

MICHAEL SCHACHTER
Curriculum Vitae

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ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

2019– **Harvard University**
Junior Fellow, Harvard Society of Fellows

EDUCATION

2019 **University of Michigan**
Ph.D., Composition and Music Theory
Dissertation (2-part): *The Black Clown*, music-theater work (composition);
“On Musical Reasoning: A Garland of Three Articles” (theory)

2012 **University of Michigan**
M.A., Music Composition
Thesis: *Freylekhe Tanzen* for symphony orchestra

2009 **Harvard University**
B.A., *summa cum laude*, Music
Thesis: *The Ten Plagues* for jazz septet (Hoopes Prize winner)

Principal composition teachers

Bright Sheng, Paul Schoenfield, Evan Chambers, Kristin Kuster, Michael
Gandolfi, Elliott Gyger, Julian Anderson, Alla Elana Cohen

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Philosophy of music (epistemology and aesthetics)
Jazz and improvisation studies
Karnatak (South Indian classical) music

History of music theory
Music-theater studies
American music

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles

- 2015 “Structural Levels in South Indian Music.” *Music Theory Online* 21, no. 4.
2013 “‘Autumn Leaves’: Intricacies of Style in Keith Jarrett’s Approach to the Jazz
Standard.” *Indiana Theory Review* 31: 115–67.

Reviews

- 2017 “Review: Keith Jarrett’s *A Multitude of Angels*.” *Music and Literature*, 2 Mar 2017.

In Progress

- “Beyond ‘Rule’-Oriented Voice-Leading: A Corpus-Based Approach” (article, with Ezra Keshet, Associate Professor of Linguistics and Philosophy at the University of Michigan)
- “Categories, Ambiguity, and Hybridity in Music Analysis” (article, from dissertation)
- “Wittgenstein’s ‘Family Resemblances’ and Musical Values” (article, from dissertation)
- “On Musical Reasoning” (book project, outgrowth of dissertation project)
- “*Varali*” (book project, invited for forthcoming Routledge series in honor of Harold Powers)

AWARDS AND HONORS (2009–present)

- 2019 **Elliot Norton Award** for Outstanding Musical Production | Winner
- 2016 **Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music** | Composer fellow
Brehm Prize in Instrumental Composition (Michigan) | Winner
- 2013–16 **ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award** | Finalist (4x)
- 2015 **Minnesota Orchestra Composer Institute** | Composer fellow
New York Youth Symphony First Music Award | Commission recipient
18th Street Singers Composition Competition | Finalist
- 2013–15, ‘18 **ASCAP Plus Awards** | Recipient (4x)
- 2014 **Mizzou International Composers Festival** | Composer fellow
ASCAP Rudolf Nissim Prize | Special distinction
- 2013 **BMI Student Composer Award** | Recipient
American Composers Forum “Essentially Choral” | Composer fellow
Berkeley Community Chorus and Orchestra Competition | First prize
- 2012 **Indianapolis Symphony Glick Competition** | Finalist
ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Award | Honorable mention
ASCAP Young Jazz Composer Award | Honorable mention
- 2011 **New York Youth Symphony Jazz Competition** | Honorable mention
- 2009 **Thomas Temple Hoopes Prize** (Harvard) | Recipient
Francis Boott Prize (Harvard) | Winner
John Harvard Scholarship | Honoree

GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2019-22 **Junior Fellowship**, Harvard Society of Fellows, Harvard University
- 2018-19 **Rackham Predoctoral Fellowship**, University of Michigan
- 2017-18 **Institute for the Humanities Fellowship**, University of Michigan
- 2017 **Rackham Graduate Student Research Grant**, University of Michigan
- 2016 **One-term Dissertation Fellowship**, University of Michigan
Rackham Summer Research Fellowship, University of Michigan
- 2013-16 **Rackham Conference Travel Grants (4x)**, University of Michigan
- 2012-17 **Regents Fellowship**, University of Michigan
- 2011 **Rackham Research Travel Grant**, University of Michigan
- 2010-12 **Regents Fellowship**, University of Michigan
- 2009-10 **John Knowles Paine Fellowship**, Harvard University (music study in India)
- 2006, '08 **Alice Mary Longfellow Fellowship**, Harvard University (study in Paris and Vienna)
- 2007 **McKinley Entrepreneurial Grant**, Harvard University

PRESENTATIONS

Invited Talks

- 2018 “Arts and Eats” talk, Office of the Arts, Harvard University
 Guest lecture on music-theater, Carol Oja’s seminar, Harvard University
- 2017 “‘The Black Clown’: Realizing Hughes,” lecture-demonstration on *The Black Clown*
 (with Davóne Tines), Beinecke Library, Yale University
 Lecture on my music, University of Tennessee
 2 pre-concert talks on my music (with Aram Demirjian), Knoxville Symphony
- 2016 Lecture on my music, Boise State University
- 2014 Mizzou International Composers Festival: Lecture on my music

Conference Papers

- 2016 “Multistable Hierarchies and Analytical Fictions,” Keynote Address (invited),
 Bowling Green State University Graduate Conference
- 2015 “Structural Levels in South Indian Music,” Society for Music Theory National
 Meeting (St. Louis, MO)

- “A Closer Look at Harmonic Prolongation in Jazz Performance,” Special Session on Jazz Harmony, Society for Music Theory National Meeting (St. Louis, MO)
- 2014 “Wittgenstein’s ‘Family Resemblances’ and Musical Values,” Music Theory Midwest (Appleton, WI)
- 2013 “Harmony, Counterpoint, and Form in Keith Jarrett’s ‘Autumn Leaves,’” Music Theory Midwest (Norman, OK)
- 2011 “The Well-Tempered Clavier Tuner: Piano Technology Influencing Composition” (with Garrett Schumann), Midwest Composers Symposium (Bloomington, IN)

Departmental Talks

- 2017 Pre-concert talk on my music, University of Michigan Concert Band
 Guest lecture, graduate wind conducting studio, University of Michigan
 Panel discussion on *The Black Clown* (with Davóne Tines, Kathleen Kelly, and Ryan McKittrick), Stamps Auditorium, University of Michigan
 Lecture-demonstration on Langston Hughes and *The Black Clown* (with Davóne Tines), Institute for the Humanities, University of Michigan
 Panel discussion on creating *The Black Clown* (with Davóne Tines and Ryan McKittrick), University of Michigan EXCEL Program
 Lecture-demonstration on *The Black Clown* and *Porgy and Bess*, (with Davóne Tines, Diane Borger, and Ryan McKittrick), University of Michigan
- 2015 “Structural Levels in South Indian Music,” Music Theory Department Colloquium, University of Michigan
- 2013 “Harmony, Counterpoint, and Form in Keith Jarrett’s ‘Autumn Leaves,’” Music Theory Department Colloquium, University of Michigan

COMPOSITION COMMISSIONS

- 2020 **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra** | *Violin Concerto* (30’), for soloist Philippe Quint
- 2019 **Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum** | *Orchot Tzadikim* (6’), for SATB chorus
Memorial Church at Harvard University | *As I Went on a Mery Mornyng* (4’), for SATB Chorus
- 2018 **American Repertory Theater** | *The Black Clown* (80’), music-theatrical work
Big Ears Festival | *Were You There* (45’), orchestration for voice and strings
- 2017 **University of Michigan Concert Band** | *Karnatakamalika* (18’), for chamber winds
American Modern Opera Company | *Were You There* (45’), multimedia music-theater piece for voice, piano/electronics, and mixed media
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra | *Knoxville Overture* (6’), concert overture

- Harvard University** | *To the River Charles* (5'), anthem for band and choir
- Emmett Rapaport** | *Variations on a Hebrew Melody* (10'), for saxophone and piano
- 2016 **Cabrillo Festival Orchestra** | *Five–Six–Seven–Eight* (8'), expanded orchestration
- New York Youth Symphony** | *Sonata da Camera* (10'), for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano
- Concord Chorus** | *Uriel* (21'), dramatic oratorio for tenor, chorus, and orchestra
- 2015 **Naples Philharmonic** | *Five–Six–Seven–Eight* (8'), symphonic orchestration
- Minnesota Orchestra** | *Freylekhe Tanzen* (8'), revised/expanded orchestration
- 2014 **VocalEssence Ensemble Singers** | *My River Runs to Thee* (4'), for SATB chorus
- Aurea Silva Trio** | *Trio* (18'), for flute, bassoon, and piano
- Alarm Will Sound** | *Five–Six–Seven–Eight* (8'), for sinfonietta
- 2013 **University of Michigan** | *Rhapsody in Maize and Blue* (4'), for piano and orchestra
- University of Michigan Department of Dance** | *Moving from the Inside Out* (23'), modern dance piece for clarinet, violin, and cello
- 2012 **Harvard University Choruses** | *Sed Virtutum Gradibus* (8'), for SATB chorus
- University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra** | *Freylekhe Tanzen* (8'), for orchestra
- University of Michigan Cello Studio** | *Capriccio* (5'), for two cellos
- Edward Goodman** | *Five Short Pieces* (18'), for saxophone and piano
- 2011 **Jeremy Crosmer** | *Fiddle Suite* (16'), for cello and piano
- Davóne Tines** | *Pierrot [Heart]* (4'), for bass-baritone and piano
- Church of Our Savior, Brookline, MA** | *Prelude and Toccata* (12') for organ
- 2010 **Mount Holyoke College Choruses** | *Hodo al-Eretz* (6'), for SSAA chorus
- 2009 **Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum** | *Oseh Shalom* (9'), for chorus and strings
- 2008 **Harvard-Radcliffe Contemporary Music Ensemble** | *Concertino* (12'), for piano and sinfonietta
- Symphony Pro Musica** | *Rhapsody* (9'), for orchestra
- 2007 **Harvard-Radcliffe Contemporary Music Ensemble** | *A Dickinson Dirge*, (25'), one-act opera for soprano, tenor, and mixed chamber ensemble

SELECTED PERFORMANCE VENUES

Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, Symphony Space, Roulette (New York, NY)
 American Repertory Theater, Sanders Theater, Paine Hall, Lowell Hall, Brown Hall (MA)
 Hill Auditorium, Stamps Auditorium, Britton Recital Hall (Ann Arbor, MI)
 Orchestra Hall, Minnesota Centennial Showboat (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN)
 San Francisco Center for New Music, Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Ojai Festival, San Diego
 Symphony “Sandbox” (CA)
 Smithsonian Institute, Historic 6th & I Synagogue (Washington, DC)
 Castleton Festival (Castleton, VA)
 Tennessee Theatre (Knoxville, TN)
 Missouri Theatre (Columbia, MO)
 Auer Hall (Bloomington, IN)
 Salle Cortot (Paris, France)
 Brhaddhvani, Ramakrishna Mutt (Chennai, India)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University

2012–17 **Primary Instructor**, University of Michigan
 Advanced Keyboard Harmony & Score Reading (4 semesters)
 Basic Keyboard Harmony & Score Reading (3 semesters)
 Music Theory: Writing Skills I & II (2 semesters)
 Music Theory: Accelerated 1st-year Aural Skills (2 semesters)
 Music Theory: 2nd-year Aural Skills (2 semesters)

2011–12 **Teaching Assistant**, University of Michigan
 Composition for Non-Majors (2 semesters; designed syllabus, taught lessons)

Community

2013–16 **Music Theory Instructor**, University of Michigan
 Piano Pedagogy Laboratory Program (primary and secondary students)

2010–19 **Private Music Instructor**, Ann Arbor, MI
 Private studio of ~15 students in composition, theory, and classical/jazz piano

2007–9 **Private Music Instructor**, Philips Brooks House, Cambridge, MA
 Taught free music lessons to underprivileged Boston/Cambridge-area students

SERVICE

Professional

- 2017 Producer, *Black Clown* workshop in Ann Arbor (partnership between American Repertory Theater and University of Michigan)
- 2014–15 Juror, Harvard-Radcliffe Collegium Musicum Composition Competition
- 2012 Organizer, Karaikudi S. Subramanian residency at University of Michigan
- 2011 Co-organizer and University of Michigan liaison, Midwest Composers Symposium

Community

- 2011–19 Co-founder, Chennai Children Foundation, Inc. (non-profit raising funds to support school fees, uniforms, living expenses for human trafficking victims)
- 2010–19 Music lesson donor, Ozone House Youth and Family Services, Ann Arbor, MI

MEDIA COVERAGE

Profiles/Interviews

- “Langston Hughes Sings in ‘The Black Clown’.” *New York Times* (Ryan Ebright), July 19, 2019
- “‘The Black Clown’ Beautifully Reconfigures a Langston Hughes Poem.” *New Yorker* (Maya Phillips), July 24, 2019
- “‘The Black Clown’ Unveils America’s Three-Ring Circus of Racism.” *Boston Globe* (Jeneé Osterheldt), September 21, 2018
- “At ART, Langston Hughes Like You’ve Never Heard.” *Boston Globe* (Patti Hartigan), August 30, 2018
- “Little Shards of Dissonance.” *Harvard Magazine* (Sophia Nguyen), October 2018

Teasers

- “Goings-on About Town: A Music-Theatre Adaptation of Langston Hughes’s ‘The Black Clown’.” *New Yorker*, July 29, 2019
- “Tap Acrobatics in ‘The Black Clown’.” *New York Times* (Gia Kourlas), July 25, 2019

Reviews

- “Magnificent. . . both a bravura, in-the-moment entertainment and a haunted, self-conscious questioning of the ways in which it entertains. . . Mr. Schachter’s exquisitely layered score takes many of its musical cues from Hughes’s annotations.”
—*New York Times* (Ben Brantley: Critic’s Pick), July 25, 2019

“An arresting work of music theater. . . this kind of boundary-pushing work used to be a hallmark of the Lincoln Center Festival. Now it has found a home at Mostly Mozart. I bet that Mozart, a true man of the theater, would have been proud to share the stage.”

—*New York Times* (Anthony Tommasini), July 26, 2019

“A controlled explosion of joy and rage that meets desires audiences didn’t even know they had. . . [a] musical-theater tour de force.”

—*New York Magazine* (Justin Davidson), July 26, 2019

“Irresistible. . . explod[ing] with vitality.”

—*Wall Street Journal* (Heidi Waleson), July 26, 2019

“A remarkable new music-theater work of significance and disturbing beauty.”

—*New York Stage Review* (Michael Summers), July 26, 2019

“Staggering. . . bringing overwhelming humanity to exactly the place where it is needed.”

—*Los Angeles Times* (Mark Swed), January 15, 2019

“Pure poetry. . . “The Black Clown” has made its grand entrance in a world premiere at the American Repertory Theater.”

—*Boston Globe* (Zoë Madonna), September 6, 2018

“The Black Clown is precisely why we have and need theater. . . filling the air around us with song and sight that plunges into the soul. It’s the kind of piece that returns you to the world you entered just 70 minutes before, if not a changed person, then certainly a vastly more enlightened one.”

—*WGBH Boston* (Jared Bowen), September 6, 2018

“Incisive and persuasive. . . this is one of those scores so interesting and involving, you wish you could purchase it in the lobby on the way out.”

—*New York Stage Review* (Bob Verini), September 9, 2018

“A work of art. . . brave, engaging, and immersive.”

—*Boston Herald* (Jed Gottlieb), September 8, 2018

“Davóné Tines, who stars in the title role, and Michael Schachter, who wrote the score, have adapted Hughes’ iconic work to create something that is so much greater. . . a mind-blowing theatrical experience.”

—*Theater Mirror* (Michael Hoban), September 7, 2018

“Beautiful and wrenching; transfixing and indelible.”

—*Edge Media Network* (Kilian Melloy), September 6, 2018

“Rhythmically complex, but poignantly lyrical. . . the bold juxtaposed against the sweetly restrained.”

—*Arts Knoxville* (Alan Sherrod), September 23, 2017

SELECTED MUSICAL PERFORMANCE ACTIVITY

- 2010– Piano soloist, accompanist, and chamber partner, at venues including:
Resonant Bodies Festival (New York), American Repertory Theater (Cambridge),
Big Ears Festival (Knoxville, TN), Rockport Chamber Music Festival (Rockport,
MA), Hearing the Future Festival (San Diego, CA), Bowling Green State University
(Bowling Green, OH), Hill Auditorium and Britton Recital Hall (Ann Arbor, MI),
Castleton Festival (Castleton, VA)
- 2005–16 Regular engagements as jazz pianist/bassist, Boston, MA and Ann Arbor, MI areas
- 2013–14 Dance class pianist, University of Michigan Department of Dance
- 2012–14 Rehearsal pianist/score reader, University of Michigan conducting studio

LANGUAGES

English (native)
German (proficient reading and writing, conversational speaking)
Spanish (proficient reading and writing, intermediate speaking)
Tamil (elementary speaking)
Hebrew (basic reading and writing)

OTHER SKILLS

Computing

Software: Sibelius, Finale, Logic, Pro Tools, Audacity
Programming: HTML, CSS, Javascript, Python, Music21 (music-aided musicology toolkit)

Mechanical

Piano tuning, maintenance, basic repairs and rebuilds (apprenticeship with Robert Grijalva)

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Society for Music Theory (Jazz, World Music, and Philosophy Interest Groups)
New England Conference of Music Theorists (NECMT)
Music Theory Midwest (MTMW)
Society for Music Research (Michigan)
Aesthetics Discussion Group (Michigan)
American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP)
American Composers Forum (ACF)

REFERENCES

Scholars**Kevin Korsyn**

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 University of Michigan
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Ramon Satyendra

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Alexander Rehding

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Composers**Bright Sheng**

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 of Composition
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Kristin Kuster

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Kevin Puts

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