

Howard Hersh

Howard Hersh was born in Santa Monica, California in 1940 and studied piano in Los Angeles and composition at Stanford University, where he received Bachelor's and Master's degrees.

He is the recipient of grants and awards from organizations that include Meet the Composer, the American Symphony Orchestra League, the American Composers Forum and American Music Center, Stanford University, ASCAP, the Puffin Foundation, and the Rex Foundation (the non-profit wing of The Grateful Dead. In 1997, he was featured on the syndicated radio program "Social Thought." In 2001, he was selected to participate in Music Alive, a national program dedicated to advancing new music by pairing composers with orchestras and their communities. He has participated in the Villa Montalvo Art Foundation residency program, and, in the fall of 2004, held the Jim and Jeanne Newman Fellowship at the Djerassi Resident Artists Program in Woodside, California.

He was recently awarded an Irvine Fellowship in the international multi-disciplinary, Sally and Don Lucas Artists Residency Program at Montalvo Arts Center in Saratoga, California; as the focus of his residency, he will compose a children's opera, *Zazzi and the Trees of Omburo*.

He has received commissions from the San Francisco ISCM, percussionist Nebojsa Zivkovic, the Twin Cities Concert Association, the Jovan Percussion Group, Music Now, the Festival of New American Music, Music in the Mountains Festival, the Chamber Music Society of Sacramento, Dale Scholl Dance/Art, and the piano/drum duo DivaDi.

Hersh's music includes concert and dramatic works for voices and instruments, ranging from solo keyboard to full orchestra, and has been presented at venues that include the Tanglewood Festival, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's Monday Evening Concerts, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Stanford University's Summer Festival of the Arts, Grace Cathedral, the CSUS Festival of New American Music and Spring Festival of the Arts, Florida State University's Festival of New Music, Music in the Mountains and Bear Valley Festivals, the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial, UCLA, Northern Arizona University, and a number of European concert halls.

Gardenias, a short orchestra piece with many melodies and few dissonances, was premiered at the 2012 Music in the Mountains Festival; in October, *Run!* for solo marimba was showcased at the annual Percussive Arts Society International Convention.

Several of his early works explore themes of the social conscience and include *Shrapnel in the Heart* for soprano, seven instruments and four-channel surround tape, based on writings from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial and performed at the California Vietnam Veterans Memorial as well as in concert settings that include the Los Angeles County Museum's Monday Evening Series, *Early Harvests*, a set of orchestral songs based on the recollections of a Holocaust survivor and premiered at the 2000 Music in the Mountains Festival, *The History Lesson*, a theatre piece for soloists, ensemble, and high school choir, *Children of God* for mezzo-soprano and piano, and the song cycle *Earthly Prayers*, which the critic for Sacramento's National Public Radio station called "an important contribution to the music world. Hersh has always given us thoughtful music of great depth that is filled with drama and beauty. *Earthly Prayers*....should be heard around the world."

Hersh's graphic score, *Three Songs on Poems of Apollinaire*, is in the collection of Middlebury College.

Hersh has also contributed to music through his work as a broadcaster, conductor, writer, and producer of contemporary music concerts. He has directed several new music groups, including the San Francisco Conservatory New Music Ensemble, which he founded, and Music Now, and served as Music Director of KPFA-FM.

The Pony Concerto, a CD of chamber works, was released by Albany Records in 2007. A collection of keyboard works performed by Brenda Tom, including his concerto for piano and ten instruments and harpsichord suite *Angels & Watermarks*, will be released in 2013.

He lives in the Sierra Foothills.

"Mr. Hersh's Quartet for Flute, English Horn, Violin, and Bass Clarinet proved worthy of its company. It is delicate not only in its sonorities but also in its form. Unlike many contemporary works of its kind – the succession and overlay of fragmented sounds – it has movement and direction." – Raymond Erickson, NY Times, reviewing a Tanglewood performance conducted by Lukas Foss

"The hit of the evening was the American premier of a new work by Howard Hersh, called *The Hundredth Monkey*... Fifteen minutes long, the work begins quietly but soon erupts in a flurry of drums, and from there everything goes...The percussionists begin to

chant syllables rhythmically, and to slap sounds from their chests and thighs and faces, like Bobby McFerrin. The counterpoint is rich, the rhythms exciting...It's heady fun. The applause was enthusiastic, and Hersh was on hand to acknowledge it." – William Glackin, Sacramento Bee