

# Alexander Zhu

alexanderwzhu@gmail.com

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**Summary:** Versatile classically trained pianist, violinist and conductor, with emphasis on solo and collaborative performance, teaching, conducting, and orchestral keyboard. Known for strong creativity, analytical skills and organizational ability. Comfortable playing all keyboard instruments, and an expert in contemporary music and minimalism. Excels at music theory and music history; involved in a broad range of projects in diverse musical styles ranging from baroque performance to opera to jazz and pop.

## Education:

**University of Southern California, Los Angeles** **2015-present**

*Doctor of Musical Arts, Thornton School of Music*

**Major:** Piano Performance (Stewart Gordon, advisor)

**Academic field:** Music Theory (Chris Rozé, advisor)

**Minors:** Instrumental Conducting (Larry Livingston, advisor)  
Arts Leadership (Ken Foster, advisor)

**University of Southern California, Los Angeles** **2013-2015**

*Master of Music in Piano Performance, Thornton School of Music, with honors*

Principal Instructors: Stewart Gordon, Larry Livingston

**New England Conservatory, Boston** **2009-2013**

*Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance, with honors*

Principal Instructors: Randall Hodgkinson, Stephen Drury, Charles Peltz

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## Key Projects and Work Experience:

### TEACHING

- **Graduate Teaching Assistant** **2015-present**  
*USC Thornton School of Music, Piano Department*  
Serves as assistant lecturer in the Keyboard Studies Department, teaching group piano classes and individual instruction to music and non-music major undergraduates, graduate students, and piano minors. Adjudicates non-major and piano minor juries.
- **Piano Faculty** **2017-present**  
*Pasadena Conservatory of Music*  
Piano instructor for students of all ages and abilities at a nationally-accredited, non-profit music school in Southern California.
- **Piano Instructor** **2015**  
*Roaring Fork Valley Music Lesson Program*  
Piano instructor for gifted and disadvantaged children in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley.
- **Piano, Violin Instructor** **2013-2015**  
*Red Pelican Music*  
Instructor at a community music school in West Los Angeles; clients and former students include high-profile musicians, actors, and celebrities. Taught hip hop artist Chance the Rapper and actress Alina Alilukyna, among others.

- **Teaching Assistant** **2009-2013**  
***New England Conservatory Theory Department***  
 Teaching assistant and tutor for the New England Conservatory Theory and Solfège department.

## PERFORMANCE

- **Principal Piano** **2013-present**  
***Young Musicians Foundation Debut Chamber Orchestra***  
 Principal pianist of the foremost pre-professional training orchestra in Los Angeles, known for exceptional performance standard and innovative programming. Orchestra has been featured in USA Today, the Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, the Huffington Post, and Reuters.

### ***Notable Performances:***

- *Petrushka*, Aratani Theatre at the Japan/American Cultural Foundation
- *Yeethoven I and II*, (Kanye West/Beethoven mash-up concert) Aratani Theatre, Belasco Theatre
- *Symphony in Three Movements* (Stravinsky), Zipper Hall
- *Gamer Jams*, John Anson Ford Amphitheatre
- *Try* (new work by Andrew Norman), Walt Disney Concert Hall

- **Principal Keyboard** **Summer 2014, 2015**  
***Aspen Music Festival- Aspen Chamber Symphony and Aspen Festival Orchestra***  
 Fellowship recipient and Principal Keyboard for one of the most prestigious festivals in the world- worked alongside principal players from New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics; Boston, Chicago, St. Louis, Atlanta and Dallas Symphonies; the Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Minnesota Orchestras. Worked closely with soloists of high caliber, including Joshua Bell, Gil Shaham, Lynn Harrell, Sarah Chang, Daniel Hope and Midori, as well as conductors including Robert Spano, Leonard Slatkin, Christian Arming, Hugh Wolff, and Nicholas McGegan.

- **Principal Piano** **2015-present**  
***American Youth Symphony***  
 Principal pianist of one of the premier youth orchestras in the United States.

### ***Notable Performances:***

- *Steve Vai, Original compositions for electric guitar and orchestra*, with Steve Vai, Walt Disney Concert Hall
- *Star Trek: Into Darkness LIVE* (David Newman conducting), Royce Hall, UCLA
- *Back to the Future, Live to Picture!* (David Newman conducting), Royce Hall, UCLA
- *Tan Dun- Heaven, Earth, Mankind*, Walt Disney Concert Hall
- *Lazarof- Poema*, Royce Hall, UCLA

- **Principal Keyboard** **2017-present**  
***American Hollywood Film Symphony***  
 Principal keyboardist for a Los Angeles-based touring film orchestra. Toured extensively in China, performing in halls such as the National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, the Shanghai Oriental Art Center, and the Shenzhen Concert Hall.

- **Conductor** **2018-present**  
***USC Philharmonic Chorus***  
 Leads a choir for international students from China.

- **Principal Piano** **2011-2013**  
***Discovery Ensemble***  
 Principal pianist of an acclaimed chamber orchestra in Boston.

### ***Notable Performances:***

- *Five Images after Sappho, Esa-Pekka Salonen*, Sanders Theatre, Harvard University
- *The Harvest* (2013), directed by John McNoughton, score by George Clinton

- **Pianist** **2018-present**  
*Thornton Edge*  
 Pianist for USC's cutting-edge contemporary ensemble.
- **Principal Piano** **2009-2013**  
*New England Conservatory Orchestras*  
 Principal pianist of all 5 of New England Conservatory's orchestras; performed over 100 concerts. Worked closely with Hugh Wolff, David Loebel and guest conductors including Jeffrey Kahane, Tito Munoz, and Osmo Vanska.
- **Staff Accompanist** **2010-2013**  
*New England Conservatory Preparatory School*  
 Accompanist for the most advanced Prep Choir, NEC Youth Chorale, as well as studio pianist for various instrumental faculty.
- **Pianist** **2011-2013**  
*nec shivaree*  
 Pianist for New England Conservatory's cutting-edge contemporary ensemble. Performed in festivals and symposiums on John Cage, Charles Ives, and Christian Wolff. Directed and rehearsed a student opera, *The Lovliest Afternoon of the Year*.
- **Pianist** **2010-2013**  
*Tuesday Night New Music*  
 Pianist for New England Conservatory's student-run weekly new music concert series. Performed dozens of new works by student composers in all styles, solo and collaboratively, usually on extremely short notice.

## ARTS LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION

- **Vice-President** **2016-present**  
*USC MTNA/California Association of Professional Music Teachers Collegiate Chapter*  
 Vice-president of USC's MTNA chapter. Organizes events such as student recitals, masterclasses and competitions, develops conference proposals, and creates a yearly strategic plan for the chapter.
- **Member Musician** **2014-2015**  
*Kaleidoscope Chamber Orchestra*  
 Member of a conductor-less chamber orchestra in Los Angeles known for its innovative programming and outreach efforts. Helped direct rehearsals, manage performances, and develop a strategic plan. Performed in Los Angeles Union Station, homeless shelters, and in traditional venues.
- **Consultant** **2012-present**  
*Zenkora Studios*  
 Advisor and content creator for an innovative, multi-platform, open source world building project. Worked on developing storylines, character settings, and strategic planning.
- **Member Musician** **2018-present**  
*Super Piano Brothers*  
 Member of a musical collective dedicated to performing two-piano arrangements of film and videogame music.
- **Production Manager** **2013**  
*Siena Music Festival*  
 Production Manager for an international music festival in Italy; coordinated logistics such as performance venues, music and instrument rentals, and government support as well as organized concerts and masterclasses.
- **Summer Production Assistant** **2012**  
*Central Conservatory of Music*  
 Managed operations of several summer programs at China's most prestigious music school.

- **Archivist and Library Assistant** 2010-2013  
*NEC Idabelle Firestone Audiovisual Library*  
Worked with resident archivist to preserve rare and delicate audio and video formats.
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## Presentations

- **Music Teacher's National Association, Collegiate Piano Pedagogy Symposium** 2017  
*Demystifying 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pedagogical Repertoire for Piano* (collaborative)
- **California Association of Professional Music Teachers State Conference** 2017  
*Demystifying 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Pedagogical Repertoire for Piano* (poster presentation, collaborative)
- **Lecture-Recital, University of Southern California/Pasadena Conservatory of Music** 2018  
*Performance Practice in Minimalist Music for Piano*

## Publications

- **CAPMT Connect** Fall 2017  
*MTNA Collegiate Chapters Piano Pedagogy Symposium: A Report*  
<http://www.capmt.org/capmt-connect-fall-2017.pdf>

## Grants and Fellowships

- Semi-finalist, Fulbright Fellowship Program, 2018
- USC Graduate Teaching Assistant Fellowship, 2015-present
- Aspen Music Festival Collaborative Fellowship, 2014, 2015
- Dean's Scholarship, University of Southern California, 2013-2015
- Merit Scholarship, New England Conservatory, 2009-2013

## Awards and Honors

- Member, Pi Kappa Lambda
- Tourjée Alumni Scholarship, New England Conservatory
- USC Thornton Distinguished Graduate Award
- Kennedy Center Debut, 2008
- Featured soloist:
  - Minnesota Orchestra (2006)
  - Milwaukee Symphony (2006)
  - Sioux City Symphony (2007)
  - Chopin Festival, NEC
  - Liszt Festival, NEC
  - John Cage Festival, NEC
- Competitions:
  - Finalist, NEC and USC Concerto Competitions (2011, 2016)
  - Finalist, PianoArts Competition (2008)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> prize, Schubert Club Competition (2006)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, Lee International Competition (2006)
  - 1<sup>st</sup> prize, Morningside Young Artist Competition (2006)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> prize, Blount Slawson Competition (2005)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, Minnesota Debut Competition (2005)

## **References**

- **Dr. Stewart Gordon**, *Professor of Piano*  
University of Southern California
- **Dr. Larry Livingston**, *Professor of Conducting*  
University of Southern California
- **Dr. Stephen Pierce**, *Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy*  
University of Southern California
- **Dr. Stephen Cook**, *Piano Department Chair*  
Pasadena Conservatory of Music
- **Dr. Lucinda Carver**, *Professor of Piano*  
University of Southern California
- **Yuga Cohler**, *Music Director*  
Young Musician's Foundation
- **Rita Sloan**, *Professor of Collaborative Piano*  
University of Maryland, Aspen Music Festival
- **Randall Hodgkinson**, *Professor of Piano*  
New England Conservatory