristol Film Festival. A short shadow film; premiered on August 28, 2020 in Bristol, UK.
- Swimming/Sinking Flute**, commissioned by Puppets After Dark. A solo flute piece performed by Bo Lee, accompanied by visuals by Maggie Gayford of Pinwheel.
- Đài Khán Xuân**, commissioned by the **Vietnamese American Society for Creative Arts and Music (VASCAM)**. A song cycle for soprano voice and string quartet, premiering March 2020 at Musco Center in Orange, CA. (COVID-19 delay)
- entice, incite, incise**, commissioned by **[sunflower]**. A piece for percussion and string quartet, virtual premiere in July 2020.
- Dr. Mabuse**, commissioned by Ran Blake. Original music for flute, electric guitar, and piano to accompany scenes from *Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler* for a special film noir event produced by Ran Blake and Aaron Hartley featuring various ensembles of NEC's Contemporary Improvisation and Jazz department. Premiered on February 19, 2020
- un-earth**, solo violin piece with live electronics written for Manaka Matsumoto, premiered during SICPP 2019 in June 2019.
- For Pinto**, commissioned by Victor Rosenbaum as part of the Prelude Project; solo piano piece premiered Spring 2019
- A Planet Without a Star**, commissioned by John Mallia. An electroacoustic fixed media piece. Premiered on April 17, 2019 to commemorate the late NEC former faculty member Robert Ceely and the renaming of NEC's Electronic Music Studio to the Robert Ceely Electronic Music Studio.
- Holy Mess**, commissioned by **SOLI Chamber Ensemble**; piece for violin, clarinet, cello, and piano; premiered on June 3, 2018 in Alba, Italy.
- ...and it passes**, a piece for flute, viola and harp; winner of the NEC Honors Ensemble Composition Competition 2018, premiered by honors ensemble **OWL riot** in Jordan Hall Spring 2018.
- Ngan's Sketches**, commissioned by **Boston Percussion Group**, a piece for percussion quartet, premiered Spring 2017 at Boston College

Artistic Residencies and Professional Affiliations:

Pinwheel; artistic director

Puppet Showplace Theatre; developmental residency

[sunflower]; composer-in-residence

Vietnamese American Society for Creative Arts and Music (VASCAM); affiliated artist

Additional Studies and Festivals:

Masterclass; John Corigliano; 2019

Summer Institute of Contemporary Performance Practice (SICPP), Electronic Workshop;
John Mallia, Scott Deal; 2019

SICPP, New Works Program; Composer-in-residence: Julian Anderson; 2018

SICPP, Electronics Workshop; John Mallia, Scott Deal 2018

Alba Music Festival, Composer-in-residence: George Tsontakis; premiere with SOLI
Chamber Ensemble, 2018

Wintergreen Music Academy, Daren Hagen, Gilda Lyons; 2018

Performance experience (as a player):

Callithumpian Consort, Stephen Drury (artistic director), electronics, 2018-Present

NEC Philharmonia, Hugh Wolff (director), keyboards/electronics, 2019

Boston Pops Orchestra, "Pops on the Heights", featured soloist, 2016

Juice, funk/pop/jazz-fusion, 2014-Present

New England Conservatory Jazz Ensemble, 2017-2019

Boston College Chamber Society, jazz combo, 2016-2017

Awards:

Winner – NEC Entrepreneurial Musician Grant Spring 2019

- Awarded a grant to help with the ongoing development of "Magic Pearl" in partnership with Puppet Showplace Theatre in Boston and to develop the artistic collective Pinwheel, which include the collaborators of "Magic Pearl".

Winner – NEC Entrepreneurial Musician Grant Fall 2018

- Awarded a grant to put together "Magic Pearl", an original shadow puppet production, a collaboration between composer, musicians, and puppeteers, that is being performed December 14, 2018 at Lincoln Center, NYC.

Winner – NEC Honors Ensemble Competition 2018

- *Doppler*, a piece for flute, viola, and harp, will be performed by the NEC Honors Ensemble OWL Riot in Jordan Hall in May 2018

T. Frank Kennedy, S.J., Award for Excellence in the Academic Study of Music

- Given by Boston College music department to graduating senior with highest GPA and shows continued and consistent excellence in the study of music

Montserrat Frontier Fellow, 2016

- Awarded a \$5000 grant to help develop a senior thesis research project (composition)

Land the Big Gig Summerfest Contest, Grand Prize (\$20,000), 2016

- Juice was one of three finalists to play for a panel of music industry professionals in Milwaukee, WI to eventually win the grand prize

2x BC Battle of the Bands Winner, 2014 & 2015

BC Idol Winner, 2014

Software Proficiencies:

Music Notation: Dorico, Finale, Sibelius

Digital Audio Workstations (DAWs): Audacity, Ableton, Digital Performer, Logic Pro X

Visual Editing: Final Cut Pro, Adobe Photoshop, Blender

Interactive Music Performance: Max/MSP

References (listed alphabetically. Contact information available upon request):

Ran Blake

Chair Emeritus of Contemporary Improvisation, New England Conservatory
MacArthur Fellow

Michael Gandolfi

Chair of Composition, New England Conservatory

Thomas Oboe Lee

Professor, Boston College

Gilda Lyons

Assistant Professor of Composition, The Hartt School

John Mallia

Composition professor, Director of Robert Ceely Electronic Music Studios,
New England Conservatory

List of Works

Stage/Film

Magic Pearl; flute, cello, percussion; 2018-Present

- 30 minute shadow puppet production
- Commissioned by Lincoln Center Education
- Premiered at Lincoln Center on Dec 14, 2018
- Ongoing development with Puppet Showplace Theatre

Body Stories; upcoming 2020/2021

- 4-part shadow film series,
- Commissioned by award-winning theatre artists Libby Schap and Caitlin Brezinski of Flying Lessons
- Premiere late 2020/early 2021

Kairos; chamber orchestra; 2020

- Short shadow film
- Commissioned by Veronica Barron
- Premiered August 28, 2020 in Bristol, UK

Orchestra

In My Life There Is This Lullaby; Orchestra; 2019

- 12 minutes

syndrome; Orchestra; 2017

- 12 minutes

The Act of Forgiveness; Chamber Orchestra; 2017

- 7 minutes
- Performed May 7, 2017

Chamber Music:

Untitled piece; percussion and string quartet; in progress (2020-present)

- 30 minutes
- Commissioned by [sunflower]
- Premiere TBD (COVID-19)

entice, incise, incite; percussion and string quartet; 2020

- 2 minutes
- Commissioned by [sunflower]
- Virtual premiere July 2020 as part of the *Through the Pavement* series

Holy Mess; clarinet, violin, cello, piano

- 5 minutes
- Premiered by SOLI Chamber Ensemble on June 3, 2018 in Alba, Italy

...and it passes (Doppler); flute, viola, harp; 2017

- 8 minutes
- Winner of NEC Honors Ensemble Competition
- Premiered by OWL riot on May 8, 2018 in Jordan Hall

Ngan's Sketches; commissioned by Boston Percussion Group; marimba, vibraphone, crotales, tom-toms, conga; 2017

- 15 minutes
- Premiered by Boston Percussion Group on April 3, 2017 in Gasson Hall

A Meditation On Sylva; flute, clarinet, piano, violin, cello, percussion; 2016

- 12 minutes
- Performed November 21, 2016

Solo

Swimming/Sinking Flute; solo flute; 2020

- 5 minutes
- Written for Bo Lee, accompanied with visuals by Margaret Gayford as part of *Puppets after Dark*

For Pinto; solo piano; 2019

- 4 minutes
- Premiered by Victor Xie as part of the Victor Rosenbaum Prelude Project

Vocal Music

Đài Khán Xuân; soprano and string quartet; 2019

- 5 minutes
- Commissioned by the Vietnamese American Society for Creative Arts and Music
- Premiere in March 2020 at Musco Center – Orange, CA (COVID-19 delay)

Toy Boat; soprano, flute, clarinet, string quartet; 2018

- 5 minutes
- Commissioned by the Vietnamese American Society for Creative Arts and Music
- Performance in Spring 2019 TBD

Selected Riddles of The Hobbit; baritone and piano; 2016

- 10 minutes
- Premiered by by Kyung (Josh) Seo and ToAnh Vu on November 20, 2016

Electroacoustic

Points of Departure; fixed media; 2020

- 5 minutes
- Premiered at Virtual SICPP 2020
- Accompanied by an audio-reactive jitter created in Max/MSP

un-earth; solo violin with live processing; 2019

- 7 minutes
- Premiered at SICPP, summer 2019, by Manaka Matsumoto

A Planet Without A Star; analog synthesizer with live electronics

- 10 minutes
- Premiered at SICPP, summer 2018