

# JUDAH ADASHI, DMA

COMPOSER

Faculty  
Peabody Institute of the  
Johns Hopkins University

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## EDUCATION

**Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University** Baltimore, MD  
Doctor of Musical Arts in Composition 2011  
Master of Music in Composition 2002

**Independent Study in Composition** Cambridge, MA  
With composer John Harbison 2002-04

**Yale University** New Haven, CT  
Bachelor of Arts in Music with Honors 1998

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

**Baltimore Peace Movement** Baltimore, MD  
Ambassador for movement committed to celebrating peace in individuals and communities, 2022-present

**Rise Bmore** Baltimore, MD  
Founder and artistic director, annual concert marking the anniversary of Freddie Gray's death, 2016-present  
"A great example of how activist artists...have responded to [2015's] unrest." (Tim Smith, *Baltimore Sun*)  
Named Best Concert in Baltimore Magazine's Best of Baltimore 2017 issue

**Evolution Contemporary Music Series** Baltimore, MD  
Founder and artistic director, 501(c)(3) concert series dedicated to music by living composers 2005-present  
"...has elevated and enriched Baltimore's new music scene enormously." (Tim Smith, *Baltimore Sun*)

**Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University** Baltimore, MD  
Composition, Music Theory, and Professional Studies faculty, 2002-present

## COMPOSITIONS

*A Song in the Dark* (2023), youth orchestra  
*Prelude* (2022), cello  
*For Chadwick Boseman* (2021), viola  
*the sun begins to fade* (2020), string orchestra and celesta  
*Ancient Atoms* (2020), piano  
*Broken Hallelujah* (2019), guitar quartet  
*Love into Concrete* (2018), piano

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*Invocation: Dear Baltimore* (2015/2018), spoken word, flugelhorn, and piano  
*No Refuge: For the Love of The Game* (2013/2017), spoken word and piano  
*Witness* (2017) for SSAA choir and piano  
*For Martin* (2017) for TTBB choir  
*Last Words* (2017) for singer, loop pedal, and pre-recorded track  
*For You* (2016) for voice and viola  
*Orpheus at the Gate* (2016, in progress) for percussion quartet  
*The Beauty of the Protest* (2016) for singing cellist  
*Rise* (2015) for double choir and chamber ensemble  
*my heart comes undone* (2014) 4-part open instrumentation  
*amo* (2013) for piano  
*Nina* (2011) for piano  
*Sestina* (2011) for voice and orchestra  
*Lament* (2010) for soprano and guitar  
*Art and the Rain* (2008) for marimba  
*The Dark Hours* (2007) for bassoon and piano  
*Are You Looking for Me?* (2006) for SSAA choir and piano  
*Musica dell'Aria* (2006) for harp and string quartet  
*Songs of Kabir* (2005) for flute and guitar  
*Songs and Dances of Macondo* (2004) for woodwind quintet  
*Grace* (2001) for solo violin, two horns, and strings  
*Eight Haiku by Richard Wright* (2001) for violin and marimba  
*Meditation: Three Episodes from William Styron's 'Darkness Visible'* (2000) for guitar  
*Tres Canciones* (2000) for soprano and piano

## AWARDS

Johns Hopkins University Catalyst Award 2019  
Baker Artist Awards Finalist 2018, 2023  
Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Award 2017  
Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University Dean's Incentive Grant 2016  
Johns Hopkins University Provost's Prize for Excellence in Diversity, Finalist 2016  
Johns Hopkins University Exploration of Practical Ethics Grant 2015  
Virginia Center for the Creative Arts Residency 2013, 2014  
Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University Preparatory Division Excellence in Teaching Award 2012  
Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University Faculty Development Grant 2011-2017  
Meet the Composer Creative Connections Grant 2011  
American Composers Forum Encore Grant 2010  
BMI Foundation Carlos Surinach Commission 2006  
Yaddo Corporation Artist Residency 2005, 2006, 2008  
American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Scholarship 2004  
ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Award 2003, 2005  
Aspen Music Festival Jacob Druckman Award for Orchestral Composition 2002  
BMI Student Composer Award 2001

## PRESS

"A rapt meditation...in my experience, music has never seemed closer to nature" (Alex Ross, *New Yorker*)

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“Straddle[s] genres...with naturalness and expressive impact” (Tim Smith, *Baltimore Sun*)  
“[A] highly original composer...conveyed a sublimely drawn fragility” (Alexandra Ivanoff, *Today’s Zaman*)  
“Strong words, clear music” (Anne Midgette, *Washington Post*)  
“Impassioned” (Will Robin, *Bandcamp*)  
“Elegant” (Steve Smith, *Boston Globe*)  
“Judah Adashi...listened to ‘Unravel’ & heard a new song inside it” (Björk, via Twitter)  
“Beautiful, delicate melodic lines...luxurious silences” (David Salvage, *Sequenzazı*)  
“Engaging...the sonic universe sounds fully personal” (David Cleary, *New Music Connoisseur*)  
“Muted but serene...[with] an undertone of joy” (Joseph McClellan, *Washington Post*)

## COMMISSIONS

Arc Duo  
Annapolis Symphony Academy  
Arx Duo\*  
Aspen Music Festival  
Atlantic Guitar Quartet  
Baltimore Symphony Youth Orchestra  
BMI Foundation  
Cantate Chamber Singers  
Carolina Chamber Music Festival  
Cornell University\*  
Tony Arnold (soprano) and Daniel Lippel (guitar)  
Michigan State University\*, \*\*  
Kramer Milan (percussion)\*  
Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University\*, \*\*  
Sandbox Percussion  
Robert van Sice (percussion)\*  
Jeff Stern (percussion)\*  
Terry Sweeney (percussion)\*  
Walters Art Museum  
York College of Pennsylvania

\* = member of commissioning consortium

\*\* = multiple commissions

## RECORDINGS

*Rise*, forthcoming 2024  
*my heart comes undone*, Bright Shiny Things, released March 2021  
*Love into Concrete*, Bandcamp, released May 2019  
*No Refuge: For the Love of The Game*, Bandcamp, released February 2018  
*my heart comes undone*, Paper Garden Records, released September 2017  
*my heart comes undone*, Artists Recording Collective, released February 2017  
*The Beauty of the Protest*, Bandcamp, released April 2016  
*Rise: Invocation*, Bandcamp, released May 2015  
*my heart comes undone*, Bandcamp, released September 2014  
*Art and the Rain*, Blue Griffin Recordings, released December 2012  
*Songs of Kabir*, Azica Records, released August 2012  
*The Dark Hours*, Concert Artists Guild Records, released May 2011  
*Meditation*, New Focus Recordings, released January 2005

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## PERFORMANCES

### Soloists

Tony Arnold (soprano)  
Gwendolyn Dease (percussion)  
LAVENA (cello, voice)  
Peter Kolkay (bassoon)  
Daniel Lippel (guitar)  
Caroline Shaw (viola, voice)

### Ensembles

Afro Blue  
American Composers Orchestra  
loadbang  
Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble  
Rhymes with Opera  
Roomful of Teeth

### Venues

Atlas Performing Arts Center (Washington, DC)  
Barbican Centre (London, England)  
Barbès (New York, NY)  
Carnegie Hall (New York, NY)  
Center for New Music (San Francisco, CA)  
Corcoran Gallery (Washington, DC)  
Floating World Gallery (Chicago, IL)  
JACK (New York, NY)  
Merkin Hall (New York, NY)  
Museum of Modern Art (New York, NY)  
National Sawdust (Brooklyn, NY)  
Symphony Space (New York, NY)  
TEDxMidAtlantic (Washington, DC)  
Trinity Church (New York, NY)

## TEACHING

Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 2002-present:

### Composition

Director, Junior Bach community engagement program, Conservatory 2011-present  
Instructor for students majoring in composition, Conservatory 2008-2009  
Instructor for 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup> century music survey course, Conservatory 2007-2022  
Instructor for students minoring in composition, Conservatory 2004-present  
Instructor for pre-college and adult students, department coordinator, Preparatory 2002-present  
Instructor for introductory music notation software course, Conservatory 2001-2002

### Music Theory

Instructor for graduate course on the music of Steve Reich, Conservatory 2018  
Instructor for advanced graduate review course, Conservatory 2015  
Instructor for undergraduate course on the music of György Ligeti, Conservatory 2012-2015  
Instructor for undergraduate course on 20<sup>th</sup> century music, Conservatory 2011-2014, 2016  
Instructor for instrumentation/arranging course, Conservatory 2007-2011, 2015-present  
Instructor for accelerated theory courses, Preparatory 2002-2004

### Professional Studies

Instructor for undergraduate course on building a brand and portfolio, Conservatory 2023-present  
Instructor for undergraduate course on 21<sup>st</sup> century artistic careers, Conservatory 2018-present

### Other

Instructor for Art and Activism Workshop, Conservatory 2016-2017  
Instructor for intersession seminar on musical genres, Krieger School of Arts & Sciences 2009-2011  
Instructor for introductory undergraduate course in the humanities, Conservatory 2007-2008

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## ACADEMIC SERVICE

Peabody Institute Mission Statement Working Group, 2019  
Johns Hopkins University Center for Medical Humanities & Social Medicine, Affiliated Faculty, 2018-present  
Johns Hopkins University, Provost's Prize for Excellence in Diversity Selection Committee, 2018-2020  
Johns Hopkins Alliance for a Healthier World Steering Committee, 2017-present  
Peabody Organization for Diverse Identities (LGBTQIA organization), Faculty Advisor 2016-2017  
Peabody Institute Director of Music Entrepreneurship Career Center Search Committee, 2016  
Peabody Institute Diversity Task Force, 2016-2018  
Peabody Institute Curriculum for the Future Task Force, 2015-2017  
Peabody Institute Marketing and Communications Advisory Group, 2015-2016  
Johns Hopkins University Practical Ethics Working Group, 2015-2016  
Peabody Institute Senior Associate Dean of Institute Studies Search Committee, 2014-2015  
Peabody Institute Director of Marketing & Communications Search Committee, 2013  
Peabody Institute Diversity Committee 2013-2016  
Johns Hopkins University Diversity Leadership Council 2012-present  
Peabody Institute Green Group, Faculty Advisor 2012-2014  
Society of Peabody Alumni, Executive Committee 2012-2015

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## PERSONAL STATEMENT

My work as a composer and pianist is guided by a belief that the creation and performance of new music can bear witness to injustice, create space for empathy, and serve as a call to action.

My compositions are grounded in the classical tradition and imbued with soul and pop influences ranging from Nina Simone to Björk. Tim Smith of *The Baltimore Sun* has written: “it’s not easy to straddle genres; Adashi does so with naturalness and expressive impact.” My piece *my heart comes undone* (2014) has been widely performed, receiving attention from Alex Ross in *The New Yorker* – “a rapt meditation...in my experience, music has never seemed closer to nature” – and from Björk herself, via Twitter: “Judah Adashi...listened to ‘Unravel’ & heard a new song inside it.”

Much of my recent music explores racial injustice: *Rise* (2015), a 40-minute work for double chorus and chamber ensemble created with poet Tameka Cage Conley, traces America’s civil rights journey from Selma to Ferguson; *The Beauty of the Protest* (2016), for singing cellist, was inspired by photographer Devin Allen’s images of the 2015 Baltimore Uprising; and *Last Words* (2017) is a multimedia vocal work about Kalief Browder, a young casualty of mass incarceration and solitary confinement. In all of these pieces, I aim to bring an intimate, human focus to ethical issues confronting American society.

As an organizer committed to creating meaningful contexts for 21st century classical music, I am the founder and artistic director of the Evolution Contemporary Music Series, an organization focused on making Baltimore a destination for extraordinary new music and musicians since 2005. *The Washington Post’s* Tim Page writes: “to live in Baltimore is to live in a perpetual state of surprise, and the marvelous and venturesome Evolution Series adds smart new music to the mix...for those of us who remember downtown New York in the 1970s, it is reassuring to find something very much like it happening in Baltimore now.”

I am also the founder and artistic director of Rise Bmore, an annual concert marking the anniversary of Freddie Gray’s 2015 death while in Baltimore Police custody. The 2017 event was named Best Concert in *Baltimore Magazine’s* annual Best of Baltimore issue, with the following citation: “This yearly performance, which recognizes the anniversary of Freddie Gray’s death, gathers artists – from Peabody professors to hip-hop ingénues – who represent a cross section of our city.”

As an educator, I have been a member of the faculty at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University since 2002. I am passionate about introducing students to new music and empowering Baltimore’s youngest artists to make their own. In addition to teaching lessons and courses in the composition, music theory, and professional studies departments, I also direct Junior Bach, a one-on-one mentoring program in composition for middle school students, culminating each semester in a concert of their original music. Junior Bach alum Tariq Al-Sabir called the program “a catalyst for growth, not only in music but in life...it taught me how to connect the music in my head to the music on paper and in the concert hall.”

Above all, I am devoted to my hometown of Baltimore. I proudly serve as an Ambassador for the Baltimore Peace Movement, which fosters and celebrates peace at the individual and community level throughout the city.