

Jeremy Beck

Composer

Artist Statement

I compose music that is direct: music that unfolds in a fresh tonal dialect and propelled by a contemporary rhythmic profile, while still derived from historical Western practice. It is music where mystery and design are equally embraced.

But how is what I do separate and distinct from that practice and its earlier approaches? Part of the distinction comes in the rhythmic flow of the music, from the syncopation and disjunct meters which derive more commonly from post-1960 popular music and jazz without especially drawing on the harmonic language or discourse of those musics. And then there is my expanded tonal dialect which embraces traditional types of sonorities but also countless other types of rich harmonic constructions involving varying degrees of consonance and dissonance.

It is also my use, deconstruction, juxtaposition, and synthesis in my music of various structural and formal principles learned from many different composers of Western music as well as from their forebears and other contemporaries - including principles generally found solely in the context of nontonal ("atonal") music - that separates me from these earlier composers even as I am a part of their continuation. It is my conscious and seeming "inconsistency" in this use that separates me from those who adhered to (and some who still doggedly chase) an ideology and dogma in the belief such adherence, such "rigor", was or is necessary for the act of creation of music. There may have been some brief historical justification for such an approach at one time, but that kind of justification is now (in my view) stale, an anachronism.

As we all continue our journey into the twenty-first century, I compose from my heart and my head, giving neither place priority in my artistic work. Rather, I create a circle that moves evenly between them, so that in the end there is no dichotomy of approach, but a welcome synthesis of the Apollonian and Dionysian in my musical compositions, where mystery and design are both equally welcome. It is my intent that this music will engage an audience, both in the head and in the heart, and that, in this way, we commune together in the poetic power and beauty of this thing called music.

Louisville

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