

Sean Friar, Composer

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BIOGRAPHY

Composer and pianist, Sean Friar (b. 1985) grew up in Los Angeles, where his first musical experiences were in rock and blues piano improvisation. While his focus soon shifted toward classical music, his composition has always kept in touch with the energy and communicative directness of those musical roots, now along with an expansive and flexible classical sensibility that is “refreshingly new and solidly mature... and doesn’t take on airs, but instead takes joy in the process of discovery – in the continual experience of suspense and surprise – that good classical music has always championed.” (Slate Magazine).

He thrives on composing for ensembles both within and outside the realm of traditional concert music, and his recent commissions run the gamut from string quartets and wind quintets to a junk car percussion concerto and music for laptop orchestra. His music has been performed throughout the world, and past and upcoming performances come from ensembles including the Berlin Philharmonic Scharoun Ensemble (Germany), So Percussion, Crash Ensemble (Ireland), Ensemble Klang (Netherlands), the American Composers Orchestra, New York Youth Symphony, Orkest de Ereprijs (Netherlands), Psappha (UK), Darmstadt Staatsorchester (Germany), ensemble Interface (Germany), Alter Ego (Italy), Newspeak, Janus, Line C3 Percussion, Quintet of the Americas, Formalist Quartet, Matmos, members of the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and 4-time Grammy-winning percussionist, Glen Velez. Festivals featuring his music include Aspen, Bang on a Can, Bowdoin, GAUDEAMUS Muziekweek, International Young Composers Meeting, Norfolk, Nuova Consonanza, Nuovi Spazi Musicali, and SONiC. In 2011, he had two works premiered at Carnegie Hall, including *Clunker Concerto*, his junk car concerto for percussion quartet and orchestra.

The youngest winner of the Rome Prize in over 25 years, Friar’s honors include the Aaron Copland Award; four ASCAP Young Composer Awards; Lee Ettelson Award; First Music Award; Renee B. Fisher Award; as well as awards from eighth blackbird, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, SCI/ASCAP, and the Hawaii Institute of Contemporary Music.

Recordings of his music can be found on New Amsterdam Records (NOW Ensemble, Awake), Darling Records (Darmstadt Staatsorchester, Soli fan tutti), and TRANSIT’s self-released TRANSIT EP.

Friar is currently an Honorific Fellow and Ph.D. candidate at Princeton University, where he has studied with Steve Mackey, Paul Lansky, David Lang, and Dmitri Tymoczko. He graduated summa cum laude from UCLA in 2007 with B.A.’s in Music and Psychology, where he worked with Paul Chihara, Roger Bourland and Ian Krouse.

[Website](#)