

Education and Overview

Alex Shapiro was born in New York City in 1962 and raised in Manhattan, where she began composing at age nine. She was educated at **The Juilliard School** (1979-1980) as a composition student of Craig Shuler and Bruce Adolphe, and at **Manhattan School of Music** (1980-1983), where she was a student of Ursula Mamlok and John Corigliano. An accomplished pianist, Ms. Shapiro was a private student of recitalist Marshall Kreisler (1973-1981), and she is also an active guitarist. As Alex recalls, "It was fantastic to be a young musician in New York City—especially in the 70's, when standing room tickets at the Metropolitan Opera were \$3, and the jazz clubs never checked for I.D.!".

Shapiro's earlier composition and electronic music studies from the age of fifteen were with Leo Edwards at **Mannes College of Music** (1977) and with Michael Czajkowski and George Tsontakis at the **Aspen Music School** (1978, 1979), where she also participated in master classes with Elliott Carter, Erich Leinsdorf and Freddie Hubbard. Shapiro views her two summers at Aspen as a harbinger of her creative adulthood amidst wilderness: "I was exposed to the professional worlds of classical, jazz, and electronic music while 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 Ms. Shapiro learned the power of activism, when as the chorus manager for the world premiere of Peter Schat's opera, *Houdini*, she negotiated with the school's president to ensure payment to every chorister for the unusually long rehearsal hours. The experience of speaking up on behalf of others and affecting change, led to a life which has been as filled with community service as it has been filled with new music notes on the page.

At age sixteen, Shapiro received her first paid commission for a brass quartet, and began working as a composer scoring documentaries for local cable TV in New York while she was still an undergraduate at Manhattan School of Music. Hired to score a documentary video in Los Angeles, she moved there in 1983 and for the following fifteen years had a career composing music for film, television, and multimedia projects. Soon after composing a chamber orchestra soundtrack for the feature film, *Horses and Champions* in 1995, Shapiro decided to devote her focus entirely to concert music. Beginning with works for small ensembles, her catalog of scores and recordings steadily grew, bolstered by her understanding of the music business, digital technology, and the still-nascent Internet.

In 2007, having grown weary of freeway driving, and with her active concert music career firmly anchored to her web presence, Ms. Shapiro moved from her Malibu home to Washington State's remote San Juan Island, a serenely beautiful place devoid of a single traffic light. Alex's life is balanced between composing, traveling through the U.S. speaking to colleagues about music careers in the 21st century, and ardent community involvement with contemporary music organizations. Shapiro's connection to the wildlife surrounding her is evident in the music, photographs and essays found throughout her website, www.alexshapiro.org, and her popular blog, *Notes from the Kelp*.

Publishing: Scores, Recordings and Performances

Ms. Shapiro's music is lyrically expressive, dramatic, and often rhythmically driven. Her catalog consists of nearly 100 acoustic and electroacoustic works for chamber ensembles and symphonic wind band that are performed and broadcast weekly across the U.S. and internationally. Published by **Activist Music**, Shapiro's scores can be found in libraries and universities nationwide, and her catalog is widely distributed by retailers including **J.W. Pepper and Sons**, **Theodore Front Musical Literature, Inc.**, **TrevCo Music**, **Flute World**, **Carol Nussbaum Music Co.**, **Tuba-Euphonium Press**, **Steve Weiss Music**, **BVD Press**, **Hickey's Music**, **Harrassowitz**, and **Hal Leonard**.

Shapiro's music has been recorded by artists around the world, and is available on over twenty commercially released CDs in the U.S., Europe, Australia and Mexico, including those from **Cambria Master Recordings**, **Innova Recordings**, **Quindecim Records**, **Move Records**, **Crystal Records**, **DC Records**, **Delos**, **Centaur Records**, **Oehms Classics** and others. A representative collection of her chamber works appears on the 2007 **Innova Recordings** CD release, *Notes from the Kelp*.

Recent Premieres

The 2010-2011 concert season included nine premieres of Shapiro commissions, including a groundbreaking suite for electroacoustic symphonic wind band titled *Immersion* for a consortium of universities led by the University of Minnesota and broadcast nationally on Minnesota Public Radio. Also premiered were a dectet for strings and winds titled *Archipelago* for Chicago's Fifth House Ensemble; *Unabashedly More*, a mixed chamber sextet premiered at Carnegie Hall by the New York ensemble Lunatics at Large; *Slowly, searching* for German pianist Susanne Kessel for her latest CD and concert tour; and *Elegiac*, for clarinet, cello and piano, premiered by Chamber Music San Juans, a Pacific Northwest ensemble which also gave the premiere of Shapiro's *Intermezzo for Cello and Piano* in August 2011. *Vendaval de Luvina*, a haunting work for piano, digital audio and prerecorded spoken word that is based on a short story by Mexican author Juan Rulfo, was premiered in California by pianist Teresa McCollough, who also gave the California and New York City premieres of Ms. Shapiro's latest solo piano work, *Spark*, in November 2011.

Perhaps the most instantly popular of Ms. Shapiro's newest pieces has been *Paper Cut*, a unique offering for wind band, prerecorded electronics and printer paper (yes, printer paper), commissioned for the *BandQuest* series by the American Composers Forum and the National Endowment for the Arts. The piece, distributed by Hal Leonard Corporation, has rapidly become a favorite with high schools and colleges, and has been performed countless times across the U.S., Canada, Europe and Asia. *Paper Cut* was featured at the December 2011 Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, performed by the Vandercook College of Music Symphonic Band.

Awards and Honors

In August 2011 Ms. Shapiro was honored with the *Award of Merit*, the highest award given to members of the national music fraternity **Mu Phi Epsilon**, for her inventive use of new technologies in developing her composing career and her efforts in helping colleagues do the same. She is the recipient of national honors and awards including those from the **American Composers Forum** (2001: *Distinguished Service Award*; 2005: *Subito Award*), **The American Music Center** (2002, *Margaret Fairbank Jory Grant*), **The International Society of Bassists** (2002, for *Of Bow and Touch*), **The California Association of Professional Music Teachers** (2004, *Commissioned Composer Award*), the **Music Teachers National Association** (2005, for *Bioplasm*), **Mu Phi Epsilon** (2001, 2004: *Artist Award*; 2007: election to *ACME*), and **ASCAP** (1999-2012 annual *ASCAP Plus Awards*), and she has been awarded artist fellowships from **The California Arts Council** (2000) and **The MacDowell Colony** (2003, *Alpha Chi Omega Foundation Fellow*). Shapiro and her music are the subject of Kyle Gann's article for his *American Composer* series, in the May/June 2008 issue of **Chamber Music** magazine.

Professional Involvement and Advocacy

Ms. Shapiro is a constant advocate for other artists through her speaking appearances, published articles, and community involvement. She is the nationally elected concert music representative on the **ASCAP Board of Review**, is a member of **ASCAP's Symphony & Concert Committee**, serves on the Board of Directors of **The MacDowell Colony**, and chairs the Media Council for **New Music USA**. Between 2002-2007 Shapiro served as President of the Board of Directors of the **American Composers Forum Los Angeles** chapter and Chairperson of **ACF/LA's Advisory Council**. She has served on the boards of national music organizations including **The American Music Center** (2009-2011), **The National Association of Composers, USA (NACUSA)** (1998-2002), **The College Music Society** (1999-2002), and **The Society of Composers & Lyricists** (1992-1998). In 1997 Ms. Shapiro co-chaired a committee for **ASCAP** to develop composers' contract standards for negotiations in the use of original music over the Internet, and between 2005-2007 served on the Advisory Board for the **Los Angeles City College Music Department**. She has sat on the Alumni Council of **Manhattan School of Music** since 1999. Shapiro has served on many awards panels, including those for **The Grammy Awards**, **Meet the Composer**, and the **McKnight Foundation Artist Fellowship**.

Shapiro's volunteer activism extends beyond the music world, and encompasses three terms she served on the Board of Directors of the **ACLU of Southern California** (1989-1995), including two years as the 30,000-member affiliate's Vice-president and Chairperson of the *State and National Legislative Action Committee*. Since 2008, Ms. Shapiro has served on the Board of Directors of **University of Washington's Friday Harbor Laboratories**.

Lectures and Residencies

Ms. Shapiro has been composer-in-residence and/or guest lecturer at conservatories and universities including **University of Southern California** (2011); **University of Minnesota** (2008, 2010, 2011); **Colorado State University** (2011); **Murray State University** (2011); **Capital University** (2010, 2011); **The Ohio State University** (2011); **San Diego State University** (2010); **Cornish College of the Arts** (2008, 2009); **University of Puget Sound** (2009); **University of Chicago** (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); **Arizona, State University** (2006); **Manhattan School of Music** (2005); **The Walden School** (2004); **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) and the **Los Angeles High School of the Arts** (2001, 2002). Upcoming 2012-2013 lectures and residencies include those at **University of Wyoming, Washington State University, and Yale University**.

Public Speaking and Writing

An articulate and passionate communicator, Ms. Shapiro regularly appears as a guest speaker at a wide variety of live music events, and has been a featured presenter at the **Los Angeles Philharmonic's First Nights series** (2004), **NARAS' Grammy® in the Schools** (1997), **IAWM's International Congress of Women in Music** (1998, 1999), the **Center for Cultural Innovation** in Los Angeles (2007), the **National Performing Arts Convention** in Denver, Colorado (2008), the **Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute** (2010, 2011, 2012), each of **ASCAP's I Create Music EXPOs** in Hollywood (2006-2011), **Chamber Music America** (2006, 2009, 2010) and many other conferences. Since 2000 Shapiro has interviewed over 100 composers as the moderator of **American Composer Forum Los Angeles's** popular **Composer's Salon** series as well as its **Composer to Composer** series at Walt Disney Concert Hall, hosting engaging conversations with diverse guests including Steve Reich, Randy Newman, Joshua Bell, Christopher Rouse, Steven Stucky, Don Davis, Gavin Bryars, Billy Childs, Mort Subotnick, Anne LeBaron, Bill Kraft, Bruce Broughton, Joan Huang, David Newman, Terry Riley and countless others.

Shapiro's entertaining writings are familiar to readers of online music blogs and magazines including **NewMusicBox, Adaptistration** and **Sequenza21**, and her essays and articles have been published in a variety of professional journals from 1999 to the present. She has been a lively guest on many radio shows, and was most recently the February 2012 featured guest on Marvin Rosen's **Classical Discoveries** series from Princeton University's WPRB-FM, for a two and a half-hour retrospective of her music. In August 2006 a one-hour podcast hosted by Innova Recordings director Philip Blackburn called **Measure for Measure: New Music, New Thoughts** featured Ms. Shapiro as the interview for its inaugural broadcast. Shapiro's life and music were the subject of the one-hour show **American MusicMakers**, broadcast in February 2006 on public radio stations across the United States, and she was the **Keynote Speaker** at the **Society of Composers, Inc. 2006 National Conference**.

Ms. Shapiro is especially well versed on the uses of digital media for the promotion of artists' careers, and is a speaker for the **ASCAP Composer Career Workshop** touring series she co-founded with composers Stephen Paulus, Jennifer Higdon and attorney and Schott/EAM president Jim Kendrick in 2009. In September 2009 Alex was the sole artist invited to testify about broadband access and digital rights issues, on a **Federal Communications Commission** panel hearing in Washington, D.C. She was joined on the panel by the chairman and CEO of **Motion Picture Association of America**, the COO of **Paramount Pictures**, and industry leaders from **The Writers Guild of America, Future of Music Coalition, Copyright Alliance, and The Directors Guild of America**. FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski quoted from Shapiro's testimony in his keynote address at the 2009 Washington, D.C. **Future of Music Coalition Policy Summit**.