

Research Statement

The **role of a composer** is to communicate a perspective unavailable to those who lack the ability to express the seemingly inexpressible. In order to effectively accomplish this task, a composer should always consider his/her performer, and at least acknowledge his/her audience. If the performer is not engaged, then the performance will fall short. I find that writing for specific performers is thrilling and rewarding on both a professional and personal level. Performers offer me valuable insights into their instruments, which are otherwise only approximately available to me through sometimes ambiguous textbook examples. The dialogue with performers is exciting for its potential to convey and develop my intentions, and for the shared opportunity to deliver them to the audience during the performance.

A disengaged audience may signal a failure of a composer's primary task, not because composers must write for the "masses," or please an imaginary faceless audience, but since I believe that listeners ought to receive the clearest and most concisely crafted music. I am by no means suggesting that composers should "write for an audience," rather it is important for us to remember that all audiences carry with them an aggregate of expectations informed by their previous listening experiences. It is easy for composers to be seduced by theoretical hierarchy, and the best way to combat that, in the traditional sense, is through the medium of the performer. For works involving no live performer, the composer must remember to put themselves in the position of performer and listener.

My **recent compositions** have been influenced by my research into the works and methodologies of spectral composers such as Griséy, Murail, Saariaho, and Lindberg. With the advent of psychoacoustic studies and greatly improved technology, we are now able to explore the complex nature of sound, and employ our knowledge to construct new and compelling sound-worlds that creatively represent natural acoustic phenomena, commonly referred to as the "spectral attitude in music." Griséy's six-work cycle *Les espace acoustique* is a textbook example of how varying forces can utilize the spectral attitude, while *Lindberg's Parada* is a compelling symbiosis of traditional melodic writing within spectral harmonic fields, a technique common among so-called third-generation spectral composers. My chamber orchestra work *Two Vestiges* builds upon Lindberg's process by incorporating elements of visual art through the measurement of light frequencies, which are found at much higher bandwidths on the same measured scale as sound. I visited Rome last summer on a Center for European Studies Grant, and, using a portable light spectrometer, measured the reflective light quanta of three objects in the *Piazza del Campidoglio*. I collated the data and wrote a new composition that through musical elements represents the following physical dimensions of those objects: height, width, length, distance from each other, and intensity of light reflection. I am writing a paper about my research and methodology, to be published in Spring 2017.

As I work to grow as a composer, I rely on my research interests, my interactions with other musicians as a conductor and performer myself, and my ear. I always welcome new challenges, fruitful collaborations, and opportunities.