

# GEOFFREY GORDON

## - 2018 Biography and List of Works



US/UK composer Geoffrey Gordon's contributions to the contemporary music repertoire have been and continue to be exceptional. Intense and luxuriant harmony, passionate melody and superb handling of instrumentation and sonic textures define his music. His works include orchestral and chamber music—vocal and instrumental—as well as scores for theater, dance and film. His music has been called “darkly seductive” (New York Times), “brilliant” (Boston Globe), “stunning” (Milwaukee Journal), “wonderfully idiomatic” (Salt Lake Tribune), “haunting” (Strings Magazine) and “remarkable” (Fanfare). Chicago Tribune music critic John von Rhein called Mr. Gordon's *lux solis aeterna*, “a cosmic beauty ... of acutely crafted music.” The Philharmonia identifies “his infectious style and “an ear for melody”, the New York Times his “zest for sonic experimentation”.

Honoured by a number of residencies internationally, he has twice served as composer-in-residence at the Aaron Copland House and is winner of 2017 Mario Merz Prize for Music, an honor which includes a major commission for the 2018 concert season. His work has been funded by the Barlow Endowment, the National Endowment for the Arts, the United Performing Arts Fund, the Concert Artists Guild, the American Composers Forum, Meet the Composer, the MacArthur Foundation, the American Music Center, the Abelson Foundation, the Mary Flagler Cary Trust, the Cheswatyr Foundation and the Bush Foundation. He has been in residence at the La Napoule Arts Foundation in Cannes, and at the historic Cliff Dweller Club in Chicago. He has been nominated for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Elise Stoecker Prize, and recognized by the Academy of Arts and Letters. He has received academic fellowship support from Boston University, New York University and the Guildhall in London.

Over the past several seasons, Mr. Gordon's works have been performed more than fifty times on three continents, including premieres conducted by rising stars including Rory Macdonald, James Gaffigan, Christoph Mueller and Ilan Volkov, and featuring soloists Toke Møldrup, Moshe Aharonov, Megumi Kanda and Carol Winenc, English String Orchestra principals Simon Desbruslais and Clare Hammond (trumpet and piano), and Grammy award-winning saxophone soloist Tim McAllister. Mr Gordon has worked with (or soon will work with) some of the best ensembles in the world, including The Philharmonia, the Copenhagen Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, Malmö Symfoniorkester, Britten Sinfonia, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Munich Philharmonic, the English String Orchestra, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, JACK Quartet, Ensemble Meitar, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and the International Contemporary Ensemble. Future projects include new orchestral and chamber works in collaboration with with top international soloists, including new concertos for guitarist Craig Odgen and BBC Young Musician horn soloist, Benjamin Goldscheider.

Recently and upcoming, the Philharmonia gives the premiere of Mr. Gordon's bass clarinet concerto “Prometheus” after the treatment by Franz Kafka, at the RFH, London [www.philharmonia.co.uk/concerts/2132](http://www.philharmonia.co.uk/concerts/2132), and US and Nordic premieres follow in 2019 with Minnesota Orchestra and Malmo Symphony. A new chamber work based on research into the first vibrations of the universe commissioned by Muse-IC Project, founded by the “University Paris Sciences et Letters” and hosted by the Institut Curie and CNSM, premieres in 2019 in Paris by members of the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. His setting of Keats' “Ode to a Nightingale” for choir and cello premiered in May 2018 in Copenhagen by Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir and a new CD of cello works will be released on the Bridge label in 2018 featuring the Copenhagen Philharmonic under Lan Shui. His “Saint Blue,” double concerto for trumpet, piano and strings has been released on CD by English String Orchestra. His song cycles “Peter Quince at the Clavier” and “Sonnets from Neruda” premiered in March 2018 at the Arnold Schoenberg Center, Vienna, and in October 2017 Munich Philharmonic under James Gaffigan premiered his trumpet Concerto “CHASE,” after the sculptures of Giacometti. His cello sonata “FATHOMS” premiered at Carnegie Hall in December 2015, and his “Winterleben” for horn, mezzo and piano (commissioned for Los Angeles Philharmonic principal horn, Andrew Bain), premiered in August 2015 as part of the 47th International Horn Symposium in Los Angeles. He received the 2015 commission award from the American Music Project with a major new chamber work for clarinet and string quartet (the JACK Quartet and Anthony McGill, principal clarinet of New York Philharmonic) which premiered in New York City and Chicago. In 2016, he was awarded composer in residence at the International Centre for Composers in Visby, Sweden. Mr. Gordon has also served as an ASCAP representative in Washington, lobbying Congress on behalf of copyright protection and composers' rights.

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# WORKS

## SOLO

- *Three Summer Sketches ....* 12' (2012)  
(Black Earth; Mineral Point; Spring Green)  
(piano solo; commissioned by the Wisconsin Arts Board)
- *Bagatelle after Beethoven* 3' (2012)  
(piano solo; commissioned by the International Beethoven Festival)
- *Aria and Cadenza for solo violin* 10' (2001)
- *Lorca Music per cello solo* 10' (1999)
- *Impromptu for solo piano* 7' (1995)

## CHAMBER

- *Aphrodite and Eros (fighting off the advances of Pan)* 5' (2018)  
(duo for violin and cello)
- *THORN* 15' (2017)  
(violin, horn and piano; for the Britten Sinfonia)
- *QUINTET* (for Bb clarinet and string quartet) 25' (2015)  
(commissioned by the American Music Project for the JACK Quartet)
- *FATHOMS* 25' (2015)  
(Five Impressions of The Tempest, with Prelude, for cello and piano)  
(commissioned for Toke Møldrup)
- *Abaciscus* (String Quartet No. 2) 18' (2014)  
(commissioned by Third Angle Ensemble)
- *Duo Sonata* 16' (2014)  
(two French horns and piano)
- *Rhapsody* (after A Day in the Life) (large chamber ensemble) 8' (2013)  
(commissioned by Great Noise Ensemble)
- *Flamingo* (Five Views of the Calder Sculpture—Chicago) 6' (2010)  
(flute {dbl piccolo and alto flute}, Bb clarinet {dbl. bass clarinet}, cello and piano)
- *Ink on Paper* (String Quartet No. 1) 25' (2008)  
(Commissioned by the Concert Artists Guild)
- *Cada canción es un remanso del amor* 8' (2011)  
(Every Song is the Remains of Love)  
(mandolin and guitar)
- *Reliquary* 25' (2010)  
(violin, cello and piano)
- *TRIO* (Bb clarinet, violin and cello) 10' (2009)  
(commissioned for Xanthos Ensemble)



- *A Canticle in Shards* (flute, oboe, Bb clarinet, bassoon and piano) 7' (2004)  
(commissioned by the Connecticut Commission on Culture)
- *Fancywork* (violin and guitar) 16' (2006)  
(commissioned by the Barlow Endowment)
- *Echoes of Ferrara* (alto recorder--dbl. tenor and soprano--and harpsichord) 20' (2006)  
(commissioned by the American Composers Forum)
- *wrecked angels ...* 12' (2003)  
(flute, guitar and cello)
- *Stanza della Segnatura* 18' (2004)  
(2 recorders, viola da gamba and harpsichord)
- *Interiors of a Courtyard* 20' (2003)  
(guitar and mandolin)
- *Bright White Smooth* 6' (2006)  
(flute, viola and harp) (ALSO: flute, cello, one perc., piano)
- *Cool RED Cool* (after Andy Warhol Self Portrait) 7' (2000)  
(flute, alto sax, trumpet, 2 percussion, piano and bass)
- *Sonata da Chroma* 16' (2000)  
(oboe, Bb clarinet, one percussion, cello and harpsichord)
- *Interludium* 5' (1997)  
(flute, Bb clarinet, violin, viola and cello)
- *Caravaggio* 8' (2000)  
(oboe {or trumpet}, Bb clarinet, one percussion, cello and harpsichord {or piano})
- *Lines Written in Early Spring* (after Wordsworth, 1789) 9' (1998)  
(flute, English horn and piano; flute, viola and piano)

## **VOCAL**

- *Fluss Land Stadt* 5' (2018)  
(in German after texts by Rainer Maria Rilke)  
(for six solo voices: SMezATBarB)
- *Harmonie* 7' (2018)  
(in German after a text by Karl Marx)  
(for soprano and solo cello)
- *Peter Quince at the Clavier* 14' (2017)  
(after a text by Wallace Stevens)  
(for baritone and piano)  
(commissioned by Anna Ferro for baritone Tobias Greenhalgh)
- *Winterleben* 24' (2015)  
(after a text by Friedrich Rückert)  
(for mezzo soprano, French horn and piano)  
(commissioned by the Colburn School for Los Angeles Phil principal horn, Andrew Bain)
- *Sonnets from Neruda* 28' (2014)

(after six texts by Pablo Neruda)  
(for mezzo soprano, baritone and piano)

- *Needles in my flesh ....* 12' (2012)  
(after five texts by poet Pia Tafdrup)  
(alto voice and double bass; commissioned by the Danish Arts Council)
- *Tiger Psalms* (after texts by Ted Hughes) 16' (2011)  
(Commissioned by Fulcrum Point New Music Project)  
(mezzo soprano soloist with flute, clarinet, trumpet, viola, double bass, one perc., piano)
- *Fallen Eve* (Five Songs after Hughes) 17' (2005)  
(commissioned by the Abelson Foundation for International Contemporary Ensemble)  
(mezzo soprano soloist with flute, clarinet, violin, cello, one perc. and piano)
- *la tristesse durera toujours* (after Van Gogh) 23' (2004)  
(soprano soloist with clarinet, violin, cello, one percussion and piano)
- *Collage a Trois Trobar* 10' (1999)  
(five mixed voices with recorders and percussion)

## **CHORAL**

- *Ode to a Nightingale* (after the text by John Keats) 16' (2017)  
(commissioned for Mogens Dahl Chamber Choir of Copenhagen and cellist Toke Moldrup)  
(for SATB)
- *CRUCIFIXUS* 12' (2016)  
(for Double Choir (SATB/SATB) and solo Violoncello)
- *Judas mercator pessimus* 5' (2016)  
(for six unaccompanied male voices)
- *The bird of dawning singeth* 5' (2016)  
(For 12 a capella voices SSSAAATTTBBB)
- *Four Preludes* 8' (after a text by T.S. Eliot) (2013)  
(commissioned by Composers and Schools in Concert)  
(SATB, string orchestra and piano)
- *Love Among the Ruins* 8' (2009)  
(for mixed choir: SATB unaccompanied)  
(OR: for mixed choir SATB, with ten winds, 2 percussion, harp, piano, and bass)
- *Shhhhh* 7' (2005)  
(triptych for mixed choir a cappella)
- *Agnus Dei* 9' (1997)  
(for SATB and ten instruments)
- *Missa solemnis in fragminis* 25' (1996)  
(for SATB and Chamber Orchestra)

## **ORCHESTRAL**

- *Prometheus* - A Concerto for Bass Clarinet and Orchestra 21' (2018)  
(after the treatment of the Greek legend by Franz Kafka)  
(commissioned by the London Philharmonia, Minnesota Orchestra and Malmo Symphony)

- *Twelve 18'* (2017)  
(for large orchestra; after The Windows of Jerusalem of Marc Chagall)
  
- *PUCK - fleeing from the dawn 7'* (2017)  
(for large orchestra)
  
- *Chase - A Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra 25'* (2017)  
(after the sculptures of artist Alberto Giacometti)  
(commissioned by the Munich Philharmonic)
  
- *ROCKS 21'* (2016)  
(for symphonic winds, brass, percussion and ensemble)
  
- *Nescientis Animi 14'* (2016)  
(for large orchestra, after the mathematics of Gottfried Leibniz)
  
- *Saint Blue 10'* (2015)  
(concertino for trumpet, piano and strings, after Kandinsky)  
(commissioned by the English Symphony Orchestra)
  
- *Where the Wild Things Are 21'* (2014)  
(for large orchestra; after the story by Maurice Sendak)  
(commissioned by the Cleveland Orchestra, Dallas Symphony and Portland Symphony)
  
- *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra 24'* (2013)  
(after Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*)  
(commissioned by the Copenhagen Philharmonic)
  
- *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra 20'* (2012)  
(commissioned by the Buffalo Philharmonic)
  
- *Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra 27'* (2010)  
(commissioned by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra)
  
- *Meditation and Allegro for Viola and Ensemble 15'* (2010)  
(commissioned for Ensemble Meitar)
  
- *Shock Diamonds* (for large orchestra) 13' (2009)  
(commissioned for Boston Modern Orchestra Project)
  
- *Lux Solis Aeterna* (for chamber orchestra) 9' (2008)
  
- *Still River Bridge –Grove Street 15'* (2007)
  
- *Altar Music* (for large orchestra) 12' (2007)
  
- *An Imagined Poussin Triptych 20'* (2004)  
(a fantasia in three movements for string orchestra)
  
- *Concerto in One Movement for Violin and Orchestra 16'* (1997)
  
- *Mis en scene* (for large orchestra) 8' (1999)
  
- *Milleniumianna* (for large orchestra) (1999)  
(commissioned by the Milwaukee Symphony)
  
- *Sones Sueño del Maya 11'* (2001)  
(for orchestral winds and percussion)

- *Morning Hymn* 9' (1993)  
(fantasia for orchestra after Isaac Watts)  
(commissioned by the Concord Chamber Orchestra)

## **BALLET**

- *The House of Bernarda Alba* (after the Lorca play) 54' (1995)  
(Ballet in three acts for mixed chamber ensemble; also: three concert Suites)

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[www.geoffreygordoncomposer.com](http://www.geoffreygordoncomposer.com)

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