

## MEMBER FOCUS: Mark Haney

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Named one of the Globe and Mail's "Canadian Arts Heroes of 2020" for his work during the pandemic as Artistic Director of Vancouver's Little Chamber Music, Mark Haney is deeply motivated by issues of identity, culture, and community. As Artistic Director for Little Chamber Music from 2012-2024, Mark created many community based works that created community through artistic expression and collaboration.

Mark and his work were the subjects of John Bolton's acclaimed 2016 docu-drama *Aim for the Roses*, named after Mark's 2010 album. In June 2022 *Omnis Temporalis*, a musical reconstruction of the acclaimed cartoonist Seth's award-winning graphic novel *George Sprott*, was released by Montreal's *Drawn and Quarterly* Publishers in a deluxe vinyl edition featuring elaborate packaging and design by Seth. Mark is the Manager of Arts and Culture for the City of Mission.

An accomplished double bassist, Mark has performed across North America in a wide array of genres and recently toured to Taiwan and South Korea with the Vancouver Inter-Cultural Orchestra.

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### How did you get your start in music?

*“On the first day of the 9th grade (back in 1988) I went to the high school band room and told the teacher, Ms. Hamilton that I'd like to play guitar. I had done some guitar lessons as a kid, and even though it never connected with me, school band sounded good. Ms. Hamilton told me they had a guitar player, but I could play bass. Until this moment I had never heard the word bass used in reference to a musical instrument, but it looked enough like a guitar that I went for it. I like it fine, and practiced a lot, and then on the first day of grade 10 Ms. Hamilton told me it was time to play a real bass, and took me to the store room that housed an old, battered plywood bass and my lie was never the same.”*

### What advice would you give emerging composers about entering the professional music world?

*“Remember that the composer should be a collaborator with the musicians, and if you can't play or sing a complex rhythm you probably shouldn't be writing it.”*

### Can you discuss the composition process for Placentia Bay: Summer of 1941?

*“This project represents the closing of what I think of as my “storytelling trilogy”. The three albums I've made, Aim for the Roses, Omnis Temporalis and Placentia Bay: Summer of 1941 chart a course of my artistic exploration: Aim for the Roses is a literal narrative, telling the story of Ken Carter in a linear fashion, Omnis Temporalis deconstructs and remixes Seth's fractured narrative about fictional TV host George Sprott telling the story as a non-linear pastiche, and Placentia Bay is a complete abstraction of a real life event, with no direct narrative or speaking.*

*To create the structure and themes for this project I travelled to Placentia, NFLD in the summer of 2018. I took the ferry overnight from Sydney, NS, to have the feeling of arriving by water, and rented a room above a cafe, overlooking the water. I knew I was writing this piece for Meaghan Williams, a friend and exceptional musician, who grew up in NFLD. Her father delivered her student bass to the cafe I was staying at so I could write on her bass as I created the work.*

*I spent 5 days in Placentia, walking, feeling the land and water, visiting the small museum and asking a lot of questions about the history of the Atlantic Charter Conference. I'd spend much of the day above the cafe, playing with ideas and slowly creating the themes and structure that would become the piece. The shore of Placentia Bay at dawn, the mist on the water, the heat of the August sun, the rusting American guns and bunkers, they are all in the work.”*

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### Can you elaborate on the narrative behind Placentia Bay and how it influences the compositional choices?

*"I can, but generally won't. The basis for the piece, the Atlantic Charter Conference, was a top secret mission, and this piece is loaded with secrets. For example, the opening timpani motif is based on the Morse Code for Rivera, the code name for the conference. The main theme from the 2nd movement is a musicalization of a secret known only to Meaghan, and the third movement has a section that is deeply personal that nobody except me will ever know the significance of.*

*It also includes references and/or nods to The Wall, Wallace Leung, Pet Shop Boys, Samuel Barber (the title of the work is a direct reference to Barber), Aaron Copland, Sofia Gubaidulina, DEVO, Werner Herzog, and Laibach (a German industrial band I've loved for over 30 years).*

*I kept telling Meaghan that rather than thinking of a narrative, this piece is a series of Japanese watercolours, where there is a subtle image with black ink characters over top. The double bass is the black ink, telling fragments of a legend, mixing the real with the ephemeral, telling the same lore in different ways as memory distorts and refines."*

### If you were not a musician, what would you want to pursue?

*"Well, the funny thing is I'm exploring this right now. The City of Mission created a Manager of Arts and Culture position 2 years ago, which they gave to me. This has provided the opportunity to begin building a culture department from the ground up, and to root it in the ideals I pursued with Little Chamber Music: pay all artists properly, remove all barriers from the community engaging with the work, bring creativity to venues and settings outside of the norm."*