

Matthew Barnson COMPOSER

full biography

Utah-born composer **Matthew Barnson** has enjoyed success on either side of the Atlantic. He has received commissions from the London-based Arditti String Quartet and from the JACK Quartet, their New York counterparts. His music has been featured at the ISCM World New Music Days in Stuttgart, at the special invitation of Wolfgang Rihm, and at Philip Glass's MATA Festival in Brooklyn; he has taken residencies at the Aspen Music Festival, the Centre Acanthes, the Czech Republic's Ostrava Days, and June in Buffalo.

At festivals, he has had extensive master classes with Rihm, Kaija Saariaho and Toshio Hosokawa. Within the academy, he has studied composition at the Eastman School of Music (where his teachers included Christopher Rouse, Joseph Schwantner, Steven Stucky, and Augusta Read Thomas), the University of Pennsylvania (Anna Weezner, James Primrosch), and Yale University (Martin Bresnick, Ezra Laderman, Ingram Marshall, and David Lang).

Barnson's music might be described as an attempt to negotiate between the current American and European schools of musical thought, without compromising either. He uses the challenging language of the European avant-garde as an expressive one, borrowing the dramatic structures, the pulsing rhythmic energy, and at times the tonal references of stateside composers.

In 2002, at the age of 22, he became the youngest recipient of a Barlow Commission, and he received a second in 2007. In addition, he has been awarded such honors as the Howard Hanson Scholarship, the Charles Ives Scholarship, the Virgil Thomson Scholarship, the Benjamin Franklin Fellowship, and the Aaron Copland Prize.

Though he has studied principally as a composer, his performing experience has included playing the viola with the Salt Lake Symphony and, under early music specialist Paul O'Dette, Eastman's Collegium Musicum. He has sung with the acclaimed Yale Schola Cantorum as well as with the VOX Vocal Ensemble, under George Steel.

His own vocal works have been performed by such choirs as Seraphic Fire and the New York Virtuoso Singers, and by soloists including Erin Morley, Ian Howell, and celebrated soprano Nicole Cabell. Conductors of his instrumental music have included Sarah Hicks, Peter Eötvös (with members of the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg), and Jacque Mercier (Orchestre National de Lorraine). Recently, his large-scale *Percussion Quartet* was commissioned and premiered by Third Coast Percussion.

In addition to his quartet for JACK and a new orchestral work, Matthew's plans for the future include a piano work for Dustin Gledhill, to be premiered at Wigmore Hall. He currently resides in New York City.