

Craig Peaslee is an award-winning composer whose music fuses Western classical traditions with American popular idioms. A Marine Corps veteran, his works confront questions of service, consequence, and social responsibility. Growing up in a rural community shapes his belief that new music should be accessible without sacrificing artistic ambition.

Craig Peaslee is an award-winning composer, arranger, and guitarist whose music fuses Western classical traditions with American popular idioms. His harmonic and rhythmic explorations occupy the liminal space between jazz and classical languages – a voice shaped by years of writing for jazz ensembles and composing for the concert stage. A Marine Corps veteran, questions of service, consequence, identity, and social responsibility run through works like *Rescue Me*, examining the Afghanistan War, and *Fragile*, addressing systemic inequality and climate change. Growing up in a rural community shapes his belief that new music should be accessible without sacrificing artistic ambition.

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A Marine Corps veteran, questions of service and consequence run through works like *Rescue Me*, examining the Afghanistan War, and *Fragile* (The American Prize, 2022), addressing systemic inequality, climate change, and other pressing sociopolitical issues. These works confront difficult subjects in musical terms, inviting listeners to think critically about their communities, culture, and society – and their roles within them. Other pieces explore different territory: *Second City Strut*, winner of the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra Competition (2021), hybridizes classical and jazz; *Her Dress Waves* treats spatialization as a primary compositional parameter; *The Message* derives its thematic material from musical cryptograms.

Craig's music has been performed throughout North America, Australia, and Europe by ensembles such as the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra, and others. He has received funding from the Presser Foundation, Illinois Arts Council, Kohler Foundation, and others. His music is available on PARMA/Navona, Common Tone Records, and PHASMA Music.

Growing up in a rural community shapes Craig's belief that new music should be accessible without sacrificing artistic ambition. His music both challenges and invites listeners in – even when confronting difficult subjects.

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Electroacoustic techniques are central to Craig's practice. *Fragile* integrates fixed media with live brass quintet; *MIA - Media Informs America* is an electronic work; and *The Death of a Nation* combines electronics with string quartet. He works in Logic Pro for production and mixing, explores spatial audio techniques, MIDI/digital synthesis, and incorporates processed recordings into his compositions.

Craig's music has been performed throughout North America, Australia, and Europe. The San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, and Henry Mancini Institute Orchestra are among the ensembles that have presented his work. Festivals and conferences – including those hosted by the Society of Composers, Inc., College Music Society, and the New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival – have featured his compositions. Grants from the Presser Foundation, Illinois Arts Council, Kohler Foundation, and others have supported projects including albums on PARMA/Navona, Common Tone Records, and PHASMA Music.

Craig values lasting collaborations. For seven years, he founded and directed The Moonlighter's Orchestra, an eight-piece jazz ensemble in Milwaukee – writing and arranging over one hundred charts while building an ensemble that could workshop new material regularly. The group's repertoire ranged from jazz standards to rock and pop arrangements, reflecting the same genre-crossing impulse found in his concert music.

Craig's scholarly work examines how theory can serve broader audiences. His SMT-Pod episode, "Reimagining Music Analysis: A Radio Broadcast of Johanna Beyer's *Music of the Spheres*," models rigorous analysis in an accessible format. His research interests include Public Music Theory; cymatics in music creation, presentation, and education; musical cryptography; and meticulous baseball analysis.

Away from music, Craig umpires softball, coaches baseball, and studies chess – pursuits that share with composition a balance of strategy and spontaneity. Growing up in a rural community shapes his belief that new music should be accessible without sacrificing artistic ambition. He currently serves as Lecturer of Theory and Composition at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, where he received his DMA in Composition in 2025.