

Point Counterpoint (2004)

Ben Phelps

The world premiere of *Point Counterpoint* was on March 4, 2004 in Schoenberg Hall, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California. It was the winner of the Verdehr Trio composition contest for students at UCLA.

Ben Phelps holds Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from UCLA and a Doctor of Musical Arts in music composition from the University of Southern California. Called “feisty” and “impressive” by the *Los Angeles Times*, he lives in Los Angeles where he teaches music theory and composition at Chapman University and at UCLA and works as a percussionist and composer. He is also an urban planning enthusiast.

Phelps is the director of What’s Next?, a leading post-classical new music event and performance collective in Southern California. In 2009, in conjunction with What’s Next?, he founded the Los Angeles Composers Project, the most comprehensive survey of local music from composers of all stages of their careers in Southern California. A more recent project, The B Band, is an eclectic “classical band” created for performance in both clubs and the concert hall.

Phelps has performed and collaborated extensively with many other local chamber music groups including the Definiens Project, the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet, WildUp, and the pioneering multimedia-based theatre company, Rogue Artists Ensemble. His work with the latter has been called “enchanting” by the *LA Weekly* and “sonically brilliant” by the *OC Weekly*. Phelps has also toured the world as an assistant conductor for *Lord of the Rings Live*.

An accomplished percussionist, Phelps performs frequently with orchestras in the Southern California area, and can be heard on locally recorded film and television soundtracks. He has worked with such luminary living composers as Steve Reich, Thomas Adès, Michael Gordon, and John Adams. At a concert honoring Reich on his 70th birthday, Reich called Phelps’ performance of *Nagoya Marimbas* “the best I’ve ever seen—and I don’t say that.” The *Huffington Post* called him “a magician of the marimba.”

Phelps has written music for solo percussion, solo voice, large ensembles, and chamber ensembles which he delineates as “standard” or “eclectic” according to their instrumentation. His compositions have been performed by the Minnesota Orchestra, the Argus String Quartet, pianist Vicki Ray, the bass clarinet duo Sqwonk, and by percussion ensembles across the country including the Los Angeles Percussion Quartet and the Talujon Percussion Group.

Additional information is available at www.benphelpscomposer.com.