



Gregory Hall

www.gregoryhall.org
hallgee@gmail.com

Compositional Improvisation **and Composition**

I. What is unique about my improvisations?

- My classical improvisations for the piano are driven by a desire to create spontaneous music that is new yet accessible. These improvisations—informed as they are by my own written work as a composer, and not merely by older styles of classical music—are performed in the virtuoso spirit of the great composer/pianists of the early twentieth century ([Scriabin](#), [Messiaen](#)).
- Although the art of compositional classical improvisation was once widely practiced I have largely had to invent my own idiom, as what is generally taught and encouraged in this culture is jazz and pop improvisation. In these styles musicians improvise, but in a musical language that is so familiar to them and the audience that it is ultimately feelings they express, not just notes. I would like to do this for contemporary classical improvisation—thus my language, while wide ranging, is all elements I instinctively understand. Technically speaking, all my harmonies exist in the context of “[tonal harmony](#)”, a widely known language.
- Besides writing original themes for improvisation, I also like to use themes I have written in the past. I often perform improvisations on themes from recently released works of mine: themes from *Water* (on [Masterworks of the New Era Vol. 15](#), released on the ERMMedia label), *Variations on Ongiara* (from [Harmonious Dissonance](#), released on the Parma/Navona label), and the four-movement *Quartet* (on [Quartet at the Crossroads](#),



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released on the Parma/Ravello label) all available now on iTunes and Amazon.

- I also work with themes from the "Symbolist/Impressionist" era, as the themes match my ideas on harmony--thus my improvisations on Ravel's *Daphnis and Chloe* and Stravinsky's *Firebird*, among others. Additionally, I do play from a wider repertoire.
- Currently, I am performing compositional improvisations live twice weekly in the online virtual world *Second Life*, and in a variety of real-world venues. References available upon request.

Compositional Improvisation References:

- Live improvisations may be found here:

<http://www.soundclick.com/gregoryhall>

- More information about me available here:

<http://www.gregoryhall.org>

- A link to an interview of me done on *Tonight Live with Paisley Beebe*:

<http://treet.tv/shows/tonightlive/clips/tlpb-17oct10>



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- Here is a link to an article on classical music in Second Life, from the September 2009 issue of ROLE magazine. Jura Shepherd discusses my improvisations, among other things (I am Tip Corbett in Second Life):

http://issuu.com/rolemag/docs/rolemagazine_september09/50

- Another review:

[SL Artsparks review](#)



Photo by David Hollis

Available for events where the usual just will not do



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II. Biographical Materials

History:

- Born in San Francisco, CA., Greg holds a B.A. degree in Music from the [University of California, Santa Barbara](#) (1982), completing studies with Emma Lou Diemer and Peter Racine Fricker, and a Diploma degree in Composition from the [Curtis Institute of Music](#), Philadelphia PA (1986), where he studied with [Ned Rorem](#). He completed further studies in 2005 at [Boston University](#) with Lukas Foss.
- From 1993 to 2005 he was Vice-President of the Maine Composer's Forum (MCF), and served from 2005-present as President of the MCF. In 2000 he was elected to the membership of the American Composers Alliance (ACA).
- Greg's works are published by the [ACA](#). He is a Fellow of the [Ucross Foundation](#), a member of the [American Composers Forum](#) and the [American Music Center](#).

Achievements:

- In 1991 he received a commission for the *Hardanger Trio* from the Maine Music Teachers National Association. Greg was selected as the "Maine Composer of the Year" in 1997 by the Gamper Festival of Contemporary Music, Brunswick, ME.



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Arkadia, commissioned in 2000 by the Arcady Chamber Orchestra, Bar Harbor, ME, received several performances at various venues in Maine. He appeared as guest on and subject of the July 8, 2000 Kalvos and Damian New Music Bazaar radio show entitled "[Basic Instinct](#)".

- Greg's *Water: 2 Poems of W.S. Merwin for Soprano and Orchestra* appears on [Masterworks of the New Era Vol. 15](#), released on the ERMMedia label) CD series. Parma Recordings released his *Variations on Ongiara* on the CD [Harmonious Dissonance](#), and his *Quartet* for saxophones on the CD [Quartet at the Crossroads](#). CRS Recordings will release his solo violoncello work *Halling* in 2011.

Works and Concerts:

- Greg has composed nearly forty works for varied ensembles. He has participated in concerts by the ACA, [Society of Composers, Inc.](#), [Maine Arts](#), [Gamper Festival](#), The Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States ([SEAMUS](#)), [Ought-One Festival](#), and in numerous concerts of the Maine Composers Forum. His MAX algorithm 21st Century Baroque for computer and sampling device(s) appeared on the MAX list CD-ROM.



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- Currently, Greg is pursuing the art of compositional piano improvisation, performing live twice weekly in the online virtual world [Second Life](#), and in a variety of real-world venues. References available upon request.

Other:

- Greg's works have been reviewed several times in the [New Music Connoisseur](#), and in the [New York Times](#) as well as the [Portland \(Maine\) Press-Herald](#). He currently reviews CD's for the Contemporary Record Society (CRS) [Society News Magazine](#).
- Greg is listed in [Marquis' Who'sWho in America](#) and [Marquis' Who'sWho in the World](#).



References available upon request