

Listening Class

CLIL Project

Prof. Filippo Salemmi

Mason Bates



Mason W. Bates (born January 23, 1977^[1]) is a Grammy-nominated American composer of symphonic music and DJ of electronic dance music. Distinguished by his innovations in orchestration and large-scale form,^[2] Bates is best known for his expansion of the orchestra to include electronics. The second-most performed living composer in the United States,^[3] he has worked closely with the San Francisco Symphony, as well as the Chicago Symphony Orchestra where he worked as composer-in-residence. In 2015 he was named composer-in-residence of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (their first ever composer-in-residence appointment), and recently had his contract renewed for another two years through 2019-20^[4].

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Life

Bates was raised in Richmond, Virginia, where he studied composition with Dika Newlin and piano with Hope Armstrong Erb at St. Christopher's School. His first symphonic was commissioned in 1993 by conductor Robert Moody, who conducted Bates' choral music at Brevard Music Center and premiered *Free Variations for Orchestra* in Evansville, Indiana^[5]. Bates subsequently attended Columbia University-Juilliard School program and earned a BA in English literature and MM in music composition, where he studied with John Corigliano, David Del Tredici, and Samuel Adler.

In 2001, he relocated to the Bay Area and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a PhD in composition in 2008,^[6] where he studied with Edmund Campion^[7] while working as a DJ in San Francisco clubs and lounges Oakland, California.^[8] His work as a DJ led to the founding of Mercury Soul, which performs classical music alongside DJ sets in clubs and in partnership with orchestras.

Notable works include *Alternative Energy*, an energy symphony premiered by Riccardo Muti and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra; *Liquid Interface*, a water symphony commissioned by the National Symphony Orchestra; and *The B-Sides*, a symphony commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. In 2010 Bates was commissioned to write for the YouTube Symphony Orchestra 2011, an ensemble composed of musicians from around the world. His piece *Mothership* was performed by the London Symphony Orchestra and went on YouTube a year earlier; it is a mixture of acoustic and electronic elements and features sections for improvisation. In 2014 Bates wrote the film score for Gus Van Sant's 2015 movie *The Sea of Trees*, starring Matthew McConaughey, Naomi Watts and Ken Watanabe.^[9]
