

Peter Johnston  
Curriculum vitae

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Country of citizenship: Canada

**EDUCATION**

- 2010            Ph.D., Ethnomusicology, York University  
                  Dissertation Title: "Fields of Production and Streams of Consciousness:  
                  Negotiating the Musical and Social Practices of Improvised Music"
- 2006-2007     Associate Graduate, Goldsmiths College, University of London
- 2005            MA, Music Composition, York University
- 2000            BMus, Concentration in Composition, Dalhousie University

**Summer Programs**

- 2008            The Summer Institute For Critical Studies in Improvisation, University of  
                  Guelph
- 2000            The Banff Centre International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music

**PUBLICATIONS**

**Refereed Journals**

- 2014            Johnston, Peter. "Labour, Creativity, and the Politics of Profit in the  
                  Improvised Music Field." *Critical Studies in Improvisation* 9, no. 1 (2014)
- 2013            Johnston, Peter. "Teaching Improvisation and the Pedagogical History of  
                  the Jimmy Giuffre 3." *International Journal of Music Education* 31, no. 4  
                  (2013): 383-393

### Self-published Manuscript

2006 "Contemporary Compositions for Beginning Jazz Ensemble: A Progressive Method To Teaching Jazz Improvisation and Ensemble Performance Practices."

### Podcast

2018-2021 Writer, producer, and host of *Northern Static: Conversations with Canadian Composers*, a 16-episode series that features interviews with composers

### AWARDS AND HONOURS

2006 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: Canada Graduate Scholarship Doctoral Scholarship

London Goodenough Association Of Canada Scholarship

2005 York University Entrance Scholarship (Ph.D.)

2003 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada: Canada Graduate Scholarship Program Master's Scholarship

York University Entrance Scholarship (MA)

2000 Dalhousie University Medal, awarded for highest grade point average in a graduating class

1999 Juno Award for "Best New Group" as a member of the Johnny Favourite Swing Orchestra

1998 East Coast Music Award for "Best Jazz Album" as a member of the Johnny Favourite Swing Orchestra

### GRANTS

2022 Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Grant to record the album *The Songs Which Are with Stranger Still*

Ontario Arts Council Music Creation Grant to compose music for *Stranger Still*

Ontario Arts Council Grants to Presenter/Producers to rehearse new compositions for *the Stranger Still*

- 2021 Toronto Arts Council Music Creation and Audio Recording Grant to record the album *The Songs Which Are* with Stranger Still
- 2020 Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Grant to record an album of arrangements of songs collected by folklorist Helen Creighton with Scottish musician Alasdair Roberts
- Canada Council for the Arts Arts Across Canada grant to tour Eastern Canada with Stranger Still
- Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Grant to record an album of original compositions with the group See Through 4
- Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Grant to write a suite of new music for the band Aurochs
- 2019 Canada Council for the Arts Explore and Create Grant to record an album of original compositions with the group Stranger Still
- Toronto Arts Council Music Creation and Audio Recording Grant to record the album *False Ghosts, Minor Fears* with See Through 4
- Ontario Arts Council Music Creation Grant to compose music for See Through 4
- Ontario Arts Council Grants to Presenter/Producers to rehearse new compositions for See Through 4
- 2016 Canada Council for the Arts Grants to Professional Musicians - Individuals to study electro-acoustic composing techniques in Northern Europe
- 2015 Canada Council for the Arts Special Projects Grant to present the fourth Somewhere There Creative Music Festival in 2016
- Ontario Arts Council Popular Music Grant to produce a CD of original compositions for See Through 5
- Ontario Arts Council Grants to Presenter/Producers to present the fourth Somewhere There Creative Music Festival in 2016
- Ontario Arts Council Grants to Presenter/Producers to rehearse new compositions for the See Through 5
- 2014 Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Arts Fellowship to compose music for solo double bass and electronics

Toronto Arts Council Audio Recording Grant to record a CD of original music with Aurochs

Canada Council for the Arts Grants to Professional Musicians - Individuals to compose new music for See Through Trio

Toronto Arts Council Music Project Grant for presenting the third Somewhere There Creative Music Festival in Toronto

2013 Canada Council for the Arts Production Grant in Music to record a CD of original compositions with See Through Trio

Canada Council for the Arts: New Music Project Funding for presenting the second Somewhere There Creative Music Festival in Toronto

2012 Canada Council for the Arts: New Music Project Funding for developing and presenting the first Somewhere There Creative Music Festival in Toronto

2010 Ontario Arts Council Chalmers Professional Development Grant Awarded to study double bass with Barre Phillips and Gary Peacock

Canada Council for the Arts: New Music Project Funding for presenting Music(in)Galleries, a curated event in which musicians perform in a series of art galleries in downtown Toronto

## INVITED TALKS

2020 "Alden Nowlan: Poety and Song", delivered at King's College as part of the Angus Johnston Memorial Lecture Series (12 March)

2016 "Radiohead's *In Rainbows*: The Work of Music in the Era of Digital Reproduction," lecture delivered at Ryerson University as part of the Sounds of the Times Lecture Series (7 November)

2011 "Such Sweet Thunder: The Art and Craft of Duke Ellington," lecture-recital delivered at The University of Toronto Scarborough, as part of the World Rhythms Performance Lecture Series (9 February)

2010 "After the Avant-garde: Free Improvisation in London, England and the Emergence of a Modernist Work Ethic," lecture presentation at the Ryerson University Music Series: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (22 February)

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND PERFORMANCES

- 2014 "Contemporary Approaches to Composing For Improvisers," paper delivered at the Canadian University Music Society Annual Conference, Brock University
- 2012 "Teaching Improvisation and the Pedagogical History of the Jimmy Giuffre 3," paper delivered at the Guelph Jazz Festival And Colloquium, University of Guelph
- "Improvising Identity: Jazz, Experimental Music, and the Politics of Musical Migration," paper delivered at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music Canada Conference, Acadia University
- "The Improvisation of Everyday Music," paper delivered at the Society of Ethnomusicology Niagara Chapter conference, University of Toronto, as part of the SEM Improvisation Special Interest Group
- 2011 "Labour, Creativity, and the Politics of Profit in the Improvised Music Field," paper delivered at the Improvisation, Community, and Social Practice symposium, "Making the Changes: Ethics and the Improvising Business," University of Guelph
- "Sounding the System: Improvisation, Creativity, and Contemporary Music Pedagogy," paper delivered at the Canadian University Music Society Annual Conference, Mount Allison University
- 2009 "Calling All Outlaws: Improvising Musicians and the Problems with Social Justice," paper delivered at the Improvisation, Community, And Social Practice Conference, McGill University
- "From Mainstream to Downstream: Jimmy Giuffre and the Deconstruction of the Jazz Art World," paper delivered at the International Association for the Study of Popular Music Canada Conference, Dalhousie University
- 2008 "Getting The Music Off The Page: Practice-based Research and the Construction of the Practitioner-Theorist," paper delivered at the Guelph Jazz Festival And Colloquium, University of Guelph
- "From The Inside Looking Out: Practice-based Research and the Study of Improvisation," paper delivered at the Improvisation, Community, And Social Practice Conference, McGill University
- "Producing the Process: Issues In Composing For Free Improvisers," lecture-recital delivered at the Canadian University Music Society Annual Conference, University of British Columbia

- 2007 “Searching For Uncommon Ground: Eddie Prévost’s Improvisation Workshop and the Construction of Collective Identity,” paper delivered at the Guelph Jazz Festival And Colloquium, University of Guelph
- “Dancing About Architecture: An Investigation Into the Practice of Writing About Improvisation,” paper delivered at the Leeds International Jazz Conference, Leeds College of Music
- 2006 “What’s Left Is Faking It: Collective Improvisation and the Creative Process of the Jimmy Giuffre 3,” paper delivered at the Guelph Jazz Festival And Colloquium, University of Guelph
- “*Eleven Pieces for Improvising Trio*,” mini concert at the Canadian University Music Society Annual Conference, York University
- “The Life Of A Trio: Jimmy Giuffre, Paul Bley, and Steve Swallow,” paper delivered at the York University Graduate Student Annual Colloquium
- “Selections From *Eleven Pieces for Improvising Trio*,” lecture-recital delivered at the University of Toronto Music Graduate Students Association Conference
- 2004 “Jimmy Giuffre: Unsung Avant-garde Jazz Composer and Improviser,” paper delivered at the Association For Recorded Sound Collections (ARSC) Annual Conference in Austin, Texas

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

### University of Toronto

Sessional Lecturer, 2021

Jazz History I and II (FW2021/22)

### Humber College

Sessional Lecturer, 2014-2021

Critical Perspectives in Contemporary Music I and II (2014-2021)

Music in Contemporary Society (F2014, W2016, W2017, W2018, W2019, W2020, S2020, F2020, W2021, S2021)

History of Canadian Music (W2015)

Music in World Cultures (F2015, F2016, F2017, F2018, F2019, F2020, W2021)

Special Ensemble - The Livetronica Ensemble (2017-18)

## **Ryerson University**

Sessional Lecturer, 2014-2021

Gospel Music: Songs of the Spirit (W2014)

Music Cultures of the City (F2014)

History of Popular Music (W2015, F2015, W2016, F2016, W2017, F2017, W2018, F2018, W2019, F 2019, W2020, F2020, W2021, F2021, W2022)

Social Issues in Popular Music (F2016, F2017, F2018, S2019, F2019, S2020, F2020, S2021, F2021)

Music of World Cultures (W2017, W2018, W2019, W2020, W2021, W2022)

Global Popular Music (F2020, F2021)

## **Freelance Teaching Experience**

2010-2014     Conductor of the Toronto All-Star Big Band, a charitable organization composed of high school and university students who must audition for admittance

Bass, theory, and musicianship instructor at Greenwood College School, Canada Music Academy, and Kitchen Music Studio

Private lessons in bass, guitar, theory, and musicianship conducted in my home studio

1999-2008     Acadia University Summer Music Institute, Wolfville, NS  
Private and ensemble lessons, teaching jazz improvisation and general musicianship to high school students

## **RECORDINGS**

### **As a leader**

2021            See Through 4 - *Permanent Moving Parts*, All-Set! Editions

2020            See Through 4 - *False Ghosts, Minor Fears*, All-Set! Editions

See Through 4 - *Bog Standards*, All-Set! Editions

2019            Stranger Still - *Songs of Bread, Wine and Salt: The Poetry of Alden Nowlan*, All-Set! Editions

Aurochs - *Perdidox*, All-Set! Editions

2016            See Through 5 - *Utilities*, All-Set! Editions

See Through 5 - *Margins*, All-Set! Editions

- See Through 2 - *Slow Bend*, All-Set! Editions
- Aurochs - *Another Helpful Medicine*, All-Set! Editions
- 2014 See Through Trio - *Parallel Lights*, Woods and Waters
- Aurochs - *Rational Animals*, Woods and Waters
- 2012 See Through Trio - *Near Northern Static*, Woods and Waters
- 2009 See Through Trio - *Lines and Spaces*, Woods And Waters
- 2007 See Through Trio - *Our Own Devices*, independent
- 2000 Quatrain - *Adamant Shoals*, independent
- 1997 The Art Ensemble Of Halifax - *Exile On The Wayside* and *Subfield Emissions*, independent

**As a side person**

- 2011 Muskox - *Invocation/Transformations*, independent
- AIMToronto Orchestra - *Year of the Boar*, Barnyard Records
- 2009 Muskox - *Five Pieces*, Standard Form
- 2008 Muskox - *Gallantries*, Woods and Waters
- 2006 George Grosman - *Mango*, independent
- 2005 Danny Bakan - "*...and truth is spectacular*," independent, Golden Quill Porcupine Award
- 2004 Paradise Public Radio - *It Seems Like Only Yesterday...*, independent  
 John Wesley Chisholm - *Dear Friends and Gentle Hearts*, Arcadia Entertainment Inc. East Coast Music Award nominee
- 1999 Johnny Favourite Swing Orchestra - *Holiday Romance*, Universal Music.  
 Juno Award winner
- Joel Plaskett - *In Need Of Medical Attention*, No Alternative
- 1997 Johnny Favourite Swing Orchestra - *Life Desire*, Lucky Life Recordings.  
 East Coast Music Award winner



## COMPOSITIONS AND NOTABLE PERFORMANCES

- 2020 Performed with Stranger Still at the inaugural “Angus Johnston Memorial Lecture” at King’s College in Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 2017 Performed with See Through 4 at the Open Waters Festival in Halifax, Nova Scotia
- 2015 Performed with See Through Trio at the Something Else Jazz Festival in Hamilton, Ontario
- 2014 Performed at the Music Gallery in Toronto with Aurochs, opening for legendary jazz bassist Henry Grimes
- 2013 Performed in the premiere of Canadian composer Martin Arnold’s piece *Mill O’Tifty’s Annie* at the Somewhere There Music Festival
- 2012 See Through Trio CD release concert for *Near Northern Static*
- Performed with Muskox at the Guelph Jazz Festival
- Conducted Doc Severinson with the Toronto All-Star Big Band
- 2011 AIM Toronto Orchestra CD release concert with special guest saxophonist Evan Parker
- Performed with Muskox at the JazzEast “Out Like A Lion” festival in Halifax
- 2010 Performed with SISTER at the Pop Montreal Festival
- 2009 Performed with Muskox at The Music Gallery, supporting Charles Spearin’s The Happiness Project
- 2008 Live recording for CBC Radio’s *The Signal*, with Muskox
- Summer tour of British Columbia with See Through Trio
- 2007 Summer tour of Nova Scotia with See Through Trio, culminating with a performance at The Atlantic Jazz Festival, Halifax
- 2006 Performed for Queen Elizabeth II in London, England as part of the Royal Visit to Goodenough College

- 2005 Performance of *Eleven Pieces For Improvising Trio* at The Distillery Jazz Festival
- 2004 Premier of *Spiral Glider*, for chamber ensemble. Performed by the Continuum Ensemble in the Dacary Concert Hall, York University
- 2001 Music for the film *A Fresh Start* by Halifax filmmaker Jason Buxton, which played at the Toronto Film Festival and the Atlantic Film Festival
- 2000 Premier of *String Quartet, Sextet For Strings, and Three Canadian Poems*. Performed by members of Symphony Nova Scotia in the James Dunn Theatre, Dalhousie University
- Music For Jazz Quartet* performed by Quatrain at the Atlantic Jazz Festival, Halifax, Nova Scotia
- Music for *Being Here*, a modern dance work by Toronto choreographer Sally Morgan
- 1999 Performed as a member of the Upstream Orchestra for a series of concerts with Symphony Nova Scotia and Peter Weigold, as part of the Open Waters Music Festival

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2016 Co-owner and operator of All-Set! Editions, a record label dedicated to releasing original, left field music. Website: [www.all-set.bandcamp.com](http://www.all-set.bandcamp.com)
- 2012-2016 Artistic Director of the Somewhere There Creative Music Festival
- 2011-2016 Board member for Somewhere There Creative Music Presentations, an artist-run group dedicated to presenting performances of creative music in Toronto. See [www.somewherethere.org](http://www.somewherethere.org) for details
- 2011-2014 File Co-ordinator at Art Books, a tax office for self employed artists
- 2003-2005 Graduate Research Assistant, York University  
Archiving audio for the Pop Music Archives and Music Gallery Collection
- 2002-2003 Assistant Musical Director and bassist, Ship's Company Theatre, Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, Canada
- 1996-1999 Musical Director and bassist, Johnny Favourite Swing Orchestra
- 1995-Present Self employed bassist, composer, bandleader, and educator

## REFERENCES

Dr. Robert Simms  
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Department of Music  
Faculty of Fine Arts  
York University  
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