

Christopher Adler

Christopher Adler is a composer, performer and improviser living in San Diego, California. His music draws upon nearly three decades of research into the traditional musics of Thailand and Laos, and a background in mathematics. He is internationally recognized as a foremost performer of new music for the khaen, a free-reed mouth organ from Laos and Northeast Thailand. He is a pianist and composer-in-residence with NOISE, a frequent performer for San Diego New Music, and a co-founder of the soundON Festival in La Jolla, CA.

Christopher Adler's stylistically diverse compositions are informed by an abiding fascination with the traditional musics of the world, and research into topics such as the traditional musics of Thailand and Laos, Russian futurism, the application of mathematics to music, and improvisation. He attended the International Gugak Workshop in Seoul, South Korea in 2022 and has recently composed works for performers of Korean instruments, including Ensemble (The Geomungo) directed by Sunhee Lee, the Society for East-West Music, Junghwa Lee (gayageum) and Soo Yeon Lyuh (haegum), many of which have been premiered at venues in Seoul including the National Gugak Center. Other notable works include *Zaum Box*, a ten-movement collection for speaking percussionist based on Russian futurist sound poetry released in a series of videos by percussionist Katelyn Rose King with cinematography by Ute Freund which was featured in the exhibition *Louder Than Words* at the Zuckerman Museum of Art, and *Aeneas in the Underworld*, a concert-length chamber oratorio based on Vergil's Aeneid for solo speaking guitarist and ensemble just released on Microfest Records featuring soloist Colin McAllister. Recent works for keyboard include *Construct: for organ*, commissioned by the American Guild of Organists, and *City Lights and Other Stories*, a concert-length collection of piano solos spanning his diverse stylistic interests and designed to be accessible to student pianists. His works have been performed at Carnegie Hall, Chicago Symphony Center, Tanglewood, Merkin Hall, Shanghai Symphony Hall, the Seoul Arts Center, Sumida Triphony Hall in Tokyo, Bang on a Can, the MATA Festival, and at universities and new music festivals worldwide by ensembles including the Silk Road Ensemble, Ensemble ACJW, Da Capo Chamber Players, Chamber Cartel, Contact Contemporary Music, Tesla Quartet, Van Buren String Quartet, Passepartout Duo, pulsoptional, NOISE and the Seattle Creative Orchestra. His compositions for percussion ensemble have been performed by ensembles including red fish blue fish, Third Coast Percussion, Ensemble 64.8, and Nief-Norf, and have been presented at the Percussive Arts Society International Convention.

Christopher Adler is the world's leading innovator in contemporary concert music for the khaen. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, the Bang on a Can Marathon, Merkin Hall, Music at the Anthology, the Cultural Center of Chicago, the National Gugak Center in Korea, and at universities across the U.S. and Southeast Asia. With his ongoing project *New Musical Geographies*, he promotes the instrument by performing and recording new works by composers from around the world. Selected works are featured on his *New music for khaen* series on Liber Pulveris Records, now including *Triangulations* (2020) and *Landscape Traces* (2023), and his recordings of compositions by David Loeb have been released on Vienna Modern Masters and Centaur.

His chamber compositions have been released on the 2008 CD *Ecstatic Volutions in a Neon Haze* (Innova), the 2004 CD *Epilogue for a Dark Day* (Tzadik), and on recordings by percussionists Omar Carmenates (Rattle Records) and Morris Palter (Blue Leaf Records). His *Violin Concerto* was released on Blue Griffin by violinist Sarah Plum with the San Diego New Music Orchestra, conducted by Nicholas Deyoe. His works have been broadcast and webcast internationally on WGBH's Art of the States, WNYC, WQXR's Q2 and BBC-3. His retrospective analysis of his first ten years of cross-cultural composition was published in John Zorn's *Arcana II: Musicians on Music* (Hips Road, 2007).

As a soloist and as pianist with NOISE, San Diego New Music, and Nief-Norf, he has given many world premieres and recorded compositions by Derek Keller (Tzadik), Nathan Hubbard (Circumvention/Accretions), Matthew Burtner (Innova Recordings), Juan Campoverde Q. (Liber Pulveris Recordings), Stuart Saunders Smith, and Christopher Burns. His piano improvisations may be heard on *Mineralia* (pfMENTUM) and *Pleistocene*, by the Alan Lechusza/ Christopher Adler Duo, on *Transcontinental*, by the Christopher Adler Trio (Nine Winds), and on *Hu Jianbing's Sky* (Traditional Crossroads). His improvisations on khaen have been released by Artship Recordings, and with the ensemble Gunther's Grass on Titicacaman Recordings and Accretions.

Christopher Adler is currently Professor of Music and Director of Asian Studies at the University of San Diego where he teaches composition, sound art, theory, twentieth-century music, and world music. And he recently completed an eight-year position as Director of Composition for the annual Nief-Norf Summer Festival. He received Ph.D. and Master's degrees in composition from Duke University and Bachelor's degrees in music composition and mathematics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He studied composition with Scott Lindroth, Evan Ziporyn, Stephen Jaffe, Sidney Corbett, Thai music with Panya Roongruang, and pipe organ with James David Christie and Haig Mardirosian.

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