

KEERIL MAKAN

“Memorably explosive” –International Herald Tribune

“A fascinating wedding of intellect and expressivity” –Newsday

“Arresting” –New York Times

“A masterful piece, one of the best heard this year... revels in its sonic splendors”
–20th Century Music

“Hard-driving and visceral, but not without moments of quiet, beautiful repose”
–Andante.com

Working to create emotionally engaging musical experiences, American composer Keeril Makan combines an exploration of the rich detail inherent in sound with an unmistakably visceral energy. Drawing from such diverse sources as American folk music, the European avant-garde, Indian classical music, and minimalism, he synthesizes a music that, in its sheer intensity, thwarts assumptions about what is beautiful.

Mr. Makan has received commissions from ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, Bang on a Can All-Stars, Paul Dresher Electroacoustic Band, California EAR Unit, Left Coast Chamber Ensemble, TimeTable Percussion, Del Sol String Quartet, and pianist Ivan Ilčić, and his works have been performed by the New York New Music Ensemble, Le Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Either/Or, and Ensemble Nomad. Mr. Makan has participated in the International Gaudeamus New Music Week in Amsterdam, the Aspen Music Festival, Le Domaine Forget in Quebec, the MATA Festival in New York, and Voix Nouvelles in Royaumont, France. He was invited back to Royaumont to participate in Le Grand Atelier, during which he collaborated on a new work for dance. Carnegie Hall has commissioned him to write a work for the John Harbison/Dawn Upshaw Workshop for Composers and Singers. He has received prizes from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and ASCAP, two Meet the Composer Commissioning Music/USA awards, and commissions from the Gerbode and Hewlett Foundations and the Fromm Music Foundation. As composer-in-residence with LEVYdance, a San Francisco-based modern dance group founded by choreographer Benjamin Levy, Mr. Makan has collaborated on two large-scale projects. Their first work together was commissioned by ODC Theater, and their second collaboration features music recorded by the Kronos Quartet. He is a featured composer at the Other Minds Festival 13.

Mr. Makan grew up in New Jersey of Indian and Russian-Jewish heritage. After initial musical studies in violin and oboe, he received degrees in composition and religion from Oberlin. He completed his PhD in composition at the University of California–Berkeley. Outside the US, Makan spent a year in Helsinki, Finland, at the Sibelius Academy on a Fulbright grant. Having been awarded the George Ladd Prix de Paris from the University of California, he also lived for two years in Paris, France.

Mr. Makan was previously on the faculty of the School of Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Currently, he is Assistant Professor of Music at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.