

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

In my compositional practice, I try to cast a wide net. Rather than suppress my varied experiences as a musician, I welcome the hybrid music that emerges when I embrace all my influences.

Although I spent much of my childhood engrossed in the piano repertoire of Western classical music, my interest in composing emerged only when I discovered electronic dance music (EDM) as a teenager. My first compositional experiences involved designing intricate groove patterns, programming multi-layered synthesizer patches, and inputting notes into a piano roll rather than a five-line staff. Today, my electronic works combine compositional techniques from contemporary Western classical music with a broad sonic palette that draws from the incisive sounds of EDM. Many of my fully acoustic works also explore conceptions of melody, harmony, and rhythm that arise from a technologically-mediated composition process. Through bringing this music into the concert hall, I hope to encourage a deeper investigation into rave culture and its varied modes of musical expression.

Among the potpourri of inspirations in my music, I often come back to the Iranian classical music of my ancestral heritage. During my undergraduate years at The UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, I was actively involved in the Iranian Music Program, even giving a one-hour public lecture as part of the UCLA Iranian Music Lecture Series. Many of my works combine the florid ornamentation and microtonal inflections of this monophonic musical tradition with a harmonic language rooted in Western classical music. As a child of Iranian immigrants, I recognize the potential for artists to engage in social activism by challenging the hegemony of the Western canon and shaping cultural narratives through their works. In Iran, self-expression can be a prison sentence; therefore, I hope to amplify the voice of the Iranian people through my art, while also exploring the complexities of my dual cultural identity.

Another aspect of my practice involves transforming musical objects from the common practice period and placing them in unconventional contexts. During the COVID-19 lockdown, I began a daily ritual of playing a Bach chorale at the piano and composing an original chorale in response. Over the course of one year and three hundred sixty-five chorales, I cultivated a personal harmonic language that includes an expanded palette of chords while retaining traditional principles of voice-leading and counterpoint. Most of my works — even those that interface with EDM and Iranian classical music — include some form of chorale-inspired part-writing. I am also fascinated by musical topoi, often using topics from tonal repertoires as a jumping-off point for musical exploration.

Leaning into the full range of my influences has offered me the fortune of working with an equally diverse set of collaborators. These include virtuoso musicians like Tessa

Lark and Anthony McGill, ensembles like Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra and Icarus Quartet, and even producer-DJs like Wooli and Codeko. I am especially passionate about projects that cross disciplinary and cultural boundaries, such as an in-process collaboration with choreographer Annie Kahane that intertwines our Persian and Jewish heritages.

The Princeton composition program, with its cosmopolitan ethos and exploratory spirit, would be an ideal setting in which to expand my collaborative practice while building additional sources of influence. As a composer fascinated by an eclectic mix of aesthetics, I would not only grow under Princeton's varied composition faculty, but also learn from the wide-ranging interests of my colleagues. I am excited to join a tight-knit community of inventive musical thinkers and listen to the wide range of perspectives within the Department of Music. The flexibility of the composition program means that I am not constrained by a rigid curriculum, but rather encouraged to define an educational pathway well-suited to my interests, while also broadening my academic and artistic horizons. Princeton Sound Kitchen would offer a rare opportunity to collaborate with world-renowned musicians and ensembles — such as ensemble-in-residence Sō Percussion — in a musical laboratory that encourages risk-taking.

Princeton also offers valuable resources for broadening my creative practice. Through researching computer music, working in the recording studios, and participating in the Princeton Laptop Orchestra, I hope to expand my EDM-inspired language and explore imaginative fusions of technology and music. I also hope to develop new multidisciplinary projects through the Lewis Center for the Arts, continuing my work with choreographers while also initiating collaborations in other disciplinary areas. Both the Composition Colloquium Series and the Institute for Advanced Study's Artist-in-Residence program would provide opportunities to gain insight from visiting composers and engage in spirited musical discussion.

In summary, what draws me to Princeton is its open-minded community of artists, its flexible program that embraces all musics, and its emphasis on collaboration. Attending an Open House and Princeton Sound Kitchen concert in November 2022 gave me a small taste of the supportive, intimate environment that the composition department offers. I hope to have the opportunity to join this inspiring community and cast the widest net possible under the auspices of the composition department.
