

Composer Bio

Kevin Joest seeks to explore fundamental truths of the natural and astronomical world through his music, and loves creating works based on historical and cutting-edge ideas in both scientific and artistic fields. However, people are often so interestingly distracting that any abstract concepts with which he begins a work usually end up as metaphors for some quirk of human behavior. While he has yet to decide if this is a good thing, he does admit that he enjoys allowing these works to communicate with other humans on a level deeper than normal daily interaction.

Kevin began composing at an early age, with his earliest public performances in his hometown of Louisville, KY, during his late teens. An avid performer in college, Kevin led the MTSU Drumline Bass Drum Section in Julie Davila's acclaimed clinic, "Applying World Percussion Rhythms to the Contemporary Marching Percussion Ensemble" at the Percussive Arts Society's International Convention in 2010. In 2011, he performed in Central America with the MTSU Wind Ensemble for the first Panamanian National Wind Band Conducting Symposium. Additionally, he taught percussion ensembles throughout Kentucky and Tennessee, as an instructor, composer, and consultant. He received the Excellence in Composition Award after his junior recital resulted in publication through C-Alan Publications in 2010. It was also during this time that Kevin received his first international performance: in 2011, *Vestiges of Oblivion* was performed at the Royal Northern Academy of Music in Manchester, England.

Upon moving to Boston, Kevin began narrowing his focus on composing. He was commissioned by the Ballard High School "Ambassadors of Nasty" Percussion Ensemble in 2011, who premiered his *Xibalba* at the Kentucky Music Educators Convention that year. He discovered a passion for writing for dance, with a performance of *Dance Piece* at a local senior center, and on the Boston Conservatory Mainstage with *Dance Piece II*, both choreographed by student dancers to great critical review. Outside the Conservatory, Kevin's music travelled widely, with a reading of his *before/behind* by Irvine Arditti in Pavia, Italy in 2012, and *The Dead* as part of a doctoral recital in Finland.

Upon graduation, Kevin began receiving recognition in the greater Boston area, with performances of *Seven Shades of Blue* through the Equilibrium Concert Series, *Laughter Ballet* on tour with Bryan Hayslett, and *Look at the Harlequins!* by the Mothertongue Ensemble. Commissions include *The Dances of Purgatory's Chasm* for Anna Seda, premiered in Cusco, Peru, in 2014; *Autumnfall* for Duo Harpwerk, which premiered in Reykjavik in May of 2017 and broadcast on Iceland National Radio; and *Look at the Harlequins!* for the Mothertongue Ensemble, premiered in Kingston, RI in 2016.

In 2015, Kevin moved to New York City, where he resides with his husband, tenor Marques Hollie. Kevin's NYC premiere came in April of 2017 when Hollie performed a song from *Somnium-Recursum* at the Sparks and Wiry Cries first annual SongSlam; he and Hollie returned to the SongSlam in 2020 with a song from *On the Deaths of Cathedrals*. Recent commissions include *Thoughts & Prayers* for Kate Amrine in 2018, which she has performed many times around NYC and appears on her album *This is My Letter to the World* released in January 2020; and *Who Speaks?* for Juxtatonal, an ensemble founded by his long-time collaborator Bryan Hayslett. Most recently, Kevin has turned his attentions toward more meditative, process-driven music with *Sapphic Meditations*, as well as a focus on community-based music making with his first DIY piece, *Dragon Curveball*. A full calendar of events and all related info can be found on his website, kevinjoestmusic.com, and in various social media platforms.