

Statement of Purpose

Since my undergraduate, I have focused my studies and career preparation on intermedia music theatre in the role of a composer-director. This theatrical form is particularly exciting to me because it loosens the traditional limitations on musical composition — whereas classical music composers may traditionally compose for specific instruments, in this role a composer considered a broader array of “instruments,” elements and forms in his/her work — the abstract expression and its ideas, communicated through sound, lighting, scenography, performers’ interpretation, audience’s interaction, and computer programs. The expanded process of composition allows the composer to share in the writing and directing of creative ideas and also enables the concept and expression to come to life more vividly in an inter-media and sonic representation.

My work has been influenced, especially by *Musique concrète*, German traditions of sound art, and the notion of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, which guides my exploration in the concept and layout of space in theatre. This theory works in tandem with the Gestalt approach to conceptualize the total construction of the theatre space to provide the audience with a comprehensive sensory experience. I believe this approach integrates several different media forms to maximize the communicative strength of space. It has been my goal to embody this philosophy in my own compositions.

I began experimenting with integrated art as an undergraduate student at Shanghai Conservatory of Music, where I focused on multimedia composition and sound art, developed my imaginative abilities for the visual and sonic arts. I sought ways to make the possibility of producing visual images in musical compositions a reality. My first intermedia piece, *Innerhearing* (2015), explored the dichotomy between what is considered traditional and modern piano sounds both sonically and visually using materials from inside the piano. That has been my starting point of thinking about both audible and visible sound in different dimensions and forms. During my third year in college, I took composition and sonic arts lectures from the U.S and German professors who visited my school every semester. And the idea of integrated art and intermedia that they advocated became the stimulus for my subsequent work in integrated art and stoked my interest in studying abroad to receive new and multicultural inspiration. At Johns Hopkins, my artistic visions indeed underwent a series of renewal. My program’s emphasis on computer music composition gave me a birds-eye view of the technological tools at a composer’s disposal and the artistic possibilities that they bring. By using interactive programming languages in music composition, I learned new ways of program design — seamlessly integrating audio and video, combining real-time inductive devices with composition, and maximizing the use of space for interactive design.

I later decided to deepen my study and research in interdisciplinary and intermedia music as an InterSchool MFA student at California Institute of the Arts, where I have the opportunity for more multidisciplinary collaborations and creative experiments. I dragged myself from sonic emphasized practice to be more multimedia, conceptual art, and critical theory-based. I started to use sound as well as other media forms to explore, express, and to question specific topics and concepts in the context of contemporary society. My intermedia ensemble work *Woven* (2017), explored the changing binaries of past/present, male/female, and the east/west. *Doppelgänger series* (2019), multimedia installations, explored a dystopia of surveillance capitalism, self-

awareness, and human-machine symbiosis. During my time at Calarts, I initiated various interdisciplinary projects in the realms of performance, theatre, the moving image, VR/AR, and installation. I experimented with different compositional forms and structures using traditional and graphic notation, improvisation, various motion tracking techniques, biometric sensors, and spatial sound applications, primarily interested in developing interactive and multi-modal systems for an intermedia and immersive experience.

Given my career aspiration of becoming a composer-director, I have read extensively on musical trends that intersect with the theatre, film industry, new media, and technology is an indispensable component in this field. Intermedia has allowed the fusion of art forms, but while the boundary between art forms is at times blurred, art creation today is more than ever before about spatial art, and sound can be the thread that connects various art forms in the creative space and the propelling force that helps move multiple narratives and ideas forward. In my recent research and creative practice, I have been focusing on Interdisciplinary music research and intermedia composition and explore how to best harness the potential of sound and technology as a medium that integrates other media forms and helps create a comprehensive artistic expression. Since a composer-director must collaborate with practitioners of other media and ensure that other media forms are expressed in service of the sound context, I plan to be proactively involved in artistic collaboration with other artists and researchers during my studies. Such experiences will refine my intermedia philosophy and execution and enable me to create truly integrated art.