

Discovering the Diverse Skills of John Mehrmann: Composer, Performing Musician, and Educator

John Mehrmann '07

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John Mehrmann is a composer, pianist, organist, choir director, percussionist and teacher who resides in Maine with his wife, Abigail, and two sons. His musical talents encompass many genres and styles, from directing the a cappella choral ensemble *VoXX: Voice of Twenty* to composing soundtracks for feature films.

Mehrmann grew up with his family in New Hampshire, and his love for music began at a young age. His first instrument was the

piano, followed by drumming lessons, which later became his primary instrument during his undergraduate studies at the University of New Hampshire. Mehrmann earned his bachelor's degree in music performance in 2007 before pursuing a master's degree in music composition from the New England Conservatory, which he earned in 2010.

During his time at UNH, Mehrmann played local gigs, instructed classmates, and honed his percussion skills under the tutelage of Professor Nancy Smith. Professors Les Harris Jr., Chris Kies and Rob Haskins additionally helped Mehrmann expand his drum, piano, composition, and music history skills respectively. Mehrmann's musical direction further developed during his time in graduate school. Enrolling in a Renaissance counterpoint course proved instrumental in his introduction and subsequent fascination with Renaissance choral music. The discovery of this entirely new sound led Mehrmann to direct *VoXX: Voice of Twenty*, which specializes in classical music from different eras. Mehrmann has been actively directing *VoXX*, and his creative abilities can be found in the plethora of choral pieces he's composed for the ensemble.

Mehrmann's passion for music education dates to his high school years, when he commenced instructing middle schoolers on the drums. This growing interest eventually led him to pursue a career in the field, where he continues to share his knowledge and expertise with students of all ages. He has held positions as a professor at the University of Maine at Augusta and the Bay Chamber Music School in Rockport as well as instructing music theory at Colby College. Mehrmann recently held the position of music director at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Auburn, and now serves as the choir director, organist, and pianist at St. Patrick's Church in Newcastle, Maine. Alongside these roles, he is a member of the Bangor Symphony percussion section. He has also lent his talents to numerous other groups, such as the

Portland Symphony, Portland Ballet, Opera Maine and Maine State Ballet.

Mehrmann has composed and contributed to numerous short and feature films throughout his career. One of his most notable works includes the score for the 2020 horror film, *Honeydew*. The soundtrack creates a sense of delirium and unease as it accompanies the story of a young couple forced to seek shelter in the home of an aging farmer and her peculiar son. Mehrmann adeptly integrated a wide range of genres and styles into the film, including subdued chanting and clanging reminiscent of cowbells, as well as utilizing ordinary household objects and employing techniques that alter his vocal delivery to create a disquieting auditory ambiance. Moreover, the music effectively utilizes low drones and ominous percussion, contributing to the film's atmosphere of suspense and fear. Employing the equipment available at home, Mehrmann wrote and produced the score in his living room while living in Belmont, Massachusetts. Notably, most of the audio content was recorded using a single microphone. Critics have described the soundtrack as “unnerving” (*The New York Times*), “truly disturbing” (*The Guardian*) and “one of the best film scores of the year,” (*Movies in Focus*), further emphasizing the ability of John's score to contribute significantly to the experience of the film.

Mehrmann has worked on many other feature and short films, including *Otherside* (2022), *No Man's Land* (2022), and *Loud Places* (2017). His work has been showcased at several esteemed festivals, such as the Tribeca Film Festival, the Palm Springs International Film Festival and the Rome Film Fest. Director Kristen Buckels and Mehrmann are currently working on a new feature film that builds upon the short film *No Man's Land*, which premiered last year. Concurrently, Mehrmann is composing the score for a forthcoming Christmas-themed drama.

Mehrmann is also known for his work as the composer of “Transportation Through Time,” a children’s music program for the Portland Symphony’s percussion *Kinderkonzerts*. The piece, which tells the story of three percussionists traveling through time, has been well-received by audiences throughout the state for the past 10 years. In addition to this, Mehrmann has also created other notable compositions such as *Magnificat* (2018), *In the Beginning* (2018) and *Ascension Anthem* (2016) which was specially crafted for the Bangor Symphony Orchestra.

As a composer, percussionist, pianist, organist choir director and instructor, Mehrmann is a diverse and skilled individual who has richly explored music in its various forms. He has composed, taught and performed music for various audiences and purposes, from conducting a classical vocal group to providing cinema soundtracks. His exceptional career trajectory underscores the potential of music to enrich one’s personal life and serve as a means for achieving professional fulfillment.

For further information on Mehrmann’s present and forthcoming endeavors, visit his [official website](#).

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