

MIKE VARGAS CV September 2018

Composer/Improviser: piano, percussion, electronics and small instruments

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OVERVIEW

Mike Vargas began playing music in 1959. Since then, his curiosity has led him through many contexts, from cocktail lounges in Indonesia to underground clubs in New York, from the Kennedy Center to cancer wards, from Grimm's fairy tales to Playback Theater. In addition to his ongoing pure music work, Vargas started specializing in music for dance in 1978, and since then has composed well over 125 commissioned dance scores. He has also worked extensively as an accompanist, improvising music for many styles of dance for 35 years. During the last 18 years, Vargas has been working closely with dancer Nancy Stark Smith, teaching and performing in workshops and festivals. His music (with and without dance) has been heard across the USA, in Canada, Europe, Russia, South America, Asia and Australia. He has published two articles in *Contact Quarterly*, one on composition (2003) and one on improvisation and collaboration (2013). Vargas has taught people of all ages about music and improvisation in public schools, colleges and universities, and privately. He has released nine CD's of his music and recently published a deck of cards useful for composition work in the studio.

RECENT EXPERIENCE

Teaching and Music in Colleges/Universities

2006-2018: full-time faculty Smith College dance department 2003-2005: Barnard College, NY

1996-1999: University of Colorado, CO

1994-1998: Naropa University, CO

Co-teaching and Music for Workshops with Nancy Stark Smith

2013-2018: Vienna (ImPulsTanz); Berlin (Tanzfabrik); Rennes, France; Geneva, Switzerland; Bates Dance Festival, ME; iDance Festival, Taipei; Earthdance, MA; Bari, Italy; HfMDK Frankfurt, Germany; Flow Festival, Warsaw;

1998-2013: Malaga, Spain; Lisbon, Portugal; Berkeley, CA; Buenos Aires, Argentina; La Floresta, Uruguay; San Francisco, CA; Moscow, Russia; Chicago, IL; Ormskirk, England; Stolzenhagen, Germany; Istanbul and Uchisar, Turkey; Vancouver, Canada; London, England; Earthdance, MA; Montreal, Canada; Banyoles, Spain; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Innsbruck, Austria; Washington, DC; Melbourne, Australia; Sydney, Australia; Apuglia, Italy; Florence, Italy; Toronto, Canada; Rochester, NY; Freiburg, Germany; New York City, NY; Boston, MA

Solo Teaching MV Workshops

2018: Earthdance, Plainfield, MA

2016: Ponderosa Tanzland Stolzenhagen, Germany

2014: HfMDK Frankfurt, Germany

1998-2013: Guest artist, Boston Conservatory; Musician's workshop, La Floresta, Uruguay; Moscow Contact Improvisation Festival, Russia; Improvisation Festival of New York, NY; Loft 211, Boston; ECITE conference, Estonia; Contactfestival Freiburg, Germany; CI36 conference, PA; Budapest, Hungary; Earthdance, Plainfield, MA

Co-teaching and Music for Workshops with Turning the Wheel Productions

1998-2011: across the USA

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Solo Piano Concerts

1998-2018: Smith College; Berlin; London; IL, CO, MA, NY, DC, VT, ME, UT; Moscow, Russia; Freiburg, Germany; Helsinki, Finland; Stolzenhagen, Germany; Istanbul, Turkey

Performances with Nancy Stark Smith

2013-2016: “Glimpse 3” w/eleven other dancers – Seattle, WA; Surfers of the Glebe”, with Andrew Harwood, Ray Chung, Nita Little, Nancy Stark Smith - ImPulsTanz Vienna; Moving in the Moment, Bates Dance Festival; “Figment” w/Nancy Stark Smith and Yeong Wen Lee – Taipei; “Glimpse 2” – 92 St. Y, NYC; “Figment” w/Andrew Harwood, Ray Chung and Nancy Stark Smith – Warsaw, Poland; Malaga, Spain; Lisbon, Portugal; Dusseldorf, Germany; Geneva, Switzerland

1998-2012: Montevideo, Uruguay; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Berkeley, CA; Chicago, IL; Moscow, Russia; Uchisar, Turkey; Northampton, MA; Boulder, CO; Melbourne and Sydney, Australia; Philadelphia, PA; Washington, DC; Middlebury, VT; Northampton, MA; Vancouver, Canada; Florence, Italy; Amsterdam, Netherlands; Poitiers, France; New York City, NY; Eugene, Oregon; Seattle, WA; Paris, France; Montreal, Canada; Earthdance, MA; Helsinki, Finland; Budapest, Hungary

Other Performances

2013-2018: *Causing it Only a Little* with eight dancers, and *Resonant Action*, with thirteen dancers – Smith College; Improvising with Teas - SCDT (Northampton, MA); Memory of the Future w/Chris Aiken, Angie Hauser, Andrew Harwood, Bebe Miller, Jenn Nugent and Peter Jones - Smith College; performed in Tatsuay Nakatani’s Gong Orchestra concert - Smith College; premiered “A,B” for solo piano and synthesizer and “Rapt in Awe” for 8 musicians at Composers’ Concert - Bates Dance Festival, ME; Gala performance, iDance Festival - Taipei; “Threshold” with Chris Aiken and Angie Hauser - Smith College, MA; VIDAM -- Northampton, MA; ongoing performances with improvising dancers in community settings - US and Europe

2000-2013: Boston Conservatory (w/Besson); Judson Church (w/Aiken and Chung), NYC; Lumen, London, UK; Earthdance (w/Aiken and Hauser), MA; Immersive Studios (w/Lowe and McCoin), Boulder, CO; Bates Dance Festival, ME; Earthdance (w/Harwood/Aiken), MA; Dance Complex, MA; EDAM (w/Bingham/Chung), Canada; Fall Jam, MA; Winterfest (w/Aiken/ Hauser) FL; VIDAM (Center for the Arts), Northampton, MA

Commissioned Music for Choreographers

1998-2011: David Dorfman, CT; David Hurwith, MA; Opiyo Okach (Kenya), ME; Bebe Miller, ME; Brenda Buffalino, CO; Diane Butler, CO; Christine Mauch, Berlin; Meg Cottam, VT; Martha Bowers, CO; David Hurwith, CT; Turning the Wheel, CO; Performance Project, MA; Andrea Olsen, VT; Wendy Woodson, MA; Univ. of CO graduate students, CO; Kelly East, VA; Deborah Reshotko, CO; Liz Lerman, DC; Felice Wolfzahn, MA; Coleman/Freeman, RI; Ellie Sciarra, CO; Toby Hankin, CO; Norah Zuniga Shaw, OH; Peter Pucci, CT; Olivier Besson, MA; Peter Bingham, Canada

Published Articles

- “Looking at Composition is Like Painting the Golden Gate Bridge - 86 Aspects of Composition“, *Contact Quarterly* (2003) Vol. 28, No. 2.
- “Notice & Contribute - Collaborative Negotiations Between Improvised Music and Dance”, *Contact Quarterly* (2013) Vol. 38, No. 1

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Published CD’s (all original music)

Whispering the Turmoil Down (1997); *Stripes* (1999); *So, Forth* (2001); *Relentless Paintings* (2004); *Pianos in the Wilderness* (2004); *Sometimes* (2006); *Tree: Still Suspended* (2009); *Tree: Unique Natural Area* (2009); *Love Songs to the Shadow*, with Vickie Dodd (2009) - all available

from cdbaby.com, cdemusic.org, iTunes, Amazon (all on Spotify, for listening only, and a few on Pandora, Amazon, Rhapsody, etc.)

Published Deck of Cards

Distributed through Contact Editions (contactquarterly.com) and eventually Amazon (2017)

Published Videos

August, 2017, “A Friendly Nod” (solo piano): Bates Dance Festival Composers’ Concert;
December 17, 2016, excerpt from “Glimpse 3” in Seattle, WA; August 2016, piano prelude from
“Surfers of the Glebe”, Vienna [youTube]; August 2015, piano prelude from “Figment” Warsaw
[YouTube]; August 2013, “Rapt in Awe” octet, Bates Dance Festival Composers’ concert
[YouTube]; June 2012, “Curiosity is Gravity”, entire piano and organ concert, MA [Vimeo and
YouTube]; October 2009, “enthusiasm: exertion”, solo piano [YouTube]

Published Website

February 2011: mikevargas.net

Private Music Instruction (piano, composition, improvisation)

2000–2018: MA

Dance Accompaniment

1998-2018: post-modern, ballet, modern, contact improvisation, African, community dance -
across the USA, around the world

LESS-RECENT EXPERIENCE

Solo Evening-Length Concerts (original compositions)

1984-2005: Colorado New Music Association, CO; Creative Music Works, CO; “Colorwheel“,
CO; “Blind Movies“, DC; “Home Movies“, DC; “Concrete Movies“, DC; “Information the New
Sugar”, NY; “Information the New Sugar Part Two”, MA

Collaborative Concerts

1983-2005: Dance Place, D.C.; Middlebury College, VT; Turning the Wheel, USA; Three on the
Loose, CO; Earthdance, MA; Buzz Band, CO; Arts/Ideas, CT; Bates Dance Festival, ME

Grants

1993: Colorado Council on the Arts and Humanities, CO 1993: Boulder County Arts
Commission, CO

1984, 1987, 1990, 1993: Meet the Composer

Teaching in Colleges/Universities

1983-2005: Smith College, MA; Mt. Holyoke College, MA; Greenfield Community College,
MA; Middlebury College, VT; Montgomery College, MD; Queens College, NY; George Mason
University, VA; American University, DC
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Teaching (other)

1988-1998: Aesthetic Education Institute, CO; Foothills Academy, CO; ArtReach, CO; Art Barn,
DC; Liz Lerman Dance Exchange

Private Music Instruction (piano, composition, improvisation)

1988-1998: DC, CO, MA

Collaborative Concerts

1983-2005: Philadelphia Improvisation Festival, PA; Dance Complex, MA; Center for the Arts, MA; 6 and 1/2 hour project, MA; Kripalu, MA; phone-in performance, Belgium; Judson Church, NY; APE Cabaret, MA; Natural History Museum, CO; West End Tavern, CO; Vickie Dodd, CO, MA, WA

Co-teaching and Music for Workshops with Turning the Wheel Productions

1991-1998: across the USA

Commissioned Music for Choreographers

1983-1995: Karen Abromaitis, Serafin Aponte, Roger Belman, Diane Butler, Beth Cachat, David Capps, Beth Davis, Barbara Dilley, Amie Dowling, Karna Handy, Nancy Havlik, Jan Justis, Hannah Kahn, Jude Landsman, Liz Lerman, Alvin Mayes, Bebe Miller, Carol McDowell, Lesa McLaughlin, Polly Motley, Douglas Nielsen, Karen Panecewicz, Carla Perlo, Deborah Riley, Kim Robards, Yola Rozynek, Ruby Shang, Dixie Shulman, Muna Tseng, Jan Van Dyke, Marina Walchli, Sharon Wyrriick

Composer, Road Manager, Co-Teacher for Workshops with Liz Lerman's Dance Exchange

1988-1991: - across USA

Music for Theater

1985-1987: (founding member) Golden Key - DC, VA, MD, TN, MA, MD, 1991-1998: Playback Theater West, CO

Dance Accompaniment

1978-1998: post-modern, ballet, modern, African, community dance - across the USA

Formal Education

1993-1995: Pilates, CO

1986: yoga, DC

1984: Alexander Technique, NY

1983: yoga, NY

1983: film-scoring: Don Sebesky, NY

1983: electronic synthesis: PATH, NY

1982: jazz theory: Michael Stevens, NY

1980: improvisation: Art Lande, Oregon (band), CO

1972-1976: B.A. German, University of Colorado, CO

1964-1970: classical piano studies with William Sible, Denver Piano Conservatory, CO

1959-1964: classical piano studies, NY