

BIOGRAPHY - Long

Brian R Banks

Currently a Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music at the Universidad de las Americas in Puebla, Mexico, Brian R. Banks is a highly productive artist with a significant catalog of works—including dozens of commissions, premieres and performances to date—for solo artists, chamber ensembles, choruses and orchestras.

With an undergraduate degree from Peabody Institute of Music, a Master's degree from San Francisco Conservatory and a Ph.D. from University of California, Berkeley, Brian has also earned distinction as a scholar, lecturing widely on composers (Ives, Lou Harrison, Revueltas), the music of Mexico, North American cross-border cultural influences, and issues of arts curriculum at the university level. As a composition student, he studied with Robert Lundquist, Morris Moshe Cotel, Andrew Imbrie, Richard Felciano and Olly Wilson. His original residency in Mexico was as a Fulbright Scholar.

Brian began his musical explorations with grade school choir and piano lessons in the neighborhood. A string of musical encounters during his teenage years—the Beatles and Bartók, Keith Jarrett and John Cage, Morton Feldman and Ella Fitzgerald—helped form his broad taste and omnivorous music collecting habits which continue to this day.

Brian's works often push at the boundaries between popular/world music and the classical music tradition, which he sees as undergoing a transformation and expansion. His current compositions are influenced by the rhythms of popular music, the dynamism of Silvestre Revueltas, the humoristic elements of Ligeti and György Kurtág, graphic novels and Manga, and his own training as a late-modernist composer.

Working daily in both English and Spanish, Brian enjoys being a U.S. artist in living in Mexico, free to participate in various cultures of the Americas. "My approach is based on the sense that I'm in the world, of the world. I'm interested in a conversation, in writing music that makes a connection. I'm aiming to be interpretive rather than singular."

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