

Charles Halka is a Pacific Northwest-based composer whose music spans the broad space between “energetic” and “crazed” (New York Times) and “haunting” and “reflective” (Houston Press). His acoustic and electronic works for concert, dance, and opera often seek to recreate natural phenomena, human interaction and movement, or visual art and poetry, while at other times they are novel worlds born of improvisation, play, and daydreaming.

With performances and commissions from the Cabrillo Festival Orchestra led by Marin Alsop, Alarm Will Sound, Mivos Quartet, the Mexican National Symphony Orchestra, the Lviv Philharmonic, counter)induction, Callithumpian Consort, Volti, and ÓNIX Ensemble, among many others, Halka’s music has been heard by audiences in North America, Europe, Asia, and Brazil at venues and events such as The Kennedy Center, Carnegie Hall, Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, and Foro Internacional de Música Nueva.

Among Halka’s recent honors are a Barlow Endowment General Commission (2019) and the Copland House Residency Award (2015), and he was in residence with Houston’s critically acclaimed Musiqa (2014-15) and the Foundation for Modern Music (2011-14). In addition, he completed residencies at MacDowell and the M.K. Sarbievijaus Cultural Center in Kražiai, Lithuania, where he wrote a chamber opera, *And Jill Came Tumbling After* (libretto by John Grimmett) for the Baltic Chamber Opera Theater that was selected for Fort Worth Opera’s 2015 Frontiers showcase. *Imaginary Spaces*, his dance and percussion project in collaboration with Houston dance company Frame Dance Productions, was awarded support from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music.

As a 2008-09 U.S. Fulbright grantee, he spent a year in Vilnius, Lithuania researching Lithuanian music and writing an opera in collaboration with director and librettist Marija Simona Šimulynaitė. The opera, *Julius*, was premiered in 2010 in Vilnius, and a choral excerpt from the opera, *Dipukų Rauda*, was performed at the ISCM World Music Days 2012 in Belgium. In 2011, *Round and Round*, based on a work by the American music patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, was premiered at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, and in 2013 he premiered a revised version in Hong Kong at the Intimacy of Creativity partnership led by composer Bright Sheng.

Halka studied music in the United States, Russia (Saint Petersburg Conservatory), and Lithuania (Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theater) and holds degrees in both piano and composition from the Peabody Conservatory, where he studied piano with Brian Ganz and composition with Michael Hersch and Judah Adashi. He earned a Doctor of Musical Arts from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music, where he studied composition with Richard Lavenda, Kurt Stallmann, Pierre Jalbert, and Arthur Gottschalk, and piano with Brian Connelly. Additionally, he studied privately with Samuel Adler through the FUBiS program in Berlin and participated in master classes with several well-known composers, including Bright Sheng, Christopher Theofanidis, Roger Reynolds, and Kaija Saariaho. Previous teachers also include Osvaldas Balakauskas for composition and Stephen Drury, Nina Seryogina, and Roger Price for piano.

Halka began teaching as Assistant Professor of Composition and Theory at Western Washington University in Fall 2018. He was previously on faculty at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, Stephen F. Austin State University, and has taught courses at Rice University, The Peabody Conservatory, and the University of Houston. He is a member of ASCAP, the American Composers Forum, SCI, SEAMUS, and NACUSA.