



Kala Pierson: choral music

My choral music is mostly a **cappella**,

university or pro level,

and based on texts by **living writers**,

with a focus on non-western, immigrant, and queer voices
and subjects that challenge us to think in new ways.

Listen at **[kalapierson.com / choral](http://kalapierson.com/choral)**

to hear the '**secular cathedral sound**' of my work –

bold and lyrical, full of sustained but beautifully singable dissonance –

which leads to my favorite reaction from performers:

"That took some work, but it was **WORTH IT!**"

Some other favorite reactions . . .

"**beguiling and beautifully crafted... the evening's strongest piece**" — *The Scotsman*

"**seductive textures and angular harmonies**" — *Washington Post*

"**massive chords throwing out a wall of sound, like a modern-day Gabrieli**"

— *San Francisco Classical Voice*

"**complex passions... took colour in transparent voicings ringing resonantly**"

— *Nova Scotia Chronicle-Herald*

"**fluid and vividly expressive**" — *Delaware Arts*

"**shot full with emotion and brave stabs of color. It was thrilling.**" — Kile Smith

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Voice was my primary instrument during my composition degrees.

I learned the power of the choral medium from top new-music-focused groups:

first, singing in the **Eastman Chorale** and **Tanglewood Young Artists Chorus**;

then in fellowships and intensives with Steven Stucky, Alice Parker, and Ted Hearne;

and finally, as a Big Sky Choral Initiative Composer Fellow with **The Crossing**.

My choral works have been winning national awards and commissions for 20 years. Some highlights:

— I've held **season-long composer residencies** with San Francisco Choral Artists, American Opera Projects, Tribeca Performing Arts Center, and Lower Manhattan Cultural Council.

— My 2016 piece for The Crossing was one of the six official submissions for the ISCM World New Music Days from the U.S.-Miami section's national call for works in any medium (choral or otherwise).

— I've also won the New Voices Prize from San Francisco Choral Artists, Yale Glee Club Composition Competition, Gregg Smith Biennial Composition Competition, VocalEssence's Essentially Choral, Dale Warland's Choral adVentures at the 2012 Chorus America convention, Khorikos International Composition Competition, and inclusion in the ACDA / Library of Congress National Symposium.

— I've been a fellow at **residencies** in six countries, including Yaddo, MacDowell, the Britten-Pears Foundation, The Banff Centre's Leighton Artists Colony, and Visby International Centre for Composers.

— My major **choral commissions** include those from the University of Chicago, for Rockefeller Chapel Choir; The Esoterics; Khorikos; New Horizons Festival (cycle for chorus and chamber orchestra, as the festival's featured composer); Heartland Chorale (cycle for chorus, soloists, and string quartet); and the GALA Choruses Consortium Commission from 15 choral groups, for the 2016 GALA Festival.

I also compose for **instruments** and for **audio**. My audio work has been called "uniquely organic" and "innovative" (*New York Times*) for its focus on acoustic rather than computer-generated source sounds, and it's been part of major festivals in Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Japan, New Zealand, Portugal, and Taiwan.

In addition to new works for chorus alone, I want to work more deeply in **combining choral music with audio** – both via fixed audio playback and via live electronics. I want to lead the way in this space, where very few composers are working despite the enormous expressive potential.

I'd love to talk with you about how my work – existing or new – would fit with your group's goals and passions.

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