

Alex Shapiro, composer biography

475 words, formal:

Composer Alex Shapiro has built an unconventional life interweaving her dynamic musical career with avid pursuits of wildlife photography, non-fiction writing, and a devotion to advocacy for the arts, marine sciences, and social justice. Alex's genre-blind acoustic and electroacoustic works are heard daily in concerts and broadcasts and can be found on over thirty commercially released recordings from around the world.

Renowned as a lively public speaker and a widely published author, Alex has been a presenter at countless national music conferences and university residencies. She is a frequent webcast guest, noted for engaging discussions on the music business, diversity and equity, copyright, technology, and activism.

Born in New York City in 1962, Alex's primary composition studies were at The Juilliard School and Manhattan School of Music. While still a student, she was hired to score a film in Los Angeles and left school to move west in 1983. The first 15 years of Alex's career were spent composing for commercial media until she shifted her focus to the professional chamber music world in the late 1990s. Alex's business and technology skills coincided with the onset of the internet, and helped her globally promote her music and encourage peers to do the same.

A 2008 commission for wind band has since led to Alex's acclaim for changing the landscape of the field with adventurous electroacoustic pieces for all performance levels. With her longtime professional background as a composer and engineer in pop, jazz, film, and concert music, Alex is sought after for her seamless melding of live and recorded sounds for performances which often include striking visual and physical elements.

Ms. Shapiro holds the Symphonic & Concert writer member seat on the Board of Directors of ASCAP and is an officer of the ASCAP Foundation. A former Director on many national arts boards, Alex also currently serves on the boards of the Aaron Copland Fund for Music and the Music Publishers Association of the United States, representing her company Activist Music LLC.

Significantly active in issues beyond music, in the 1990s Shapiro was Vice President of the Board of Directors of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California and balanced her composing deadlines with regular appearances as a spokesperson for women's rights. Alex joined the board of the University of Washington's distinguished Friday Harbor Laboratories marine research center in 2008. Among the works in Alex's diverse catalog are those with social and environmental messages, often accompanied by her award-winning images.

Alex relocated to Washington State's remote San Juan Island in 2007, after 21 years in Manhattan and another 24 in Los Angeles. Her holistic approach to a happy life in the arts in which music, nature, technology, multimedia, and business acumen join with her commitment to the wellbeing of others, can be experienced through social media and her website, www.alexshapiro.org.