



JAMIE ALLEN

Composer / Conductor / Animateur

BIO

Jamie Allen has over 30 years of experience as a composer, conductor, performer, and music educator. His 2012 performance with Jamie Bernstein in a Dallas Symphony Family Concert was hailed by the Dallas media as “marvelous” and “impressive.”

Allen earned a bachelor’s degree in music from the University of Chicago, and a master’s degree in composition from the University of Texas at Austin. He has been named “Composer of the Year” by the New Mexico Music Teachers Association and was hailed as “the most inventive young composer in the state” by *The Santa Fe Reporter*. Allen has won awards from both ASCAP and the American Music Center for his work, as well as commissions from numerous ensembles and arts organizations.

Allen has served on the music faculties of the College of Santa Fe and Collin College. He has been a frequent presenter, educational consultant, and conductor for many arts organizations, including the Santa Fe Opera, the Desert Chorale, Santa Fe New Music, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Dallas Opera, Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts, the Texas Commission on the Arts, the New Mexico Arts Commission, and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. He was the founding director of the Desert Chorale Children’s Chorus and the Santa Fe New Music Youth Ensemble in New Mexico, and the Cross Timbers Youth Orchestra in North Texas.

Under his guidance as Education Director for over 14 years, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra’s award-winning educational programs reached over 50,000 children and adults each year with Youth & Family Concerts, an innovative string instruction program for under-represented students, the El Sistema inspired Young Musicians program (serving every aspiring musician in South Dallas), frequent in-school & community programs, pre-concert lectures, open rehearsals, web sites, master classes and more. Allen has conducted many side-by-side concerts (combining professionals with students), including regular appearances on the podium for the Music Memory concert and competition. In 2014, Allen traveled to Oaxaca, Mexico with musicians from the Dallas Symphony to organize a city-wide residency and conduct a culminating concert with over 100 musicians on stage, in the historic Teatro Macedonia Alcalá. In 2016, Jamie was the stage director and assistant music director for the DSO’s production of Benjamin Britten’s community opera *Noye’s Fludde*, presented at the Cathedral Shrine of Guadalupe. In 2017, Jamie worked with Dallas community leaders to develop and execute a successful poetry-writing program, culminating in an inspiring performance that combined original poetry and theater with music by both professional and advanced student musicians, called *Dallas Dreams Big*.

Since the beginning of 2020 Allen has composed full-time, receiving commissions and performances from renowned trombonist Angel Subero, the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, the American Recorder Society, and others. He is currently collaborating on a full-length musical based on the financial crisis of 2008, and on a series of arrangements for recorder duets and trios of works by black composers.

PHOTOS

Approved Publicity Photos available [HERE](#)

QUOTES

“Jamie’s music is fresh, rich and has a depth that makes his compositions a really wonderful trip, truly special. *Double Variations for Bass Trombone and Percussion* is a unique and fantastic addition to the repertoire. You can hear the refined and detailed process where he captures the essence and shows the many colors of the modern bass trombone in the most beautiful, musical and elegant way.”

- Angel Subero

Bass Trombonist for the Boston Philharmonic and Boston Pops Orchestras.

“Jamie is a thoughtful composer, with a sensitivity for color and form. His *Nightingale Concerto* for recorder, strings and percussion is full of atmosphere, as well as humor. It’s a welcome addition to the recorder repertoire.”

- Yaniv Dinur

Music Director, New Bedford Symphony Orchestra & Resident Conductor, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra

“It was a great honor to play the piece Jamie wrote for me. You can tell he plays and understands the recorder very well, because his piece felt very idiomatic. I really loved his sense of line and color. Jamie showcased my instrument without asking it to do something it couldn’t do. Thank you, Jamie!”

- Héloïse Degrugillier

Recorder Virtuoso & Music Director, Boston Recorder Society

“Life, destiny, music, and God have given me the opportunity to meet people with a truly great social conscience. Jamie Allen is one of those people. I have witnessed, first-hand, the unparalleled organizational work he has done with the Young Musicians program in Dallas, which has impacted the lives of so many children and youth living in areas which are otherwise largely neglected.”

- Roberto Zambrano

Artistic Director, Dallas Symphony Young Musicians Program

“Jamie Allen’s work shows an uncanny ability to create exactly the right marriage between the musical and visual image.”

- Beverly Jones

Filmmaker

PRESS CLIPPINGS

From The Albuquerque Journal *Composer Looks for Cure to Musical Myopia* *Fuses folk energy, classical ideas*

Agogo isn't a dance step and the chajchas aren't something you eat for dessert. In the eyes of composer Jamie Allen, it's our unfamiliarity with agogos and chajchas (as well as pandeiros, berimbaus and other instruments from the developing world) that's symptomatic of America's classical-music induced myopia.

But though we all may be suffering a form of musical illness, Allen feels there's hope for a cure. The answer, he says, lies in contemporary music's capacity to "...fuse folk music's cultural inspirations and energies with the high artistic goals of classical music."

A widely published music journalist as well as composer, conductor, and music educator, Allen often draws upon musical traditions from Latin American, South American, and Native American cultures in creating the synthesis that's at the core of the *In Memory of a Once New World* experience. By combining these cultural perspectives and instruments with classical music's precision and instrumentation, Allen advances two goals: invigorating his musicians and inspiring his audience.

From The Santa Fe New Mexican *Allen Merges Realms of Folk and Classical*

Many musicians regard folk and classical Western music as polar opposites, but not composer Jamie Allen.

Allen's interest in combining the unpretentious clarity of folk traditions with classical structures is the basis for *In Memory of a Once New World*, recordings of live performances from Santa Fe, New Mexico.

"As a child, I was immersed in the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago, and the energy, authenticity, and lack of pretense in folk music has been a part of my blood ever since," Allen said.

As a result, "...folk music has always inspired me. When I went on and became a classical musician, I asked myself 'How can I blend this energy, inspiration and lack of pretense with high artistic goals at the same time?'"

The title work of the album was commissioned by the New Mexico Music Teachers Association for their 1992 conference. "When I received the commission, I was immediately struck by the fact that it was the year 1992," Allen said, "a year which is problematic for many, particularly in New Mexico."

"So I wanted to write a piece that reflected my own issues with the celebration of the Quincentenary, to express musically where I felt we had gone, and where we still need to go in terms of cultural relations."

“The first movement is called “Encounter.” It starts out raw and beautiful, like a waterfall. Then, in the midst of all this surging and flowing, you hear these clanging bells that come in and tear it all apart. The second movement, “Resignation,” represents “that period of time when the vast majority of indigenous peoples in the Americas said ‘there’s no way we can win, we’ll have to give up.’ There’s a bit of hoping and wishing something were better, but it’s very mournful and sad.”

The third movement, “Struggle,” is a technical tour-de-force, with constantly alternating 9/8 and common-time measures. “It’s where I feel we are right now,” Allen said. “There is a groove there, but it takes a while to hear it. This kind of rhythmic framework works well for a struggle – all these forces clashing, pulling, and pushing so that you’re never quite sure where the downbeat is.”

From The Santa Fe Reporter

The pure, haunting sounds of Allen’s compositions are mesmerizing...with an emotional range from mournful to celebratory. Not easily categorized, but absolutely worth having.

From The Albuquerque Journal

The Man Who Couldn’t Stop Dancing is colorful and wonderfully entertaining. Based on a traditional New Mexican folk tale, *The Man Who Couldn’t Stop Dancing* tells the sort of story that everyone seems to love. Composer Jamie Allen was inspired to write the work after hearing local storyteller Joe Hayes recite the tale.

From The Santa Fe New Mexican

Being young can be tough, especially when bullies complicate the turns of growing up. And if they’re adult bullies, it makes things all the harder. Caught in such a trap, a sad youngster might yearn for something magical to set the balance right and just perhaps discover it, which is exactly what happens when a young goatherd and a nasty old abuela intersect in *The Man Who Couldn’t Stop Dancing*, by composer Jamie Allen.

From The Santa Fe Reporter

Last weekend’s premiere of *New Mexico Landscapes* was excitement at its best. Jamie Allen is one of the most inventive composers. *New Mexico Landscapes* is a multi-media experience. Like Bach’s Brandenburg concerti, each of the six “scenes” varied instrumentation slightly. And what instruments! Joan LaBarbara’s incredible voice recreated the birds of Bosque del Apache and spirits of the Pecos Ruins. Sam Lunt danced percussion that included the elusive bull-roarer, bowed cymbals, and more. Charly Drobeck’s flute wove melody and creative sounds, and David Yard complemented all with his guitar. On top of this, Toni Austin-Allen presided at the keyboard and the open strings of a piano.