

Alex Shapiro
composer

**Narrative Biography
and C.V.**

685 Spring Street, Suite 226 • Friday Harbor, Washington 98250

Narrative Overview

I was born in Manhattan in 1962. Growing up, I'd save the money I earned from babysitting to attend everything from opera, ballet, and classical concerts to jazz, rock, and alternative events in equally alternative venues around the city. It was fantastic to be a young musician in New York— especially in the 70's, when standing room tickets at the Metropolitan Opera were \$3, and the jazz clubs never checked for I.D.

I started composing at age nine, and piano lessons came soon after. With a tendency to improvise on my mistakes rather than correct them, what I lacked in a promising future as a concert soloist launched my life as a composer. At fifteen I began composition lessons, enrolling in the **Mannes College of Music** summer program and studying with **Leo Edwards** (1977), whose kindness was deeply encouraging. I also took a class in electronic music, unaware how significant those skills would be in my future career. The following two summers (1978, 1979), I was the youngest composition student accepted to the **Aspen Music School**, studying with **Michael Czajkowski** and **George Tsontakis**. It was at Aspen that I received my first paid commission: \$500 for a brass quartet fanfare, featuring one of the worst tuba lines ever conceived. But the check cleared. I have been working steadily ever since.

In addition to master classes with **Elliott Carter** and **Erich Leinsdorf**, my time at Aspen also had me participating in workshops with jazz greats **Freddie Hubbard** and **Toshiko Akiyoshi**. It was life-changing to be exposed to the professional worlds of classical and jazz while continuing my electronic music studies and living in a rural setting where, for the first time in my life, I could see the night sky. It was also at Aspen that I first learned the power of activism. Hired at 17 as the chorus manager for the world premiere of Peter Schat's opera, *Houdini*, I negotiated with the school's president to ensure every chorus member would be paid something for the unusually long rehearsal hours. The experience of speaking up on behalf of others and affecting change, no matter how modest (I think each singer got \$50), was important. That this occurred as the backdrop to a musical life set the tone for my adulthood, which has been as filled with community service as it has been filled with new notes on the page.

My subsequent education was at **The Juilliard School** (1979-1980) as a composition student of **Craig Shuler** and **Bruce Adolphe**. Upon graduating the *Pre-College Division*, I began composition studies at **Manhattan School of Music** (1980-1983), studying with **Ursula Mamlok** and **John Corigliano**. While in school, I worked in commercial music, scoring documentaries for local cable TV and getting my feet wet in the jingle industry. Hired to score a documentary video in Los Angeles, I moved there in 1983 and began my career composing film and TV music while fighting legendary traffic gridlock. After twelve years of writing music for mostly unmemorable, low-budget projects, the joy I felt in composing a chamber orchestra score for a feature film, *Horses and Champions*, in 1995 led me to soon decide to shift my career back to concert music.

It was 1996, and since leaving conservatory, I had only composed soundtracks. I had no concert music catalog, and knew no one in the concert music world. Undaunted, I began composing chamber works, found opportunities to get them performed, and was fortunate to have two of my early pieces recorded and commercially released. The combination of the advent of the internet, my volunteerism with music service organizations, my geeky technical proclivities, and a grasp of publishing concepts from my film music background was fortuitous, and my music quickly became widely performed and recorded in many countries. I've written over 90 concert works, each but one published by my company, **Activist Music**, and sold through a broad network of distributors.

In 2007, with my career firmly anchored to my web presence, I realized that I could conduct my music life from anywhere on the globe. Drawn by a love of nature and the joy of having composed in the woods at Aspen long ago, and as a Fellow at **The MacDowell Colony** more recently, I moved from the disquiet of Los Angeles to Washington State's San Juan Island, a serenely beautiful place devoid of a single traffic light.

I am fortunate to work steadily, full time, as a composer. I travel around the U.S. speaking at and moderating many music events, and giving workshops on behalf of **ASCAP** for colleagues about the power of the web for creating a viable livelihood. I recently testified before the FCC on the topic of digital rights, and have published articles about the new digital paradigm, and the philosophy of an abundant approach to working in the arts. My volunteerism with national service organizations is deeply rewarding. Since moving to this remote bridge-less island, my career has never been busier. Just as in Aspen when I was sixteen, once again I'm composing music in a profoundly inspiring natural environment, only with better tuba lines. For this, and so much more, I am grateful. 🌱

Education

Manhattan School of Music (1980-1983) composition student of Ursula Mamlok and John Corigliano

The Juilliard School (1979-1980) composition student of Craig Shuler and Bruce Adolphe

Aspen Music School (1978, 1979) composition student of Michael Czajkowski and George Tsontakis

Mannes College of Music (1977) composition student of Leo Edwards

Piano Studies (1971-1980) student of Marshall Kreisler

Leadership

Chairperson, Media Council, New Music USA, 2011-present

Board member, The MacDowell Colony, 2010-present

Symphony & Concert music elected national composer representative, ASCAP Board of Review, 2010-present

Board member, American Music Center, 2009-2011

Member, ASCAP Symphony & Concert Committee, 2009-present

Board member, University of Washington, Friday Harbor Laboratories, 2008- present

Board member, Spring Street International School, 2008-2010

President of the Board of Directors, The American Composers Forum of Los Angeles, 2003-2006

Chairperson, Advisory Council, The American Composers Forum of Los Angeles, 2000-2007

Board member, VTEA Advisory Board, Los Angeles City College Music Department, 2005-2007

Board member, Mladi Chamber Orchestra, 2005-2007

Officer, The National Association of Composers, USA (NACUSA), 1998-2002

Officer, Pacific Southern Chapter, The College Music Society, 1999-2002

Vice President, board member, The Society of Composers & Lyricists, 1992-1998

Chairperson, Digital Rights Committee, ASCAP, 1997

Chairperson, SCL/The Hollywood Reporter Film & TV Music Conferences, 1996-1999

Chairperson, Public Relations committee, Women in Film Crystal Awards, 1993

Co-Founder, The Clinic Defense Alliance, 1990-1994

Board member, The Institute for First Amendment Studies, 1992-1994

Chairperson, State & Nat'l Legislative Action Committee, The ACLU of Southern California, 1991-1996

Vice President, Board of Directors, The ACLU of Southern California, 1992-1996

Awards, Honors, Residencies and Fellowships

2011 Recipient, National Award of Merit, **Mu Phi Epsilon**

2011 Composer-in-Residence, **Symphonic Voyages, Celebrity Cruises inaugural classical music cruise**

2011 Composer-in-Residence, **Aries Composers Festival, Colorado State University**

2011 Composer-in-Residence, **Athena New Music Festival, Murray State University**

2010 Composer-in-Residence, **NOW New Music Festival, Capital University**

2010 Guest Composer, **Vashon Island Chamber Music Festival**

2010 Guest Composer, **Music in the Mountains Festival**

2009 Award for *Second Life show for Music Academy OnLive*, **Meet the Composer**

2008 Award for *Slip*, **Aliénor Prize, International Harpsichord Composition Competition**

2007 Elected to **ACME, Mu Phi Epsilon**

2006 Keynote Speaker, **Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference**

2006 Guest Composer and Festival Moderator, **Santa Clara University New Music Festival**

2006 Guest Composer and Speaker, **Voices on the Edge: Women in New Music Festival**

2005 Subito Award for *Music for Two Big Instruments*, **The American Composers Forum**

2005 Composers Award for *Bioplasm*, **Music Teachers National Association**

2004 California MTNA Commissioned Composer Award, **California Assn. of Professional Music Teachers**

2004 Composer-in-Residence and Festival Moderator, **The Walden School**

2003 Alpha Chi Omega Foundation Fellow, **The MacDowell Colony**

2003 Guest Composer and Speaker, **Festival of New American Music, Sacramento State University**

2003 Subito Award for *Current Events*, **The American Composers Forum**

2003 Best Original Composition Award for *At the Abyss*, **Mu Phi Epsilon**

2003 Award for *Current Events*, **The American Music Center**

2002 Distinguished Service Award, **The American Composers Forum**

2001 Award for *Of Bow and Touch*, **The International Society of Bassists**

2000 Artist Fellowship Award for the Performing Arts, **The California Arts Council**

2000-2003 Composer-in-Residence, **University Campus Choir, Los Angeles, CA**

2000 Artists Award for *Repair for Flute and Bassoon*, **Mu Phi Epsilon**

1999 Best Instrumental Composition, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano*, **Utah Composers Guild**

1999 Best Performance Award, *Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano*, **Delius Association of Florida**

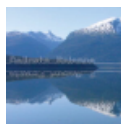
1998-2011 **ASCAP Plus Awards**

Discography



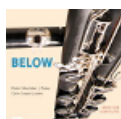
An Robert Schumann

Obst P330.30. Release date: February 2010.
Slowly, searching, Susanne Kessel, piano.



Delicate Balance

Aucourant Recordings Aurec 1001. Release date: January 2010.
Water Crossing, F. Gerard Errante, clarinet, Alex Shapiro, electronics.



Below: Music for Low Flutes

Move Records MD3330. Release date: November 2009.
Below, Peter Sheridan, contrabass flute, Alex Shapiro, electronics.



Solo Rumores

Quindecim Recordings 186. Release date: November 2007.
Luvina, Ana Cervantes, piano.



Notes From The Kelp

Innova Recordings 683. Release date: October 2007.
Collection of 8 Shapiro chamber works, 24 artists.



William Garrison Piano Competition

ALS Records. Release date: September 2007.
Scherzo, Beatrix Klein, piano.



Saxtronic Soundscape

Centaur Records 2862. Release date: July 2007.
Desert Tide, Douglas Masek, soprano saxophone, Alex Shapiro, electronics.



60 x 60 2005

Vox Novus Records 001. Release date: June 2007.
Unhinged; Alex Shapiro, electronics.



Trumpet Colors

Crystal Records CD766. Release date: April 2007.
Elegy, Ismael Betancor, trumpet; José Luis Castillo, piano; Carlos Rivero, cello.

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Discography, cont'd



La Discordantia

DC Records 0024. Release date: April 2007.
Slip; Antonio D'Andrea, violin; Maria Clotilde Sieni, harpsichord.



Jenni Scott

JS Records. Release date: August 2006.
Shiny Kiss; Jenni Scott, flute.



Californian Concert

Oehms Classics/WDR OC 534. Release date: February 2006.
For My Father, from *Piano Suite No. 1: The Resonance of Childhood*; Susanne Kessel, piano.



Beck and Call

Crystal Records CD846. Release date: December 2005.
Deep; Carolyn Beck, contrabassoon, Alex Shapiro, electronics.
Of Breath and Touch; Carolyn Beck, bassoon; Delores Stevens, piano.



Coast to Coast

Baer Tracks Music 001. Release date: September 2005.
Music for Two Big Instruments; Alan Baer, tuba; Bradley Haag, piano.



Above and Beyond

LAFQ Records 0605. Release date: August 2005.
Bioplasm; The Los Angeles Flute Quartet: Colleen Carroll, Eileen Holt-Helwig, Lisa-Maree Amos; and Peter Sheridan.



Music for Hammers and Sticks

Innova Recordings 630. Release date: February 2005.
At the Abyss; Teresa McCollough, piano; Thomas Burrirt, mallets; Peggy Benkeser, percussion.



Clariphonia: Music of the 20th Century on Clarinet

Cambria Master Recordings 1125. Release date: June 2001.
Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano; Berkeley Price, clarinet; Nancy Roth, violin; Deon Nielsen Price, piano.



New American Piano Music

Innova Recordings 552. Release date: May 2001.
Sonata for Piano; Teresa McCollough, piano.

Commissions (selected)

- Perpetual Spark**, for flute/piccolo, violin, viola, cello, double bass and piano; Commissioned by Sherwin Abrams, 2011
- Transplanted**, for harpsichord and viola; Commissioned by Sherwin Abrams, 2011
- Of Song and Touch**, for euphonium and piano; Commissioned by Robert Benton, 2011
- Spark**, for piano; Commissioned by Sherwin Abrams, 2011
- Intermezzo for Bass Flute and Piano**, Commissioned by Jenni Olson, 2011
- Immersion**; for symphonic wind band and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by U. of Minnesota, Yale University, Ohio State University, Encore Wind Ensemble, Rosemount High School, U. of Wisconsin-Whitewater, U. of British Columbia, 2010
- Unabashedly More**, for flute/piccolo, clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano; Commissioned by Lunatics at Large, 2010
- Vendaval de Luvina**, for piano and digital audio; Commissioned by Teresa McCollough, 2010
- Paper Cut**, for concert wind band, printer paper, and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by the American Composers Forum and the NEA for BandQuest, 2010
- Elegiac**, for clarinet, cello and piano; Commissioned by Chamber Music San Juans and Carolyn Haugen, 2010
- Slowly, searching**, for piano; Commissioned by Susanne Kessel, 2009
- Archipelago**, for string quartet, double bass and woodwind quintet; Commissioned by the Norton Concert Series, MacArthur Foundation, 2009
- Below**, for contrabass flute and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Peter Sheridan, 2008
- Homecoming**, for symphonic wind band; Commissioned by Major Tod Addison and the U.S. Army TRADOC Band, 2008
- Luvina**, for piano; Commissioned by Ana Cervantes, 2007
- Unabashedly**, for flute/piccolo, violin, cello and piano; Commissioned by Chamber Music Palisades, 2006
- Of String and Touch**, for viola and piano; Commissioned by Peter Neubert, 2006
- Music for Four Big Instruments**, for tuba, piano, double bass, drum set; Commissioned by Steve Dillon and Gerhard Meinl, 2006
- Evolve**, for electric viola and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Martha Mooke 2006
- Of Wind and Touch**, for baritone saxophone and piano; Commissioned by Brandon Masterman, 2005
- Chakra Suite**, for 32-string veena, tabla, guitar, electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Thakur Chakrapani Singh, 2005
- Desert Tide**, for soprano saxophone and electronic soundscape, Commissioned by Douglas Masek, 2005
- Vista**, for violin and electronics; Commissioned by Antonio D'Andrea, 2005
- Elegy**, for trumpet, cello and piano; Commissioned by The Orenunn Trio, 2004
- Deep**, for contrabassoon and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Carolyn Beck, 2004
- Bioplasm**, for flute quartet; Commissioned by California Assn. of Professional Music Teachers, 2004
- Desert Passage**, for tenor saxophone, violin and piano; Commissioned by The Cleveland Duo, 2003
- Current Events**, for string quintet; Commissioned by Pacific Serenades, 2003
- At the Abyss**, for piano, marimba, vibraphone, percussion; Commissioned by Teresa McCollough and Santa Clara University, 2003
- Water Crossing**, for clarinet and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by F. Gerard Errante, 2002
- Celebrate!**, for SATB choir and piano; Commissioned by University Campus Choir, 2002
- Re:pair**, for flute and oboe; Commissioned by Mu Phi Epsilon, 2002
- Slip**, for violin and harpsichord; Commissioned by Robin Lorentz and Kathleen McIntosh, 2001
- Desert Waves**, for 5-string electric violin and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Sabrina Berger, 2001
- Music for Two Big Instruments**, for tuba and piano; Commissioned by Norman Pearson, 2000
- Re:pair**, for two baroque or modern flutes; Commissioned by Tom Moore and Laura Ronai, 2000
- Of Breath and Touch**, for bassoon and piano; Commissioned by Carolyn Beck, 1999
- Evensong Suite**, for flute, clarinet, bassoon and piano; Commissioned by St. Bede's Episcopal Church, 1999
- Shiny Kiss**, for solo flute; Commissioned by Chelsea Czuchra, 1999
- Journey**, for 5-string electric violin and electronic soundscape; Commissioned by Mary Lou Newmark, 1999
- Transplant**, for organ; Commissioned by Frances Nobert, 1999
- Intermezzo for Clarinet and Harp**, Commissioned by Chanté Duo, 1998
- Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano**, Commissioned by Bronwen Jones, 1998

Public Speaking, Event Moderating, Broadcasts (selected)

Composer-in-Residence and Emcee, *Symphonic Voyages, Celebrity Cruises inaugural classical music cruise*, 2011
Presenter, *Chamber Music America Workshop*, New York, NY, 2010
Speaker, *NETMCDO Conference*, New York, NY, 2010
Keynote Speaker, *Soroptimist International*, Friday Harbor, WA, 2010
Speaker, *Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute*, Minneapolis, MN, 2009, 2010, 2012
Lecturer, *ASCAP Composer Career Workshops*, Philadelphia, PA, 2009; Chicago, IL, 2009; San Diego, CA, 2010; Los Angeles, CA, 2010 and 2011; Fort Collins, CO, 2011; New York, NY, 2011
Speaker, *ASCAP I Create Music Expo*, Los Angeles, CA, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011
Speaker, Federal Communications Commission *Public Hearing on Broadband Access*, Washington, D.C., 2009
Speaker, *Making Music Work workshops*, St. Paul, MN, 2009
Speaker, *Chamber Music America Conference*, New York City, NY, 2006, 2009
Moderator, *Los Angeles Composers Salons*, American Composers Forum of Los Angeles, 2000- present; conducted live on-stage interviews with over 100 composers
Speaker, Moderator, *National Performing Arts Convention*, Denver, CO, 2008
Guest, WITF-FM Harrisburg, PA, *Composing Thoughts with John Clare*, 2008
Guest, Second Life Cable TV Network, *Music Academy Online*, 2008, 2009
Featured artist, *ASCAP Audio Portrait*, 2008
Featured artist, *Behind the Beat*, 2008
Featured Guest Speaker, *Center for Cultural Innovation*, Los Angeles, CA, 2007
Guest, KCSN-FM Los Angeles, CA, *The Audition Booth with Martin Perlich*, 2007
Moderator, *Composer to Composer interviews*, American Composer Forum of Los Angeles, at Walt Disney Concert Hall with Gavin Bryars (2003), Steve Reich (2004), Don Davis (2005), Billy Childs (2005), Christopher Rouse (2007)
Keynote Speaker, *Society of Composers, Inc. National Conference*, Tempe, Arizona, 2006
Featured Guest, *American Music Makers*, one-hour U.S. syndicated Public Radio show, 2006
Moderator, *New Music Festival*, Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA, 2006
Featured artist, *Measure for Measure*, podcast with Philip Blackburn for the American Composers Forum, 2006
Featured Guest, *My Auditions*, interactive month-long web chat, 2006
Speaker, *Voices on the Edge: Women in New Music Festival*, Cal State University, Fullerton, CA, 2006
Presenter, *Mladi Chamber series concert*, Los Angeles, CA, 2005, 2006
Speaker, *Los Angeles Philharmonic, First Nights series, Steven Stucky Second Concerto for Orchestra premiere*, at Walt Disney Concert Hall, 2004
Guest, WGDR-FM Vermont *Kalvos & Damian's New Music Bazaar*, 2004
Moderator, *Music Business Chops Workshop*, Los Angeles, CA, 2004
Guest, NPR, *Theme and Variations* with Will Everett, 2004
Moderator, *The Virtuoso Soloist in Film Music*, presented by The Society of Composers & Lyricists at Paramount Pictures Studio, (with guests Joshua Bell, Ralph Grierson and Eric Rigler), Los Angeles, CA, 2004
Moderator, *Launching Your Film Scoring Career*, presented by The Society of Composers & Lyricists and The American Composers Forum of Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA, 2004
Guest, KXLU-FM Los Angeles, CA, *Trilogy*, 2000
Speaker, *Business Tools for Composers workshop*, The American Composers Forum, Los Angeles, CA, 2003
Speaker, *The International Alliance of Women in Music International Congress*, London, England, 1997
Guest, KPFK-FM Los Angeles, CA, *For the Record* with Samm Brown, 1997
Speaker, *Grammy® in the Schools*, National Association of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), Los Angeles, CA, 1995
Speaker, *The Film Music Society*, Los Angeles, CA, 1994
Guest, KPFK-FM Los Angeles *Music of the Americas* with Jeannie Pool, Los Angeles, CA, 1996
Speaker, Moderator, *The Society of Composers & Lyricists*, Los Angeles, CA, 1993-2005

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Speaking, Moderating, Broadcasts, cont'd

Additional related public speaking experience:

- **Lobbying** in Washington D.C. and California
 - visits to numerous elected officials, on copyright and civil liberties issues (1990-present)
- **Speaking** in formal public debates
 - on radio, television, and to live audiences, as a spokesperson of the ACLU and other civil liberties organizations (1991-1996)
- **Producing** professional conferences
 - Chairperson and speaker at four *State of the Art Film & Television Music Conferences* with The Hollywood Reporter and the Society of Composers & Lyricists (1994-1997)
 - Chairperson and speaker at two *State and National Legislative Conferences* for the ACLU of Southern California (1991, 1992)

Guest Lectures, Master Classes, Keynote addresses given (selected)

University of Southern California 2011
Colorado State University 2011
University of Minnesota, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011
The Ohio State University 2011
Murray State University 2011
Capital University 2010, 2011
San Diego State University 2010
University of Chicago 2009
Philadelphia Music Project 2009
Cornish College of the Arts 2008, 2009
University of Puget Sound 2009
McNally Smith College 2009
University of California, Santa Barbara 2005, 2006, 2009
University of Washington, Friday Harbor Laboratories 2008
Spring Street International School 2008
University of Arizona, Tempe 2006
Manhattan School of Music 2005
The Walden School 2004
American Composers Forum of Los Angeles 2003
California Institute of the Arts 2003
Sierra College 2003
Santa Clara University 2003
California State University Sacramento 2003
California State University, Fullerton 2002
Fullerton College 2002
Los Angeles High School of the Arts 2001, 2002

Panelist and Judging services (selected)

2009 Panelist, **The Grammy Awards**
2008 Panelist, **SEAMUS Festival**
2006 Panelist, **Meet the Composer Creative Connections Awards**
2005 Panelist, **Music Teachers Association of California Piano Competition**
2004 Panelist, **The McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowship Award**
2003 Panelist, **Sacramento State University Graduate Composition Competition**

Published Essays, Articles and Interviews (selected)

Notes from the Kelp; 2006-present; author
New Music Box; American Music Center, Frank J. Oteri, editor; 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010; author
ArtsJournal; Douglas McLennan, editor; 2010; author
Federal Communications Commission; 2009; panel hearing testimony
Mind the Gap; Molly Sheridan, editor; 2009; author
Chamber Music magazine, American Composer, Kyle Gann series, Ellen Goldensohn, editor; 2008; profile article
Sounding Board; The American Composers Forum, John Michel, editor; 2005; 2006, 2008, 2010; author
Tokafi, 2006, 2008; interviews
Vegetarian Times, 2008; interview
Islands Sound, 2008; author
Veg News, 2008; interview
Adaptistration, Take a Friend to the Orchestra essayist, 2006; author
Sequenza21, 2005, to present; author
Journal of the International Alliance for Women in Music, 2005; author
The Society for Electro-Acoustic Music, U.S., 2005; profile article
New Music Forum, 2003; interview
Pan Pipes; Sigma Alpha Iota, 2002; profile article
The Triangle; Mu Phi Epsilon, 2002, 2008; profile articles
Composer/USA; NACUSA, 2002; profile article
Malibu Surfside News, 2001; profile article
Music & Vision Magazine, 2001; profile article
Film & TV Music Special Issues; The Hollywood Reporter, 1994; 1995; profile articles
The Score; The Society of Composers & Lyricists, 1993-1998; author

Organization Affiliations

Writer and Publisher member, ASCAP	Voting member, The Recording Academy (<i>The Grammys</i>)
Publisher member, National Music Publishers' Association (<i>NMPA</i>)	Member, Alumni Council, Manhattan School of Music
Board member, American Music Center	Current member, Chamber Music America
Current member, past Vice President, The Society of Composers & Lyricists	Current member, past officer, The College Music Society
Current member, past Chapter President, American Composers Forum	Current member, Electronic Music Foundation
Current member, SEAMUS (<i>Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the U.S.</i>)	Current member, Mu Phi Epsilon , <i>elected to ACME</i>
Current member, past officer, NACUSA (<i>Nat'l Assn of Composers, USA</i>)	Current member, Society of Composers, Inc.
Current member, International Alliance for Women in Music	Current member, The Dominant Club Music Association