

Joseph Foster Harkins

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Full Biography

The music of Joseph Foster Harkins (b. 1995, Harrisburg, PA) celebrates his native state of Pennsylvania, the natural world at large, and the vital exercise of self-actualization, often centering around the Appalachian Mountains and other geological features and points of interest throughout the Eastern United States. Mr. Harkins' work, deeply inspired by the energy and experimentation of rock music across the decades, also emphasizes collaboration with small chamber ensembles and solo performers in the creation of colorful, evocative, expressive, and narratively rich pieces of emotional and musical depth. His work has been performed and disseminated across North America, has enjoyed two awards in Instrumental Chamber Music from the American Prize (Finalist for the *Piano Sonata No. 2* and Honorable Mention for *Mountain Streams*), and made a record label debut in May 2020 on Centaur Records' compilation disc *Polychrome*. Additionally, his work will make its first appearance in publication in 2021 with *Flat Rock Vista's* inclusion in the first volume of NewMusicShelf's "Anthology of New Music: Solo Piano" series.

2020 projects have included the premieres of *Space and Proportion* with Boston duo Transient Canvas at the RED NOTE New Music Festival at Illinois State University and *Catoctin* for flutist Sarah Brady as part of the Online Cortona Sessions for New Music. While other scheduled premieres and residencies were cancelled or postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, collaborations have continued with new works for oboist Katherine Needleman (*Filtered Sunlight*), for the Flexible Orchestra and Tara Simoncic (*Sirens from Everywhere*), percussionist Micheal Barnes (*A River of Cobalt Blue*), and the duo of Eric Mrugala and Eunjin Lee. Highlights of previous projects include the premiere of reed quintet *Chesapeake Clementine* at the 2019 Fresh Inc Festival with Fifth House Ensemble, multiple performances of the bass clarinet and drum set showpiece *Breathing Octane* on tour with Atlanta duo Pie for Two, and other fruitful collaborations with soloists and chamber ensembles across the country including F-Plus (*Suspended Sandstones*), Unheard-Of//Ensemble (*Golden Fields of Air's Perspective*), Zodiac Trio, New Morse Code, and the Aizuri Quartet among numerous others. The 2020-2021 season will include a residency at Michigan State University, including a portrait concert performed by the Zenith Reed Quintet, Hypotenuse Trio, and percussionists from MSU. The season will also feature new large-scale projects for new chamber ensembles and friends, including Michigan trio Hypotenuse, New York trio Oasi, a double violin concerto for Holly Nelson and Yan Izquierdo, and a multi-percussion solo for frequent collaborator Micheal Barnes.

In addition to his own projects and commissions, Mr. Harkins is a member of the Cincinnati-based composer collective QC³, or Queen City Composer Collective, established in 2018 and comprised of eight composers with roots across the United States. QC³ made their debut collaborating with Unheard-Of//Ensemble in February of 2019 (including *Golden Fields of Air's Perspective*). Upcoming projects include a residency at the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, where QC³ will collaborate with the UNCG Clarinet Studio on performances of their music and give talks and presentations with the composition department, and a new evening-length collaborative work for pianist Michael Delfin, with a recording and performance tour in preparation for 2021.

Mr. Harkins received his master's degree in composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he taught music history as a graduate assistant with Matthew Peattie and Angela Swift and completed undergraduate degrees in composition and oboe performance at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. He has studied with internationally recognized composers Michael Fiday, Ellen Ruth Harrison, Robert Maggio, Adam Silverman, Jacob Cooper, Mark Rimple, Andrew Conklin, and Van Stiefel, and has participated in masterclasses with composers David Rakowski, Stacy Garrop, Dan Visconti, Miguel de Aguila, and Derek Bermel. Mr. Harkins was inducted into the Delta Sigma chapter of the American music honor society Pi Kappa Lambda in the spring of 2017. He is currently pursuing doctoral work at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins, where he serves as teaching assistant to musicologist Laura Protano-Biggs alongside a grading assistant position with Graduate Theory Review. He currently studies composition with Oscar Bettison.