

j. clay gonzalez

composer, performer, and teacher

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J. Clay Gonzalez is a composer. His work depicts natural and spiritual landscapes with mostly acoustic instruments. He works often with large ensembles, and his music uses unconventional techniques to evoke the chaos and patience of the natural world.

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Education:

University of Michigan,
School of Music Theater
and Dance

MA in Composition
Fall 2018 - Winter 2020 — GPA 3.92
Attended on full scholarship

University of Michigan,
School of Music Theater
and Dance

BM in Composition
Fall 2011 - Winter 2015 — GPA 3.86
Awardee of the Penny and Roe Stamps Scholarship

Teaching House Chicago

CELTA (Pass B)
February - March 2016

Private Instructors

Music Composition

Erik Santos
University of Michigan
(2013 - 2014, 2019 - 2020)

Evan Chambers
University of Michigan
(2013 - 2014, 2018 - 2019)

Kristen Kuster
University of Michigan
(2012 - 2013)

Paul Schoenfeld
University of Michigan
(2011 - 2012)

Jazz Trombone

Dennis Wilson
University of Michigan
(2014)

Classical Trombone

David Jackson
University of Michigan
(2011 - 2014)

Ensemble history:

the Suburban Piano
Quartet
2013 - Present

Performer, co-founder, co-manager
Chicago-based new performance ensemble that makes multimedia
performance situations.

Arbor Composer's
Collective
2013 - 2015

Trombonist, composer
Ann Arbor-based jazz chamber orchestra focused on experimentation
and improvisation. Founded by Derek Worthington.

University of Michigan
Creative Arts Orchestra
2014 - 2015

Trombonist, improviser
Directed by Mark Kirschenmann

Ensembles (continued):

YUKON 2014-2015	Trombonist, composer A new music quartet, consisting of Christina Manceor and Dylan Green (percussion), Sonya Belaya (piano) and Clay Gonzalez (trombone, electronics)
University of Michigan Michigan Jazz Ensemble 2014 - 2015	Trombonist Directed by Ellen Rowe
University of Michigan Trombone Ensemble 2011 - 2014	Trombonist Directed by David Jackson
University of Michigan Digital Music Ensemble 2013	Performer, installation artis) Directed by Stephen Rush
Jazz Lab Band 2013	Trombonist Directed by Dennis Wilson
University of Michigan University Philharmonic Orchestra 2013	Trombonist Directed by Chris Lees
University of Michigan Men's Glee Club 2011	Vocalist Directed by Eugene Rogers
Bonali Trombone Quartet 2011 - 2012	Co-founder, arranger, trombonist 2011 - 2012
University of Michigan Concert Band 2011 - 2012	Trombonist Directed by Rodney Dorsey

Work History

MUSA (Music of the United States) 2019-2020	Assistant Editor, Engraver Published through AR Editions; a series of critical editions of previously unpublished music belonging to the United States's cultural heratige. Main contribution as assistant editor for Fork Songs, a collection of transcriptions of the 100 most-cited American folks songs, to be published early 2021.
Gershwin Critical Edition 2019- 2020	Assistant Editor, Engraver Affiliated with the University of Michigan; publishes performance and critical editions of the works of George and Ira Gershwin.
Third Place Music 2018 - 2020	Assistant Director Non-profit in Ann Arbor focusedon bringing chamber music to communi-ty spaces, and connection local musicians with interested venues such as bars and cafes. Also puts on the annual Third Place [MUSICFEST].

Evening-length pieces for large ensemble (continued):

- the Days of Awe
Performance/installation for winds and percussion.
Commissioned by Ben Zisook. To be premiered Fall 2020.
- we didn't think it would
come (but when it came,
we didn't think it would
ever stop)
Music for wind ensemble.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Hankenson Hall, Moore School of Music)
March 22nd, 2019
- LOVE BEATS RAIN
Chamber opera in one act
Written in collaboration with Christina Manceor, percussionist
Premiered in Baltimore, MD (Griswold Hall at the Peabody Institute)
Thursday, October 6th 2016
- it all ends with a sort of
coming together
Concerto for viola and chamber orchestra
Written in collaboration with Jack Mobley, violist
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (412 N. Thayer)
April 3 and 4, 2015
- grow|thaw
Concerto for flute, piano, and twelve percussion
Written in collaboration with Nadine Dyskant-Miller, flutist
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Rehearsal Hall, Moore School of Music)
J. Clay Gonzalez, piano — Nadine Dyskant-Miller, flute
February 26th, 2015
- [just before dawn, a storm
passes through]
Symphonic poem for 64 instrumentalists
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (St. Andrews Episcopal church)
March 23rd, 2014
- music for a place of refuge
Concerto for saxophone, sax quartet, piano, harp, and percussion
In collaboration with Jonathan Hostottle, Ji Hoon Kang (saxophonists)
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Canterbury House)
December 12th, 2014
- as we all go together into
another night
Installation for brass ensemble and percussion
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (the Moore School of Music pond)
September 25th, 2014

Short pieces for large ensemble:

- before your eyes
For symphony orchestra
Premiered by the University of Michigan's University Philharmonic
Orchestra
February 19, 2020
- you|the rain
For choir. Unperformed.
- the sun rises for the first
time over lake superior
For chamber orchestra
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (335 E Ann Street)
September 2nd, 2015

- the sun rises for the first
time over lake superior
- For chamber orchestra
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (335 E Ann Street)
September 2nd, 2015
- scene with birds and
water
- For chamber orchestra
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (335 E Ann Street)
Appears on (*am*). More information in “recordings”.
September 2nd, 2015
- eight sacred dances
- for chamber orchestra
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (335 E Ann Street)
Appears on (*am*). See recording information below.
September 2nd, 2015
- Demon Lover
- For sixteen trombones
Written for the University of Michigan Trombone Ensemble
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Stamps Auditorium)
Sunday, March 15, 2015
Performed in Arlington, VA (Brucker Hall)
Presented at the American Trombone Workshop
Saturday March 21, 2015
- Pieces for small ensemble:**
- (cocoon)
- For flute, strings, piano, and percussion
Written for Girlnoise (contemporary classical chamber ensemble)
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Canterbury house)
May, 2015
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (Moore Building rehearsal hall)
August, 2015
- the Drunken Sparrow
- For flute and tuba
Composed for University of Michigan’s 24-hour Composing Marathon
Winter 2013
- Three Landscapes
- For cello, voice, and piano
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Macintosh Recital Hall)
Kellan Deagnan’s junior recital
November 7th 2013
Performed in Ann Arbor, MI
Living Room Music concert series
November 2013
Performed in Ann Arbor, MI
University of Michigan composer’s forum
December 3rd, 2013
- Danzon
- For flute, violin, and contrabass
Written for Grecia Sierra-Navarro, bassist
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI
October, 2013

Pieces for small ensemble (continued):

- (in three parts) For three tenor trombones
Performed in Ann Arbor, MI (Northside Community Church)
November 7th, 2012
Performed in Ann Arbor, MI (Britton Recital Hall)
University of Michigan Composers' Forum
November 19th, 2012
Workshopped in Ann Arbor, MI with composer Lera Auerbach (Moore Building)
February 28th, 2013
- (cantos) For tenor trombone and four percussion
Written for Jing Irene Wu, trombonist
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Macintosh Recital Hall)
Jing Irene Wu's Master's recital
November 18, 2012
- in this valley of dying stars For trombone and piano
Premiered in Lexington, KY
May, 2011
Performed Ann Arbor, MI (Lord of Light Lutheran Church)
performed by Micah Smiley, trombonist
March 24, 2012
- Quintet for Winds Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Britton Recital Hall)
University of Michigan Composer's Forum
Winter of 2012
- Two Pieces For brass quintet
Written for The Brass Initiative Project ensemble.
More information in "Recordings".
Premiered in Lexington, KY
Spring, 2011
- Celeritas For brass quintet
Written for The Brass Initiative Project
Appears on the Brass Initiative Project. More information in "recordings".
Premiered in Lexington, KY
Clay Gonzalez's senior recital
Spring, 2011
- Pieces for voices:**
- the garden of earthly delights Fluxus-style oratorio for a crowd of voices
Premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan (412 N. Thayer)
"the Singing Party" experimental choir event
Summer, 2015
- a land of deepest shade For sixteen voices
Premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Maynard Street Parking Garage)
"the Singing Party" experimental choir event
Summer, 2015

Pieces for voices (continued):

a land of deepest shade

For sixteen voices
Premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Maynard Street Parking Garage)
“the Singing Party” experimental choir event
Summer, 2015

today can be a first day

Three campfire songs
Premiered in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Maynard Street Parking Garage)
April 22nd, 2015
Performed in Ann Arbor, Michigan (412 N. Thayer)
“the Singing Party” experimental choir event
Summer, 2015

Pieces for open score:

grass roots

For more than nine instrumentalists
Recorded on *(am)* (see recording information below)
September 2nd, 2015

Nocturnes

Written for the Ann Arbor Composer’s Collective
Performed several times between Winter 2013 and Spring 2014

Work for theater:

The Seaside Sing-off

Short educational musical for children
Written in collaboration with librettist Ellie Todd
Written for a Monterey Bay Aquarium call for scores
February 2013

music for *Anna in the Tropics*

For chamber orchestra
Original music for a 2013 production of Nilo Cruz’s *Anna in the Tropics*
Directed by Amanda Cohen
Recorded in Ann Arbor, MI (Duderstat Center recording studio)
December 2013
Performances in Ann Arbor (Walgreen Drama center, Studio One)
December 6th - 8th 2013

Recordings (of original work and collaborative work):

scene with birds and water

Piece for orchestra, video recorded. Funded by the University of Michigan’s EXCEL enterprise fund.
Production by Peter Littlejohn, Sam Schaefer, and Mac Porter
October 2018.
Available on youtube and vimeo.

grass roots

Piece for orchestra, video recorded. Funded by the University of Michigan’s EXCEL enterprise fund.
Production by Peter Littlejohn, Sam Schaefer, and Mac Porter
October 2018.
Available on youtube and vimeo.

Recordings (continued):

- REQUIEM IN WATER Music by the Suburban Piano Quartet. Recording of an original requiem for four antiphonal choirs, instrumentalists, spoken word, percussion, and tape
Production by Peter Littlejohn, Sam Schaefer, and Mac Porter
Recorded December 2015 (335 E Ann Street studio)
Released Fall of 2016
Available on iTunes, Spotify, Bandcamp, and CD baby
- structures (EP) Music by the Suburban Piano Quartet.
Production by the Suburban Piano Quartet
Recording of five original compositions recorded December 2015
Released fall of 2016
Available on Bandcamp and CD baby
- (*am*) Recording of three works for chamber orchestra
Production by Peter Littlejohn, Sam Schaefer, and Mac Porter
Recorded in fall of 2015 in Ann Arbor, MI (335 E Ann Street studio)
Released spring of 2016
- music for a place of refuge Recording of a work for saxophones, harp, piano, percussion, voice, and bass.
Production by Peter Leonard
Recorded in Winter of 2014
Released Spring of 2015
- A Trombone Christmas Album by the Bonali Quartet (trombone quartet)
Production by Peter Leonard
Album of original arrangements of Christmas tunes
Recorded November 2011 in Ann Arbor, MI (Moore Building)
Released December 2011
- The Brass Initiative Project Pieces “Two Pieces” and “Celeritas” included on anthology of new works for brass quintet. Works recorded by the Brass Initiative ensemble.
Recorded fall 2009 (Lexington, KY)
Released fall of 2009

Projects with the Suburban Piano Quartet:

- REQUIEM IN WATER Work for antiphonal choirs, instrumental soloists, electronics, and percussion. Commissioned by Friends of the Chicago River in memoriam of the 100th anniversary of the Eastland Disaster. Part installation, part musical performance, the premiere took place in downtown Chicago, blocks from the site of this largely forgotten tragedy.

Premiered in Chicago, IL (McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum)
October 19th, 2015

Performed (revised version) in Ann Arbor, MI (Blanche Anderson Moore Recital Hall).
December 4th, 2015

Projects with the Suburban Piano Quartet (continued):

- About a Block: Walking Tour
Half surrealist performance art, half walking tour. Sponsored by the Roman Susan Museum in Roger's Park, Chicago.
Performed four times in July, 2018.
- winter songs
Cabaret set. Secember 2017.
- REQUIEM IN WATER
Work for antiphonal choirs, instrumental soloists, electronics, and percussion. Commissioned by Friends of the Chicago River in memoriam of the 100th anniversary of the Eastland Disaster. Part installation, part musical performance, the premiere took place in downtown Chicago, blocks from the site of this largely forgotten tragedy.

Premiered in Chicago, IL (McCormick Bridgehouse and Chicago River Museum)
October 19th, 2015

Performed (revised version) in Ann Arbor, MI (Blanche Anderson Moore Recital Hall).
December 4th, 2015
- the last few miles
slow rotation, suggesting permanence
the wheels
ashland
- the bird that flew back-wards through time
Short instrumental compositions composed and performed by the Suburban Piano Quartet
recorded in Ann Arbor, MI for EP "*Structures*"
December 2015
- Drone Music
A drone oratorio for orchestra, organ, electronics and four soloists responding to the violence of U.S. imperialism.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (St Andrew's Episcopal Church)
October 15th, 2014
- There is No Jazz in Idaho
A fluxus-inspired musical about self-actualization within a hostile institutional environment.
A collaboration with Kirsten Carey
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (412 N Thayer Street)
April 23rd, 2014
- what's gone to sky
A multi-media performance reflecting on loss and place, attachment and leaving. Tableaux using found objects, dance, video, and song.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Moore Building Rehearsal Hall)
April 9th and 11th, 2014

- general admission Short fluxus-style piece performed on a Michigan Composer's Concert.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Britton Recital Hall)
April 7th 2014
- Plail A multimedia concerto for bass and chamber ensemble. Equal parts
ceremony and improvisation, austerity and absurdism.
A collaboration with Betsy Soukup.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Blanche Anderson Moore Recital
Hall)
February 22nd, 2014
- nineteen days the sun Integrates text written by Edith Josie, a journalist from the town of Old
Crow, Yukon, recognized for her unique style and beautiful prose. Part
experimental dance, part minimalist theater.
A collaboration with Jasper Sussman.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (Yellow Barn)
November 23rd, 2013
- some people fly by in a A series of absurd and contemplative vignettes — a celebration of seasons
helicopter and community.
Premiered in Ann Arbor, MI (412 N Thayer Street)
October 9th, 2013

Selected Performances (continued):

- Singing Party I (singer,
director, organizer,
composer) Experimental singing event, in collaboration with Nadine Dyskant-Miller
Premier of "The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Clay Gonzalez, and
"sculptures" by Nadine Dyskant Miller
Ann Arbor, MI (412 N. Thayer, Nickol's Arcade, Maynard Street
Parking Deck)
Summer 2015
- Ji Hoon Kang, Senior
Recital (trombonist and
vocalist) premiered "Plant Songs" by Rebecca Rosen
Ann Arbor, MI (Arbor Vitae Studio)
Spring, 2015
- University Michigan Jazz
Ensemble's Tour of
Northern Colorado
(trombonist) Tour with the university's top jazz ensemble consisting of workshops,
performances, and attendance at a national conference of jazz musicians
in Greeley Colorado.
Spring, 2015
- Christine Hedden, Fídíl
Recital (trombonist) Performed "What What What" by Caoimhin O Roghallaigh.
Ann Arbor, MI (Canterbury Concert House)
April 30th, 2015
- Improvisation with
Creative Arts Orchestra
(trombonist) Ann Arbor, MI (Stamps Auditorium)
March 18th, 2015
- WCBN-FM 88.3 Radio
Performance (trombon-
ist) Live improvization with Creative Arts Orchestra.
Ann Arbor, MI
March 11th, 2015

Selected Performances (continued):

- Nadine Dyskant Miller,
Senior Recital (composer,
pianist) Premiered “grow|thaw” (original composition).
Ann Arbor, MI (Britton Recital Hall)
February 7th, 2015
- Music for Prayer (pianist) Performance organized by Christine Hedden. “Spiegel im Spiegel” by
Arvo Part.
Ann Arbor, MI (St. Thomas Catholic Church)
Winter, 2015
- Improvisation with
Creative Arts Orchestra
(trombonist) Ann Arbor, MI (Stamps Auditorium)
November 18th, 2014
- Midwest Composer’s
Symposium 2014
(pianist) performed “Glass Trees” by Nadine Dyskant-Miller
Cincinnati, OH (Cincinnati Conservatory of Music)
November 15th, 2014
- Alison Hendricks, Senior
Recital (trombonist) Premiered “the Girl of Your Dreams” by Alison Hendricks
Ann Arbor, MI (Lord of Light Lutheran Church)
November 9th, 2014
- UMMA Art Installation
with Creative Arts
Orchestra (trombonist) Ann Arbor, MI (UMMA)
October 26th, 2014
- Bonnali Quartet Recital
(trombonist, composer,
arranger) Program of classical and contemporary music for trombone quartet.
Premier of “Threnody” by Sam Johnson, and performance of “in
this valley of dying stars” (original composition)
March 24th, 2012
- Projects with other groups:**
- Gypsy Pond Music XV
(sculptor) Installation with University of Michigan’s Digital music ensemble.
Ann Arbor, MI (Pond Behind the Moore Building)
November 4th - 10th, 2014
- El Ladron De Joyas (film
composer, ensemble
director) Short film with director Caroline Schaper, Produced by M-Agination
Films for the M-Agination Film Festival
Ann Arbor, MI (Michigan Theater)
Winter 2013
- Anna in the Tropics
(composer, sound
designer) Original music and sound design for a production of Nilo Cruz’s Anna in
the Tropics, directed by Amanda Cohen-Esteves
Recorded in fall 2013
Ann Arbor, MI (Duderstat Center recording studio)
Production ran December 6th - 8th 2013
Ann Arbor, MI (Walgreen Drama center, Studio One)
- The Women of Trachis
(sound designer) Production of Sophocles’s “the Women of Trachis” directed by Doron
Bloomfield.
Ann Arbor, MI (Walgreen Drama Center, Studio One)
March 29–31, 2012

Projects with other groups (continued):

The Pelican (sound designer)	Production of Strindberg’s “the Pelican” directed by Doron Bloomfield. Ann Arbor, MI (Walgreen Drama Center, Studio One) November 10th - 13th, 2011
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Teaching Experience:

Centro Autonimo de Albany Park, Chicago	ESL Teacher
Ciep. Diego Muñoz Torrero	Teaching Assistant Bilingual Primary School in Valdemoro, Spain September 2015 to June 2016
Freelance ESL Tutor	Private Instructor Madrid and Valdemoro, Spain September 2016 to June 2016
VIPkid (online teaching platform)	Private Instructor Chicago, IL October 2016 to November 2016
Freelance Music Tutor	Private Trombone and Composition instructor Lexington, KY September 2009 to May 2011