

Biography of Ian Krouse

American composer IAN KROUSE is known widely as one of the foremost composers of guitar music working today, though throughout his career he has written in nearly every genre including opera. In addition to hundreds of performances annually by guitarists and guitar quartets all around the world, his works are performed and recorded each season by major artists and ensembles such as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Ukraine Radio and Television Orchestra, the Philharmonic Orchestras of Cairo, Armenian, and New Zealand, the Mexico City, and Pasadena Chamber Orchestras, the Aureole Trio, Dinosaur Annex, 20th Century Consort, Remix, Debussy Trio, Pacific Serenades, Dilijan Ensemble, May Festival Choir, and Los Angeles Chamber Singers, to name a few. Among his most notable recent performances was the premiere, in April, 2015, of his *Armenian Requiem*, a 100 minute long work for chorus, soloists and orchestra sung to texts from the Armenian liturgy interspersed with poetry from some of the greatest Armenian writers of the past 1000 years. The work, an historical first, received its debut performance before a packed Royce Hall in Los Angeles, under the direction of Neal Stulberg. It was commissioned by the Lark Musical Society to honor the 100th year commemoration of what the Armenians call their 'Great Calamity,' what the rest of the world commonly refers to as the 'Armenian Genocide.'

Other recent premieres include two earlier works in Armenian: *Nocturnes*, on poems by Metzarents, Mahari and Terian, for baritone and string quintet, conducted by the composer in performances in Los Angeles, Tuscany and Yerevan, with baritone Vladimir Chernov and the UCLA Camarades string ensemble, and *Fire of Sacrifice*, on poetry of Charents, for soprano and chorus, premiered by Vatsche Barsoumian and the Lark Master Singers. Of *Nocturnes*, critic Charles Fierro wrote in 2010: "*The most striking work of the day was the song cycle Nocturnes for baritone and string quintet...The metaphors of darkness and light, both physical and psychological, inform the words and the music with depth and empathy. The trajectory of Krouse's score is powerful because it is complex and truthful. His expert use of a widely extended tonality conveys strong emotion, as witnessed by the enthusiastic audience response. This is music that will repay many hearings. It clearly deserves a place in the standard repertory.*"

Other vocal works for which he is known are his song cycles *Cantar de los Cantares (Song of Songs)* and *Invocation*, both written for American soprano Jessica Rivera who released the former in 2009 for Urtext Digital Classics to critical acclaim, and the earlier *Cinco Canciones Insolitas*, which has been championed and recorded by American mezzo-soprano, Suzann Guzman with the Debussy Trio. In 2010 Mr. Krouse's a cappella setting of Walt Whitman's *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking* received its successful premiere performance by the May Festival Chorus of Cincinnati under the direction of the work's dedicatee, conductor Robert Porco. Writing of another of Mr. Krouse's choral works, *it is at moments after I have dreamed* (on a text by e.e.cummings) Nick Strimple wrote, in the American Choral Review: "*Krouse's work is varied, surprising, engaging, and gorgeous.*"

Born in 1956 in Olney, Maryland, Mr. Krouse has been hailed in Gramophone as "*one of the most communicative and intriguing young composers on the music scene today.*"

Soundboard described his music as "*absorbing, brutal, beautiful, and harsh, all at the same time.*" He is widely known for his pioneering efforts in the development of a brand new medium, the 'guitar quartet,' of which he has composed ten to date, most of which are now featured regularly in the touring repertoires of the leading groups of our time, including the Aquarelle, Fire, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, New Zealand, Miscelánea, Mexican, and Versailles Guitar Quartets. Several of his guitar solos, including the *Trois Tableaux d'Andersen*, *Variations on a Moldavian Hora*, and *Air*, appear to be increasingly ensconced in the solo repertoire, having been championed and recorded by some of the world's most noted soloists including Randall Avers, William Kanengiser, Alberto Mesirca, Ronald Pearl, Ben Pila, Scott Tennant, and Jason Vieaux, to name a few. His *Variations* are included in a list of the 'top 100 modern guitar solos to be recorded,' while his *Air* was played between the reading of names by Presidents Bush and Obama at the 2011 '9/11 Commemoration' at ground zero in New York City.

During the past several seasons the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet has toured and released a new CD of his 9th quartet, "*Music In Four Sharps*," while the British based Aquarelle just released a new recording of his 4th on Chandos. In 2013 he completed his 10th, a rock infused work commissioned by the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet called *StarWaves*, a '*Second Labyrinth*,' in the spirit of his earlier *Labyrinth On A Theme of Led Zeppelin*, a work which the composer recorded as a guitarist with the LAQG in 1995. Of this work critic Josef Woodard wrote in the Los Angeles Times in 1996: "*On fresher turf, Ian Krouse's "Labyrinth" takes, as a conceptual springboard, the Led Zeppelin song "Friends." Rather than using the chamber-rock angle as a novelty, a la the Kronos Quartet's "Purple Haze," the composer pays respect to Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page – one of rock's great exotic riff makers – by extending the harmonic language of the original tune. Extra-classical guitar effects abounded, with the use of picks, slides and open tunings...a gutsy attempt to bridge different musical worlds.*"

Throughout his career he has received many awards and grants, including an AT&T American Encores Grant (for the second performance of an orchestral work), three opera development grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and several from the American Composer's Forum and Meet the Composer, as well as those from the Ford and Rockefeller Foundations and the Atlantic-Richfield Corporation. He has won the BMI Award and the Gaudeamus Festival Prize, was a semi-finalist in the Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards, and a finalist in the Barlow Competition, and Big Ten Commissioning Project. His works have been recorded and released by Brain, Chandos, Delos, GSP, GHA, Koch, Lisaddell, Naxos, RCM, and Urtext Digital Classics among others. His principal teachers have been James Hopkins, Morten Lauridsen and Halsey Stevens at USC. Early studies in composition at Indiana University at South Bend with Barton McLean, and David Barton, were later augmented with those at USC with Earle Brown, William Kraft, and Leonard Rosenman, as well as master classes with Pierre Boulez and Witold Lutoslawski. Mr. Krouse, who holds a Bachelor of Music degree, as well as the Performer's and Composer's Certificates from Indiana University at South Bend, and Master of Music and Doctorate of Music degrees in composition from the University of Southern California, is a Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he currently serves, in addition to his teaching responsibilities, as an Associate Dean for

Academics for the new Herb Alpert School of Music. He resides in Southern California with his three children.