

## Steve Antosca

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The music of American composer Steve Antosca blends acoustic instruments with computers to create an atmosphere rich with immersive audio processing and spatialization. Through the realization of scores that juxtapose elements of indeterminacy with traditional notation, musicians craft a sonically rich performance environment. The Washington Post has described his concerts as *“spectacular, wonderfully provocative,” “formidable”* and noted that *“he has brought wildly imaginative concerts ... to Washington for more than a decade.” “Antosca revels in pushing traditional instruments (and instrumentalists) beyond their limits”*

The dynamics of the computer music medium provide both opportunity and impetus to consider unique structural designs and sonic explorations in Antosca’s compositions. Consideration of compositional structure across time, intersecting with performance spaces are at the forefront of the architectonic approach to his compositional design. His path toward the blend of creative sounds and extended performance techniques, presented in unique performance environments, continues to inspire new ways of considering, performing and experiencing music. His regard for Shoshin or *“beginner’s mind”* from Zen Buddhism leads to a fresh approach in the design of every new work.

Antosca holds the position of Curator for New Music-in-Residence at the American University Museum in the Katzen Arts Center. Appointed in 2015, he established the concert series CONNECTED: MUSIC IN THE MUSEUM, forming the resident INTERFERENCE *new music collective*. The series focuses on the use of technology in composition and performance exploiting the sonically unique and visually rich performance environment of the American University Museum. Concerts of Antosca’s music by INTERFERENCE have been presented at the Museum of Russian Art in Minneapolis and at Campus Hybernská in Prague.

Antosca is noted for performances of his compositions in unique spaces throughout Washington and is recognized for his extensive record of collaboration with Washington performance venues. His compositions present a momentary glimpse into the delicate interaction among performance, technology and space. In the Washington area his works have been performed at the National Gallery of Art, the Corcoran Gallery, the Kennedy Center, la maison Française/Embassy of France, the Phillips Collection, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution and numerous universities.

Antosca initiated and was a co-director of the 2012 John Cage Centennial Festival Washington, DC, one of the largest centennial celebrations of Cage in the world, which took place throughout Washington from September 4 – 10, 2012. Regarding the Festival’s impact, the Washington Post wrote that for Washington, *“where artistic life centers on museums and conservation”* the Festival *“could be seen as a gradual shift in Washington where Antosca, the National Gallery, the Library of Congress, the Maison Francaise and others have been working hard to cultivate a contemporary music audience.”*

Among his most noted collaborative events was the 2016 celebration of *“Music at The Phillips”*, part of the Phillips Collection 75th Anniversary Season. The Phillips formed the Steve Antosca Ensemble and commissioned *tessera* for ensemble and computer as part of an evening of Antosca’s compositions in a surround sound environment in the Phillips Gallery. The concert extended his relationship with the Phillips to over a decade of collaborative presentations of contemporary music.

The violin and computer work *One becomes Two* premiered at the Phillips Collection in 2007. The performance was described by the Washington Post as *“the afternoon’s most exciting composition. It was performed with knowing sensitivity by [the violinist], her violin plugged into Antosca’s laptop, her fiddle*

*generating ambient electronically controlled responses that were repeated or transformed into vaporous, liquid reflections of her sound.” One becomes Two* received its European premiere in Paris at the *Festival de musique Américaine* in 2007 and has been performed throughout the US and in Mexico and China. *One becomes Two* was awarded a prize in 36th Bourges International Competitions in 2009. A graphic page from the score was published in *Notations 21*. In 2010, *One becomes Two* was presented at the inaugural concert of the National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble in the Atrium of the NGA East Building.

After several years of developing new music events with the National Gallery of Art, Antosca was invited by the NGA Music Department to form the National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble (NGA NME). He was appointed Artistic Director, a position he held from 2010 until 2016. NGA NME performances promoted a broad range of innovative and imaginative work aimed at enhancing the NGA audience’s experience with contemporary music. The NGA NME specialized in using the unique performance spaces of the National Gallery of Art East and West buildings to integrate acoustic instruments with distinct performance spaces and technology to create rich and singular performances of contemporary music.

Antosca was the National Gallery of Art Composer-in-Residence for Fall 2013. He premiered two works with the NGA NME. The Washington Post described his Chamber Music America commission *my end is my beginning* as “a shimmering, multilayered sea of sound, surging with power under a surface of delicate detail — a fascinating dance between the human players and their electronic ghosts.”

The residency culminated with the premiere of *HABITAT* for percussion, video, and computers, composed for the I. M. Pei architectural wonder, the NGA East Building Atrium. The performance was part of the NGA 65th American Music Festival and celebrated the 35th Anniversary of the East Building. It was enthusiastically reviewed: “*HABITAT* ... filled the atrium with a surging, often breathtaking ocean of sound — and turned the huge space into an instrument in its own right. ...a complex and wildly colorful palette of sound — that seemed to sweep in huge waves from every direction, as if [the percussionist] were playing the atrium itself as a gigantic meta-instrument — and we, the audience, were inside. A fascinating and often compelling new work from Antosca.”

Antosca presented “*HABITAT: composition|performance|technology|spaces*” as part of the Library of Congress Technofiles lecture series. A video of the premiere performance of *HABITAT* is archived at the National Gallery of Art and the Library has archived the Technofiles lecture/performance. They are both available for viewing on their respective websites.

In celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the West Building of the National Gallery in 2011, Antosca was commissioned to present an NGA NME concert in the Gallery Rotunda. The concert included premieres of two compositions *in every way I remember you* and *echoic landscape*. The Washington Post wrote of the Rotunda event: “*Who in their right mind would put on a concert in the Rotunda of the National Gallery of Art? The place is a nightmare — an echoing, marble-lined cavern, a glorified hallway... Thankfully, Steve Antosca — director of the National Gallery of Art New Music Ensemble — was unfazed by the challenges, even turning them to his advantage... Wiring the Rotunda with a battery of speakers, Antosca transformed it into an immense temple of sound, presenting a program of theatrical new works that married humans with computers, and ancient myths with contemporary aesthetics... Virtually every work on the program pushed out the possibilities of human performance in intriguing ways.*”

Antosca’s awards and commissions include the American Composers Forum, American Music Center, an award in the 36th Bourges International Competitions, Chamber Music America, Distric5, Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University, Georgetown University Orchestra, winner of the International Music Prize

for Excellence in Composition 2011 from the National Academy of Music, Johansen International Competition, a Kennedy Center commission, a Lifetime Award from the Mandel Foundation, several Maryland State Arts Council awards, the McKim Fund in the Library of Congress, Meet the Composer, National Endowment for the Arts grants in 2007 and 2012 to present festivals of contemporary music in Washington, National Museum of the American Indian, No EXIT Ensemble, Pictures on Silence, numerous awards from the Randy Hostetler Living Room Music Fund, Subito/Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund, Washington Commission on the Arts, numerous private commissions, and a three year technology FIPSE award from the US Dept. of Education.

Antosca's works have been performed throughout America, Mexico, Europe and in China. In the Washington area his works have been performed at the National Gallery of Art, Corcoran Gallery, Kennedy Center, la maison Française/Embassy of France, Phillips Collection, Library of Congress, Smithsonian Institution, numerous universities, the UMBC Livewire Festival and the Third Practice Festival. In New York his works have been performed at the first New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival, NYU, June in Buffalo, Symphony Space, the Stone, the Issue Project Room, and le poisson rouge. His work was presented at the first edition, and subsequent International Electroacoustic Music Festival concerts in Rome.

Antosca has worked directly with numerous members of the contemporary electronic/computer music field from emerging artists to established iconic composers and performers. He was responsible for the transfer of the scores, composition materials and hardware of composer Morton Subotnick to the Library of Congress and has recorded several interviews for the Library of Subotnick describing composition techniques on his original Buchla 100.

The Library of Congress now holds Antosca's collection of unpublished scores of contemporary music numbering in the thousands. It is archiving the collected scores, notebooks, sketches, writings, website, audio and video recordings and performances of Antosca's work.

Antosca has been actively involved in studio design, comprehensive music technology program development and grant writing for schools. He has worked with such diverse institutions as Eastern High School in DC and Episcopal High School in Virginia. In 1998 he was awarded a three year teaching and curriculum development grant from the US Dept. of Education.

From 2002 through 2012, Antosca was Artistic Director and composer member of the highly regarded VERGE ensemble of Washington, the resident ensemble of the Corcoran Gallery of Art. During his tenure the Washington Post wrote the ensemble put *"modern classical music in front of the public with more dedication and skill than any other group in Washington"* and was *"a national presence."* Under Antosca's direction VERGE Ensemble performed in Paris, at the UMBC Livewire Festival, the Third Practice Festival at Richmond and the Cleveland State Contemporary Music Festival. VERGE was the resident ensemble for the June in Buffalo Festival in 2009. They performed in New York at le poisson rouge, the Issue Project Room and the Stone. In Washington, VERGE ensemble regularly appeared at la maison Française/Embassy of France, the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of the American Indian, the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Phillips Collection, the Library of Congress and the National Gallery of Art, as well as numerous universities.

Steve Antosca has a Master's degree in Computer Music Composition from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University. He lives and teaches privately in the Washington, DC area.