

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

My areas of interest center on Iranian classical music, electronic dance music (EDM), and Western classical music. In my compositions, I welcome the hybrid music that emerges when I embrace all these influences.

For me, the Iranian classical music of my ancestral heritage is an endless wellspring of inspiration. 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. When writing for Western instruments, I often evoke the timbres and playing techniques of traditional Iranian instruments such as the *ney* and *tombak*. By weaving Iranian music into my works, I hope to not only explore the complexities of my dual cultural identity, but also to challenge the hegemony of the Western canon and promote a more inclusive musical culture.

I am also fascinated by EDM and the plethora of musics that arise from rave culture. Drawing on my background as an EDM producer, my electronic works combine compositional techniques from contemporary Western classical music with virtuosic instrumental writing and a broad sonic palette that incorporates the incisive sounds of EDM. Many of my fully acoustic pieces explore conceptions of melody, harmony, and rhythm that arise from a technologically-mediated composition process. My goal is to encourage Western classical musicians and audiences to appreciate the inherent complexity and wide-ranging expressive effects of EDM.

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. The chorale is just one of many topics from the tonal repertory I engage with; concepts such as *pastorale*, *fantasia*, and *nocturne* have also served as jumping-off points 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. 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. My ongoing collaboration with the half-piano/half-percussion Icarus Quartet exclusively utilizes MIDI instruments, exploring how tactile expressivity can breathe life into electronic timbres — especially those found in EDM.

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 diverse 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 So Percussion — in a musical laboratory that encourages risk-taking.

Princeton also offers valuable resources for deepening my creative practice. Through researching computer music, working in the recording studios, and utilizing the Council on Science & Technology's StudioLab, I hope to expand my EDM-inspired language, exploring imaginative fusions of technology and music ranging from live motion capture to custom-built modular synthesizers. 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. The composition program's abundant funding opportunities would not only allow me to continue my private study of Iranian classical music, but also to bring traditional Iranian instrumentalists to Princeton for a department-wide collaboration.

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 grow as an artist under the auspices of the composition department.
