

## Christopher Norby, PhD

Freelance Musician. Instructor, Arizona State University.

COMPOSER WEBSITE: [www.christophernorby.com](http://www.christophernorby.com)

PORTFOLIO: [soundcloud.com/christopher\\_norby](https://soundcloud.com/christopher_norby)

ALBUMS: [christophernorby.bandcamp.com](https://christophernorby.bandcamp.com)

REPRESENTATION AND SCORES: <https://www.cmc.ie/composers/christopher-norby>

### Education

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- **Doctor of Philosophy – Music Composition (PhD).** 2012. University of Ulster, Derry, Northern Ireland. (Fully funded by a Department of Education and Learning research grant)

Thesis title: *Maintaining Pleasure in Composition: Cultural and Philosophical Issues Affecting My Work as a Composer*

**ABSTRACT:** This thesis, in conjunction with a practical compositional portfolio of 9 compositions, traces my development as a composer. Using sociological, historical and phenomenological analysis provides a contextualized account of the many influences acting on me as a composer. I have drawn heavily on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's sociology places emphasis on a reflexive research methodology which aims to unite the dichotomies between structural and phenomenological research in the belief that doing so will enable a researcher to produce a more self-aware, rounded study. Using a reflexive methodology in analyzing my work allows me to account for my technical and aesthetic developments as a composer and also to question how historical, social and geographical factors have had an influence on my music. Bourdieu's sociology has led me to investigate how such issues have had an effect on all who occupy positions within the field of contemporary composition in Ireland, including practitioners, academics, critics and all who have acquired an appetite for such composition. Bourdieu's approach has enabled me to step away from a purely personal analysis and in doing so to realize the reasons for my own biases, beliefs, hopes and aspirations which often lie beyond the limits of a biographical approach.

Digital Thesis available via the British Library:

<http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.569040>

- **Bachelor of Music (BMus).** 2006. Degree with first class honors (highest UK undergraduate classification). University of Ulster, Magee. Derry, Northern Ireland.

### Professional Composition Experience

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I have been active as a professional composer since 2007. I have worked on commissions from some of Europe's leading musical ensembles, theatre companies and arts organizations. My music has been performed throughout Ireland, the UK, Europe, Asia and the USA and has been featured in arts festivals of international renown. I have completed scores for numerous games released commercially on iOS and android platforms and have composed music for a national US television series.

### Selected Concert Works

#### Orchestral/large ensemble

**2017:** *Carnival Chaos*. Symphony Orchestra. 5mins.

Premiere Performance: 21 Oct. 2017. Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. Level UP - Music from Video Games. Gammage Theatre, Tempe, Arizona. Conducted by Michelle DiRusso.

**2016:** *Noir*. Wind Symphony. 7mins.

Premiere Performance: Arizona State University Wind Symphony. Gammage Theatre, Tempe, Arizona. USA. Conducted by Jason Caslor

**2013:** *Five Ideas for Orchestra*. Symphony Orchestra. 12 mins.

Premiere performance: 19 Jan. 2014. AZ Pro Arte Orchestra. Tempe Centre for the Arts, Tempe, Arizona. USA. Conducted by Keitaro Harada.

**2011:** *A Tale of Fractured Minds*. Symphony Orchestra. 11 mins. **Commissioned by BBC Radio 3.**

Christopher Norby  
Curriculum Vitae

Premiere performance: 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011. Ulster Orchestra, conducted by Jurjen Hempel. Derry, Northern Ireland.  
Broadcast on BBC Radio 3.

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### Chamber/Chamber Opera

**2020:** Piano Quintet (Title TBD). **Commissioned by Oracle Piano Society.** *Premiere performance Oracle, AZ, May 2020.*

**2020:** New Piano Trio (Title TBD). *Piano, Flute, Cello.* 20/25mins. **Commissioned by Walled City Music Festival.** *Touring West USA and Ireland, Spring 2020.*

**2019:** Tunes in Brexit Land. *Bass Clarinet and Uilleann Pipes.* 10mins. **Commissioned by Paul Roe.** *Performed in Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, Ireland. March 24<sup>th</sup> 2019.*

**2016:** Three Songs About Now. *Octet and Singers.* 12 mins. *Written for the Kabarett Ensemble. Performed throughout Arizona 2017-19.*

**2012:** Three Pieces for String Quartet. *String Quartet.* 18 mins. **Commissioned by RTÉ** (national broadcasting company of Ireland). *Performed by RTE Vanbrugh Quartet. Toured throughout Ireland in October and November 2013.*

**2012:** Once There Was An Island. *String quartet and mezzo-soprano.* 6 mins. **Commissioned by City of London Festival and Brodsky Quartet.** *In collaboration with writer Dr. Matt Jennings, Brodsky Quartet and mezzo soprano Lore Luxemburg. 9 international composers and poets were commissioned contribute to this original song cycle on theme of walled cities. This cycle toured internationally through Ireland, UK, Europe and Western Asia. Album released on the Chandos label: <https://www.chandos.net/products/catalogue/CHAN%2010883>*

**2012:** The Girl Who Knew She Could Fly. *Chamber opera.* 15mins. **Commissioned by Northern Ireland Opera.** *Libretto by Frank McGuinness. Dir. Rachel O'Riordan. Performed by Ulster Orchestra/Northern Ireland Opera. The MAC, Belfast. June 2012. The Southbank Center, London. July 2012. Recorded and broadcast by BBC Radio 3.*

**2008:** Capriccio. *Chamber Ensemble.* 12 mins. *Premiere performance: 22nd June 08. Royal Academy of Music, London.*

**2008:** Six Bagatelles. *Chamber Sextet.* 15 mins. **Commissioned by Concorde.** *Premiere performance: Concorde, Hugh Lane Gallery, Dublin, 10th February 08. Further performances in Dublin and Ljubljana(Slovenia).*

**2007:** A Dance and Intermezzo. *Piano duet and percussion.* 5 mins. *Premiere performance: Ulster New Music Group, University of Ulster Magee, 12th December 2007.*

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### Solo

**2016 – present:** Piano Things. *Solo Piano.* *On-going compositional project. Presented at PHX Art Amplified, Phoenix Art Museum, Arizona.*

**2009:** Fantasia. *Solo Piano.* 12 mins. **Commissioned by Dr. Atsushi Tamura.** *Premiere performance: Atsushi Tamura. Bristol Music Club, Bristol, Feb 2009. Further performances in Tokyo and Osaka (Japan), Phoenix (USA) London, Cheltenham, Bristol (UK) and Derry, Belfast and Dublin (Ireland).*

**2007:** Other Stories. *Bass Clarinet.* 8 mins. **Commissioned by Dr. Paul Roe** *Premiere performance: National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, May 2007. Further performances in York (UK), Derry and Dublin.*

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## **Theatre Collaborations**

**2019:** The Neon Nazis. 30 mins. Kabarett Ensemble and An Nua Productions, Ireland.  
*Performed at Valley Bar, Phoenix, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2019. Recording for podcast release Autumn 2019.*

**2017-Ongoing:** Kabarett. 120 mins. (Composer, Arranger, Performer and director)  
I collaborate with various artists (film/visual/music/writing and set design) to create and direct this multimedia show. We have presented in various venues throughout Arizona, including large and small theatres and bars. We are currently developing a new show for presentation in 2019.

**2017 - Ongoing:** Civilians. TBA. (Composer, Sound Design, Research)  
International experimentation work towards a new theatrical production through *AnNUA Productions*. This involves collaboration between artists and researchers based in Ireland, Australia and the USA.

**2015:** PLACE. 60 mins. (Writer, Composer, Performer, Design)  
I collaborated with various artists (film/visual/music/writing and set design) to create this original show, which draws upon images and history of the Sonoran desert and the Phoenix Metropolitan Area.

**2012:** The Cove. 50 mins. (Composer, Sound Design, Music Production, Workshop Facilitation)  
Dance theatre work **commissioned by Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company**. Choreographed by Stephen Batts.

**2012:** View From the Hill. 25mins. (Composer, Performer, Workshop Facilitation)  
Dance theatre work **commissioned by Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company**. Choreographed by Stephen Batts.

**2011:** Mapping Memories. 30 mins. (Composer, Performer, Workshop Facilitation)  
Dance theatre work **commissioned by Echo Echo Dance Theatre Company**. Choreographed by Stephen Batts

*The above projects with Echo Echo Dance Company involved facilitation in community workshops with dancers over the age of 50. I improvised with the dancers for 8 weeks and built a final score from the sketches and ideas generated through the collaborative improvisation sessions.*

**2011:** That Big Swim. 40 mins. (Composer, Conductor) Text by Garrett Carr.  
Theatre work **commissioned by UK Olympic Games Legacy Trust**.

**2010/11:** Artaud. 50 mins. (Composer, Performer, Co-Designer).  
Dramatic theatre work developed through AnNUA Productions. Written and Directed by Paul Moore.

**2009:** Rain. 25 mins. (Composer, Conductor, Co-Designer)  
Dramatic theatre work developed through AnNUA Productions. Written and Directed by Paul Moore.

*This work led to the formation of a new theatre company in Ireland. I co-founded An Nua Productions in 2009 with Australian actor, writer and academic Dr. Paul Moore. In forming the company, we aimed to combine art forms and world aesthetics in the creation of challenging, critical and philosophically aware arts theatre. The company continues to produce and offer a platform for artists interested in collaborative production.*

**2009:** Bild Lilli. 15 mins. (Composer, Conductor)  
Dance theatre work developed with Open Space Dance Company. Directed by Oona Doherty.

**2007:** Ich Ich im Raum. 6mins. (Composer)  
A short collaborative work developed with dance choreographer Alexandra Boettcher.

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## **Videogame/e-book**

**Present:** Project Hot Mess. Currently in development with LA based animator Carl Schembri.

**2017:** FireDawgs. Videogame. *Original Music*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc. (Ireland)**

**2016:** Unwound. Videogame. *Original Music*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc. (Ireland)**

**2014:** Flub Fighter. Videogame. *Original music*. **With Retora Game Studios. (USA)**

**2014:** Graffiti Grinder. Videogame. *Original music*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc. (Ireland)**

**2014:** JellyFlug Micro Adventures. Videogame. *Original music/ additional sound effects*.  
**Commissioned by Troll Inc.(Ireland)**

**2013:** Seagull Swipe. Videogame. *Original music*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc. (Ireland)**

**2013:** JellyFlug Antibody Assault. Videogame. *Original music/ additional sound effects*.  
**Commissioned by Troll Inc.(Ireland)**

**2012:** Zombies HII Interactive Book. *Original music/sound effects*. **Commissioned by Uproar Comics. (Ireland)**

**2012:** Nelly Fandango. Interactive Book. *Original music*. **Commissioned by Discovery Publications. (UK)**

**2012:** Finn Folk Tales. Videogame. *Original music*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc./ Games Aptually.(UK)**

**2011:** JellyFlug. Videogame. *Original music/ additional sound effects*. **Commissioned by Troll Inc.(Ireland)**

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## **Film/Commercial**

**2017:** Deadly Dentists. *Original Title Theme*. **Commissioned by Investigation Discovery Channel**. Broadcast on Discovery ID.

**2016:** Deadly Dentists. Concept tape for new show at Investigation Discovery. *Original Music*. **Randy Murray Productions**

**2016:** Maricopa Integrated Health Care. TV Spots, radio spots and online content. *Original Music*. **Randy Murray Productions**

**2015:** AZ K-12 Promotional video. TV Spots, Radio Spots and Online Content. *Original Music*. **Randy Murray Productions**

**2015:** CDA promotional video. *Original Music*. **Randy Murray Productions**

**2014:** Helios Foundation Promotional Video. *Original music*. **Commissioned by Randy Murray Productions/ Helios Foundation**.

**2014:** Hope Village Promotional Video. *Original music*. Dir. Josh Kasselmann.

**2013:** Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror. *Original music and re-orchestration*. **Commissioned by AZ Pro Arte ensemble**. Premiere Performance: Tempe Center for the Arts, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2013

## **Related Experience**

**2019:** OMNI Music Publishing. 'Batman Returns': Engraving, Transcription and Score Editing

*I worked closely with Tim Rodier, member of Danny Elfman's music preparation team and founder of OMNI Music Publishing to transcribe, edit and engrave a selection of cues from Danny Elfman's handwritten scores from the Tim Burton movie 'Batman Returns'. OMNI is the only company with rights to publish original film scores in full for commercial release. I was happy to offer two students opportunities to work on this project.*

## Teaching Experience

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**Current Position:** Instructor of Composition and Theory. Arizona State University. **(2019- Present)**

### **Past Positions:**

Faculty Associate, Arizona State University. **(2015 – 2018)**

Faculty Associate, Valley City State University, North Dakota. **(2013 – 2015)**

Part Time Lecturer, University of Ulster, Derry, North Ireland. **(2007 – 2012)**

### **Outline of Topics Taught (2007- Present)**

- **Composition**
- **Harmony**
- **Analysis**
- **Counterpoint**
- **Film Composition**
- **Interactive Media Composition**
- **Music Technology**
- **Ear Training**
- **Collaborative Creation**
- **Music for Theatre and Dance**
- **Philosophy of Aesthetics**
- **Sociological theories of Artistic Production**

### **Teaching in Detail**

#### **Current Classes**

##### **Advanced Ear Training**

###### **Topics covered:**

Transcription of Bach Chorales by ear in original clefs  
Score reading at the piano  
Modal counterpoint composition and transcription  
Atonal melody transcription and sight singing  
Twentieth and 21<sup>st</sup> Century score reading  
Error detection in orchestral scores  
Sight-singing from transposed scores and concert scores

##### **Composition**

###### **Topics covered:**

Formal, structural, harmonic and philosophical analysis of disparate works  
Structuring compositional methodologies in various realms (collaborative, self-directed, commercial)  
Sketching scores prior to typesetting  
Approaches to electronic composition

##### **The Work of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht**

###### **Topics covered:**

Study of philosophy and sociology of production using primary source texts  
Musical analysis of key works of Weill and Brecht in relation to contemporary works  
Aesthetics and performance practice  
Collaborative creation towards live performance – working with all areas of live performance (lighting, stage design, blocking, composition and performance)

##### **Advanced Media Composition and Production**

###### **Topics Covered:**

Adaptive video game composition  
Theme and variation in dramatic projects  
Commercial scoring  
Mixing, editing and mastering.

## Individualized instruction

### **Duties include:**

Portfolio Development  
Undergraduate, graduate and honors level mentorship (both music majors and interdisciplinary students)  
Working with a diverse range of students specializing in Music, Digital Culture, Physics, English  
Completed projects have included Hip-Hop album production, noise music installations, videogame collaborations, film collaborations and acoustic/electro concert works  
Setting course pre-requisites  
Syllabus and content development  
Grading all assignments

## Composing for Film and Media

### **Topics Covered:**

In depth analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* and Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*  
Music as part of a collaborative medium  
Approaches to synchronization  
Orchestration in film  
Electronic music in film  
Historical contextualization  
Contemporary electronic production  
Mixing, editing and composing within digital audio workstations

## Past Classes

### Orchestration and Arranging - three years combined online and classroom teaching

#### **Duties include:**

16 week class orchestration and arranging  
Devising weekly listening and study exercises

#### **Topics covered:**

Working from texts by Adler, Rimsky Korsakov, Piston, Sebesky and Mancini  
Primary source analysis of works by contemporary composers  
Development of new educational texts based on contemporary needs  
Practical assignments in arrangement and orchestration  
Exposure to wide range of material spanning classical concert, film, theatre and pop orchestration  
Instrumental ranges  
Breaking down each section of the orchestra and then considering them in relation to each other

### Harmony, Analysis and Counterpoint - three years combined online and classroom teaching

#### **Topics Include:**

Analysis of core works, popular works and contemporary music  
Historical contextualization  
Working from texts by Piston, Fux, Schoenberg and Kostka/Payne  
Practical assignments leading to performances in class

## Undergraduate Ear Training and Aural Studies

#### **Duties include:**

Devising 15-week progressive undergraduate course  
Developing progressive ear training exercises that expose students to a wide range of musical idioms  
Introducing analysis into ear training realms

## Undergraduate Music Technology

#### **Topics covered:**

Learning Cubase, Reason, Logic and Sibelius Software  
Introduction to audio production including effects, sequencing, tracking, mixing and editing.

## **Performance Experience**

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I have performance experience across multiple genres as both a pianist/keyboardist and clarinetist. This experience has included solo engagements as well as many jobs as a session player and recording artist. I have been accompanist to singers and instrumentalists across the genres of classical, rock and folk. I also have conducting experience as a conductor of my own music for theatre.

### **Highlights**

#### **2017 – Present: Keyboardist, arranger, composer and musical director of *Ensemble Kabarett***

I formed this ensemble in January 2017. The ensemble consists of 8 Phoenix based musicians and a number of designers and videographers based in Phoenix and Santa Barbara. We have played a number of shows around the Phoenix valley and beyond and are gaining positive recognition for our debut show. We are currently working towards the production of a brand-new show in 2019.

#### **2010 – Present: Freelance solo pianist.**

Performing a combination of classical, folk, pop and experimental improvisations in multiple venues, including art galleries, cafes, theatres and bars in Ireland, UK and USA.  
I was the resident pianist at the Crescent Ballroom, Phoenix, for four years.

#### **2009 – Present: Conductor and Musical Director**

I have conducted much of my own music for chamber-sized ensembles in collaborative dramatic theatre, contemporary dance musical theatre settings across the UK, Ireland and USA.

#### **2005 – Present: Session keyboard player/ arranger**

This experience includes piano/synth performance and arrangement across a wide range of genres including folk music, progressive rock, singer-songwriter, country and classical. I have contributed to multiple album releases and recordings as a keyboardist and arranger and have performed with singers and ensembles on national and international television and radio broadcasts. I have developed my performance and music production skills considerably through this work.

#### **2008 – 2009: Harpsichordist with *Sestina* ensemble.**

The *Sestina* ensemble has established itself as one of the leading early music ensembles in the UK and Ireland. Founded by renowned countertenor Mark Chambers, this ensemble combines theatre and music to create engrossing experiences in old and beautiful architectural spaces across Ireland and the UK.

#### **2007 – 2009: Clarinetist with *Balkan Alien Sound*.**

Balkan Alien Sound is a successful Irish band specializing in Klezmer, Balkan and Eastern European folk music. The group performs regularly throughout Europe and has created a popular scene for this type of music across Ireland. I performed clarinet with the band on a freelance basis, requiring sight-reading and learning by ear rhythmically and technically complex folk-dance music.

References:

**Dr. Brian Bridges**

Research Director – Music, Drama, Dance and the Performing Arts  
Ulster University  
Derry  
N.Ireland  
Tel: +442871675407  
Email: [bd.bridges@ulster.ac.uk](mailto:bd.bridges@ulster.ac.uk)

**Dr. Carlo Maley**

Associate Professor  
Biodesign Institute  
Arizona State University  
Email: [maley@asu.edu](mailto:maley@asu.edu)

**Randy Murray**

Owner and Director  
Randy Murray Productions  
Phoenix  
Tel: 01144-2871-675407  
Email: [RANDY@randymurrayproductions.com](mailto:RANDY@randymurrayproductions.com)  
Website: [www.randymurrayproductions.com](http://www.randymurrayproductions.com)