

THE PRINCETON SOUND KITCHEN:

The Composers' Ensemble at Princeton was formed in 1985 and has a long and illustrious history, having been formed and cultivated over the years by Department faculty Paul Lansky, Steven Mackey, Barbara White, Michael Pratt, Dan Trueman, and others. In 2013, the Composers' Ensemble was renamed the Princeton Sound Kitchen, to more appropriately reflect its nature and activities. The Princeton Sound Kitchen (PSK) is a professional musical performance organization that serves the artistic/educational needs of the Composition Program in the Princeton University Music Department. It provides an opportunity for composers to hear, discuss, and revise their work. It is consistent with these educational aims to present their music in public concerts surrounded by other music that influenced its creation. In fact, some of the concerts are themselves creations of the graduate students, who are charged with designing programs that project a particular point of view.

Graduate composers have ample opportunity to consult with performers prior to or in the course of composition. The PSK utilizes outstanding performers, chosen not only for their technical mastery but also for their qualities as sympathetic and resourceful collaborators with composers.

There are two primary scenarios: one is the "freelance" concert, where we select individual performers to execute student works as needed; the other entails hosting a pre-existing ensemble. Most often, visiting ensembles are selected by the composition faculty; students may request that we consider specific performers as well.

Enrolled students are expected to attend every PSK concert; one of the main features of the graduate student role in our program is to provide an attentive ear to one's colleagues in the program

PERFORMANCE SPACES

Most PSK concerts are held in Taplin Auditorium in Fine Hall. Other performance spaces on campus include the Lee room, the Frist Theater (desirable for video projection) and Richardson Auditorium, among others. Suggestions and inquiries are welcome. We are cultivating a relationship with the Princeton Arts Council, with the idea of presenting one or two concerts off-campus each year.

PROGRAMMING, ECOLOGY, PHILOSOPHY

The Princeton Sound Kitchen is intended as a "lab space" for graduate composers to explore and experiment in the public yet intimate environment of our academic program, the University, and the wider community. Our concerts are produced by an expert and dedicated staff; within this supportive and professional environment, we encourage, on the part of the

graduate composers, a balance of risk-taking and finessing, as in the interpenetrating liberty and rigor of our graduate program in general. The second-year students' annual Generals Concert is a prime example of this philosophy.

In assembling individual programs, the Director aims to maximize possibilities within logistical limitations, balancing financial priorities, University and Departmental policies, production staff availability, and, in concert with the other faculty, students' individual workloads and trajectories. "Air time" is only part of the equation. In finessing individual priorities, students may find the following to be informative: the more flexible one may be, the more possibilities may emerge; the more particular one may be, the more one may benefit from choosing to focus on a specific and fine-grained priority. For example, should you elect to work on a piece that presents special requirements in terms of duration, performing forces, or technical assistance, we are more likely to be able to support it if you focus closely on that. And if you have a portfolio of short solo works on hand, we just might be able to tuck them in when we find space. In more mundane terms, an ordered list of programming priorities follows:

1. New works that seek a premiere and that are not yet scheduled for any other performance.
2. Work that has been performed but that would benefit from a new and improved performance and/or recording; work that has been substantially revised.
3. Work that has already been performed; work that is already programmed elsewhere. When there is room on a program, such works are most welcome and do not prevent other works by the same composer from being programmed in the same season.

PROPOSING A WORK FOR PERFORMANCE

To propose a work for a future performance, send the Director as much information as possible about the following:

- instrumentation
- technical requests (sound reinforcement, playback, lighting)
- duration (a range or maximum suffices)
- expected completion date
- performance history, if any
- specific performers you may have in mind, or a request to have performers selected for you; if the latter, information about the flavor of the piece or desired characteristics in a performer is useful (either route is welcome)

If you have a performer you would like to work with under the auspices of the PSK, you are

welcome to make an initial inquiry with that performer regarding interest and general availability; if this proves promising, let the PSK Director know. Under no circumstances should a student discuss financial compensation or contractual details with a performer before the performer is contacted by the Director. Note that while students may be involved in the scheduling of rehearsals, University policy prohibits students from discussing financial arrangements or making contractual agreements on behalf of the University, and there are many University protocols to follow (for example, non-US citizens may be required to complete additional paperwork and some Non-Resident Aliens cannot be paid).

PREPARATION AND REHEARSAL PROCEDURES

The Program Coordinator will solicit program information ahead of time; deadlines for this are important! On occasion, student composers may be asked to attend rehearsals of their works off campus (usually in New York City). Composers are welcome to use their Bryan Fund monies for this purpose; see Beth Schupsky in advance of the rehearsal for information on processing reimbursement. On performance days, you will need to be available beginning at noon for the dress rehearsal. The Program Coordinator will contact you about rehearsal scheduling. Ordinarily the Program Coordinator is available for a portion of dress rehearsals. The Director is available by phone, to the extent possible at those times.

GRADUATE STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

For most PSK concerts, parts and scores are due two months in advance. (The deadline may be earlier in certain cases.) Program notes, bios and confirmation of technical requests (including but not limited to amplification, audio playback, video, and lighting) are due four weeks in advance of the performance date. (Note that lighting is a species of “special request,” which we are happy to provide when feasible; in addition, video playback presents certain logistical challenges, chief among them being the loss of audio recording because the mics obscure the screen.) Failure to provide this material in a timely manner may jeopardize the presentation of your work.

Any unusual uses of instruments or facilities must be submitted to the Coordinator as well. This includes, but is not limited to, prepared piano, playing inside the piano, fire or water (or other unexpected elements), projectiles, and any other eventuality that could raise a logistical, safety or liability issue. (This list is intended to be descriptive rather than prescriptive; graduate students should not feel obliged to push the envelope here. In some case we need the Chair’s approval, and in others the Production Supervisor’s or even the Borough’s. This takes time.)

Technical requests are managed at the discretion of the Audio Specialist, Andrés Villalta, in consultation with the rest of the production staff; such requests are not be considered approved until confirmed by him. Technological elements such as video projection or lighting

should be conceived as part of the “instrumentation” and should ideally be addressed earlier, at the time of programming the concert. Composers may be required to attend a production meeting to discuss technical requests. Feasibility of requests for lighting or video projection will depend on the ecology of the entire program in question; for example, not all concerts can provide video or lighting. In addition, when lighting or video is involved, the composer may be required to provide a cue person. Students should be aware that it is not possible to provide their own technology, unless approved by the Audio Specialist. Last minute-technological requests, and other last-minute requests, will not be considered.

The Department records PSK concerts in audio and, in some cases, video format and will make copies of such recordings available to those who may request them for non-commercial purposes. Most often, the audio materials are placed on the Harmony Server within two weeks after the concert, students are sent an email link, and students may access components to do their own mixing. Student composers are responsible for obtaining any necessary permission for copyrighted materials (for example, a text set to music, or an audio or video sample). Although we record dress rehearsals as well as concerts, students should be prepared that the dress rehearsal is not a recording session, and thus, there may be noise in the hall during rehearsal.

UPDATE TK: Video recording raises a number of logistical and aesthetic issues. Current policy is as follows: default recording procedure is audio only. Students may request videorecording; default for that, when approved, is to record the dress rehearsal and not the concert. This policy is somewhat flexible, depending on the nature of the performance and the preferences and priorities of those involved. The PSK owns a large drive which can be used to transfer data from videocards to the students’ own equipment.

University policy specifies that the University “may broadcast and/or record” PSK performance “by any means in any format and use such recordings for archival, academic and other non-commercial purposes in support of the University.” A student’s enrollment in the program is to be construed as acceptance of this policy.

Thanks to our Chair and Concert Manager’s efforts, we have a one-year-old relationship with WWFM, The Classical Network, who have been broadcasting PSK and other Department performances. These are broadcast one time (not archived). If you have any questions about this program, contact the PSK Director.

Concert audio recording protocols and formats are chosen at the discretion of the Audio Specialist. Recordings are made available on the Department server after the Audio Specialist has completed them. Students who would like a tutorial in ProTools should contact the Director.

STUDENT SUPPORT

Students routinely support the PSK in various ways, primarily by volunteering in pairs to manage post-concert receptions. In the event that students assist beyond the usual scope of the composer's role, financial compensation from the PSK may be available. Details:

- The Program Coordinator assigns two students per concert to manage the reception; this is completed on a volunteer basis. See Beth Schupsky, Room 313, x8-2443, email bschupsk@princeton.edu about how to order food and beverages and follow policy on reimbursement.
- A student performing his or her own piece does not receive financial compensation.
- A student performing another's piece does receive financial compensation according to the same scale we use for all performers.
- Simple, minor duties such as turning pages for one piece—activities that work easily into routine concert attendance—are considered “pitching in” and are not ordinarily compensated. However, when students are invited to work on a more involved basis— assisting with audio or videography, for example—they are compensated according to University scale. A student who assists by meeting a visiting group at the airport, for example, will be compensated for mileage and will be thanked profusely as well.
- Relatedly, performer fees are flat fees without additional compensation for travel or meals; however, on occasion, students may be invited to accompany a visiting group to town for a meal, which the PSK will reimburse. This is most likely to occur when the group is responsible for a full program or residency.

DOCUMENTATION, PUBLICITY, SOCIAL MEDIA

Concert Coordinator TK facilitates publicity with the Marketing & Outreach Manager, so that all PSK concerts are included on department mailings, calendars, social media campaigns etc. Should you have brainstorm, questions, or requests concerning publicity, contact the Director, who will confer, as appropriate, with the Production Manager.

Our GoogleCal can be found at this address:

html:

https://www.google.com/calendar/embed?src=4r22tokgg5j5emt9vc17cqn140%40group.calendar.google.com&ctz=America/New_York

xml:

<https://www.google.com/calendar/feeds/4r22tokgg5j5emt9vc17cqn140%40group.calendar.google.com/public/basic>

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<https://www.google.com/calendar/ical/4r22tokgg5j5emt9vc17cqn140%40group.calendar.google.com/public/basic.ics>