



Jack Hughes

Music Theory Faculty, Conservatory

Cleveland-based composer and music theorist Jack Hughes was born in Reston, Virginia, and his interest in composing was sparked by his public-school music program. He wrote his first real composition, a fugue for string quartet, after being inspired by a transcription of a Bach fugue he performed as a trumpet player in his middle school band. It won first place in a contest for young student composers sponsored by the Webster University Community Music School in St. Louis, and for the first time, at age 13, Hughes got to hear his own work performed and recorded by professional musicians. During high school, he twice attended the summer Young Composers Program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he was coached in composition and theory by CIM graduates and had additional pieces professionally performed and recorded.

Several years after those pivotal experiences, Hughes earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he was a double major in theory and composition and studied in the studio of Keith Fitch. He earned his PhD in 2020 at the University of Chicago, where he studied with composers Augusta Read Thomas and Shulamit Ran and theorist Lawrence Zbikowski.

Hughes served as composer fellow for the Canton Symphony Orchestra in 2014 and San Francisco's Volti choral ensemble in 2017. In 2018, he won the music theory prize for the well-known Nadia Boulanger curriculum at the summer music program in Fontainebleau, France. In 2019, he was awarded an Underwood Commission from the American Composers Orchestra, which is scheduled to premiere his new work at Carnegie Hall in 2022. The American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2020 awarded him its Charles Ives Scholarship and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival selected him for its 2021 String Quartet Project and Commission. Hughes joined the music theory faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music in fall 2021. In addition to his performance background on trumpet, Hughes also plays piano, viola and traditional Irish fiddle.