



# BIOGRAPHY

## ALEX BERKO, composer/pianist

### LONG BIO (529 words)

Fascinated by the art of storytelling and capturing human expression, American composer/pianist **Alex Berko** (b. 1995) draws from a wide array of musical and worldly influences to create dynamic and deeply expressive works of sonic art.

Berko's music has been widely performed throughout the U.S. and abroad by orchestras, chamber ensembles, and choirs. His recent collaborators include Del Sol String Quartet, Heartland Marimba Quartet, jazz/folk singer Kate McGarry, the Cathedral Choral Society, NOTUS Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Donald Nally, The Crossing, Cape Symphony, and Monterey Symphony.

Most recently, Berko was selected as the winner of the Boston New Music Initiative's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Commission Competition and the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra's Call for Scores. His work has also received national recognition from the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI), American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Additionally, he has held fellowships or residencies at Big Sky Choral Initiative, RED NOTE New Music Festival, Atlantic Music Festival, Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur, California Summer Music, and NYU/ASCAP Film Scoring Institute.

Berko is a recent graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music with a BM in composition, an outside concentration in piano, and a certificate in entrepreneurship. In addition to composition and piano, Berko participated heavily in the vocal community, singing in NOTUS Contemporary Vocal Ensemble directed by Dominick DiOrio, Conductor's Chorus, the leading vocal jazz ensemble, and accompanying various singers and choral ensembles. Primary teachers at Indiana included David Dzubay, Claude Baker, Aaron Travers, Don Freund (composition) and Jean-Louis Haguener and Edmund Battersby (piano). Originally from Cleveland, Berko received extensive training at the Cleveland Institute of Music pre-college division, studying with Keith Fitch (composition) and Sandra Shapiro (piano). His first composition teacher was Stephen Stanziano.

Also an accomplished pianist, Berko was the winner of the inaugural Carl E. Baldassarre Composer/Performer Competition at the Cleveland Institute of Music. The following year, he was invited to be the featured guest composer/performer for the competition. While at Indiana, he frequently performed his own works on various concerts and served as a pianist for premieres of new works by numerous colleagues on composition recitals. Berko is also a passionate improviser and was the pianist for the improv comedy troop *HoosOnFirst*.

Berko was most recently a recipient of a 2018 Downbeat Award for Best Arrangement. His arrangements have been performed by Grammy-nominated vocalist Kate McGarry and the Cape Symphony Orchestra, Arabic/jazz artist Nai Barghouti and numerous vocal jazz ensembles around the country. His work has also been performed at the Jazz Education Network (JEN) Conference. While at Indiana, Berko had the opportunity to take lessons with Darmon Meader of the New York Voices.

Recent and upcoming projects include *Through a Technicolor Glass* commissioned by the Society of Composers, Inc. for the Heartland Marimba Quartet (March, 2018), *Lincoln* for SATB choir commissioned by the Cathedral Choral Society and premiered at the Washington National Cathedral in D.C. (March, 2018), *Among Waves* commissioned by the Monterey Symphony conducted by Max Bragado-Darman (October, 2018), and *Curls* for small chamber ensemble written for the Boston New Music Initiative as part of their 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Commissioning Competition (April, 2019).

## ALEX BERKO, composer/pianist

### MEDIUM BIO (235 words)

Fascinated by the art of storytelling and capturing human expression, American composer/pianist **Alex Berko** (b. 1995) draws from a wide of array of musical and worldly influences to create dynamic and deeply expressive works of sonic art.

Berko has collaborated with the Del Sol String Quartet, Heartland Marimba Quartet, jazz/folk singer Kate McGarry, the Cathedral Choral Society, NOTUS Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, The Crossing, Cape Symphony, and Monterey Symphony. Most recently, Berko was selected as the winner of the Boston New Music Initiative's 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Commission Competition and the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra's Call for Scores. His work has also received national recognition from the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI), American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP), American Choral Directors Association (ACDA), and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Additionally, he has held fellowships or residencies at Big Sky Choral Initiative, RED NOTE New Music Festival, Atlantic Music Festival, Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur, California Summer Music, and NYU/ASCAP Film Scoring Institute.

Berko is a recent graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music with a BM in composition, an outside concentration in piano, and a certificate in entrepreneurship. He received extensive training at the Cleveland Institute of Music pre-college division with Keith Fitch (composition) and Sandra Shapiro (piano). Primary teachers at Indiana included David Dzubay, Claude Baker, Aaron Travers, Don Freund (composition) and Jean-Louis Haguenuer and Edmund Battersby (piano). Berko is a member of ASCAP.

### SHORTER BIO (199 words)

Fascinated by the art of storytelling and capturing human expression, the music of American composer/pianist **Alex Berko** (b. 1995) has been performed by The Crossing, Monterey Symphony, Cape Symphony, Del Sol String Quartet, and Heartland Marimba Quartet, among many others. His music has received national recognition from ASCAP/SCI, the American Choral Directors Association, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and more and has been heard at the Washington National Cathedral, Green Music Center, American Choral Directors Association Central Division Conference, Jazz Education Network Conference, RED NOTE New Music Festival, BGSU New Music Festival, Atlantic Music Festival, and the NYU/ASCAP Film Scoring Institute. In addition, he has received recognition from ASCAP/SCI (Three-time ASCAP Morton Gould Finalist; SCI Commission Competition Award), BMI (Finalist), the American Choral Directors Association (Brock Memorial Award), the Cleveland Institute of Music (Carl E. Baldassarre Award), and the Minnesota Orchestra Composer's Institute (Honorable Mention), among others. Berko is a recent graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, holding a BM in composition with an outside concentration in piano and a certificate in entrepreneurship. He has studied with David Dzubay, Claude Baker, Keith Fitch, Aaron Travers, Don Freund (composition) and Jean-Louis Haguenuer, Edmund Battersby, and Sandra Shapiro (piano).

## ALEX BERKO, composer/pianist

### SHORTEST BIO (116 words)

Fascinated by the art of storytelling and capturing human expression, the music of American composer/pianist **Alex Berko** (b. 1995) has been performed by The Crossing, Monterey Symphony, Cape Symphony, Del Sol String Quartet, and Heartland Marimba Quartet, among many others. His music has received national recognition from ASCAP/SCI, the American Choral Directors Association, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, and more. Berko is a recent graduate of Indiana University's Jacobs School of Music, holding a BM in composition with an outside concentration in piano and a certificate in entrepreneurship. Primary teachers included David Dzubay, Claude Baker, Keith Fitch, Aaron Travers, Don Freund (composition) and Jean-Louis Haguenaer, Edmund Battersby, and Sandra Shapiro (piano). Berko is a member of ASCAP.