

Andrew Maxbauer
Personal Statement
Music, PhD

The work and career of a composer is a complex and multifaceted path that pushes each individual composer to engage in a wide variety of tasks and focus areas. The creative, academic, and administrative demands of a composer, coupled with an ever-present desire and calling to be an advocate for the arts, has been a driving force behind my own pursuit of a career as a composer. These demands excite me, yet they have also pushed me to remain diligent in my exploration and education into this dynamic field.

I have remained active in these pursuits throughout my studies, and I believe the PhD program in composition at the University of North Texas, will provide an environment that is both artistically and intellectually rich, where I can not only gain additional technical proficiency but also continue to discover my unique musical voice and pursue my artistic goals. I believe that my background in composition and performance has prepared me for such demands and that my current work represents my ability to be an artistically successful member of the College of Music.

During my undergraduate studies at Western Michigan University, I studied with Dr. Christopher Biggs and Dr. Lisa Renée Coons, and found two great mentors who continually challenged me, helped me to reflect on my own aesthetic choices, and encouraged me to explore new possibilities in my work. In this supportive environment, I began to evolve as a composer, aiming to discover an artistic voice through my affinity for experimentation. This provided me with a variety of opportunities to present my work at various festivals and conferences, along with the opportunity to work with different performers and participate in reading sessions with professional ensembles. In addition, I became involved in the university's student composer society, serving as president and treasurer.

While at Western Michigan University, I was also an active performer and focused almost exclusively on contemporary repertoire. I soon learned that my work as a percussionist greatly informed my own compositional effort. Performing as a soloist, and in contemporary chamber ensembles, I have had the pleasure to premiere numerous pieces, which allowed me the opportunity to work closely with a diverse group of composers. Through these experiences, I have become a more sensitive interpreter of contemporary literature, as well as gained insight into the significance of performance and interpretation in the realization of my own compositional work.

Following my undergraduate studies, I completed my Master of Music degree in composition at the University of Louisville, where I was named a Moritz von Bomhard Fellow in composition and studied with Dr. Krzysztof Wolek. I was again fortunate to find a teacher and mentor that continued to push me to consider the worth of my aesthetic aims, and who stressed the importance of creating work with a high level of craftsmanship as well as artistic value. My Fellowship presented an opportunity to focus part of my research on composition for voice. My thesis project involved writing a twenty-minute work for five solo voices and nine instruments. This work allowed me to explore elements of the voice underrepresented in vocal repertoire and

exploit the potential of non-verbal sounds and non-semantic languages. For my commitment to this research as well as for my studies in other branches of music I was awarded the Graduate Dean's Citation for excellence in research upon graduation from the University of Louisville.

In my current work, I am particularly interested in two primary streams of thought: the first being exploring music as a physical experience. This interest has pushed me to investigate new potential for instrumental and vocal performance by exploring the relationships between the physicality of performance and sound creation, as the choreography of instrumental performance has become a crucial aspect of my compositional process. The second salient feature of my recent compositional thought, is that of the environment. In my work I seek to create imagined musical habitats, as I frequently think of musical texture as a fabricated field recording, incorporating my perceptions and experiences of listening to natural environments as well as looking to create new and unique sound worlds. These two primary streams of thought have become interconnected in my most recent work, as I view the performing ensemble itself as a unique environment. Utilizing these pre-conditions, I endeavor to create an imagined world in which the instrumentalist acts in response to both the sonic and physical characteristics of the other performers.

My work has been presented at a variety of festivals and conferences in the United States and Europe. I have had my work performed by ensembles and soloists such as Talea Ensemble, New York New Music Ensemble, Longleash, Luca Piovesan, and members of the Callithumpian Consort. In addition to these rewarding experiences, I have also had the opportunity to receive additional instruction from a variety of composers both in private lessons and in master classes. Equally valuable were the interactions I had with colleagues my own age, discussing and sharing the challenges we have as young artists as we discover our own musical paths. These interactions have revealed the importance of being an active member of an intellectual environment enriched by colleagues with a diversity of perspectives such as the community and environment that can be found at the University of North Texas.

While pursuing my compositional efforts, I have continued to teach percussion in a variety of situations, both privately and in the classroom setting. In working with students from all backgrounds and a wide range of skill and ability levels, I strive to always stay true to my convictions regarding the individuality of my students and their needs, as well as to provide them with the most effective, individualized, and useful learning environment that I can.

These experiences and the education that I have received during my Bachelor and Master's programs have prepared me for the challenges and experiences presented by the University of North Texas. I look forward to the opportunity to become a part of a vibrant and progressive composition program invested in the importance of contemporary musical creativity.