



Akshaya Avril Tucker, b.1992, (ASCAP) is a composer, cellist, dancer and choreographer from Ashfield, Massachusetts. Having spent 20 years studying and performing Classical Indian Odissi dance, her work is greatly inspired by the music and dance traditions of South Asia. Her study of North Indian Classical music in Mumbai in 2013 grew into a continuing practice of creating works that involve South Asian and Western musicians. These collaborations, while opening minds, ears and hearts, provide the fuel for fascinating and humbling musical discoveries. Even when writing only for Western-trained performers, Akshaya lays a path toward luminescent, meditative sound worlds that lie somewhere between Indian and Western music.

Her 2018-2019 commissions include works for violinists Johnny Gandelsman (Brooklyn Rider) and Sean Riley, cellist Robert Howard, string quartet *invoke*, and chamber orchestra *Density512*. In 2018, Akshaya received Honorable Mentions at the ASCAP Morton Gould Young Composer Awards and National Sawdust's Hildegard Competition. Akshaya is currently a Composer Fellow at the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music, where she is writing for Duo Cortona. In 2019, she will be a Composer Fellow at MusicaNova Orchestra (AZ) and will attend the Lake Champlain Chamber Music Festival (VT) as a Young Composer. Her music has been performed by Lidiya Yankovskaya and the Refugee Orchestra Project at National Sawdust (Brooklyn), Johnny Gandelsman and Joshua Roman in California, in New York City by *Vent Nouveau* and the New Parnassus Ensemble; at Brown University, Smith College, the University of Massachusetts Amherst; and in Austin, Texas by *Density512*, CLUTCH New Music, UT Austin Ears, Eyes and Feet, and Tetractys.

Akshaya received her M.M. in Composition from the University of Texas at Austin in 2018, and her B.A. in Music from Brown University in 2015. Her teachers have included Yevgeniy Sharlat, Reena Esmail, Gabriela Lena Frank, Donald Grantham, Russell Pinkston, Dan Welcher, Shep Shapiro and Butch Rovin. In 2018, she received a Rainwater Innovation Award from the University of Texas for her collaboration with Hindustani Vocalist Saili Oak on *Three Songs for Hindustani Vocalist, Soprano and Sinfonietta* (2018). In 2015, she was a recipient of the Madeira Award of the Brown Club of Rhode Island, and she received a Brown University Distinguished Senior Thesis Award for her work on *Gyaan Kar Dekh/Perceive with Love* (2015), a work she composed, choreographed, and directed. She also co-directed Brown University's Classical Indian music group, Ragamala, and Fermata/Brown Composer's Collective. At the University of Texas, Akshaya was an member of CLUTCH, a group that organizes concerts of new music by students.

Akshaya is Programs Manager at Shastra, an organization dedicated to connecting the musical traditions of India and the West. In 2016 and 2017, she attended Shastra's intensive summer workshops, "Composing with Indian Voice" with Reena Esmail and Saili Oak, and "Composing with Indian Rhythm" with Payton MacDonald and Shawn Mativetsky. She has presented her cross-cultural work at the 2016 and 2018 Shastra Symposia and the 2018 Composition in Asia Conference at the University of South Florida.

As a cellist, Akshaya has led an eclectic path through North Indian music, new music and early music. From 2005, she studied Cello Performance with Boris Kogan, and at Brown University, she studied with Daniel Harp. In 2012, she won the Brown University Orchestra Concerto Competition, playing Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*. In 2014, she received two grants from Brown University to study Hindustani music on cello in Mumbai with Sandeep Mishra (sarangi). From 2016-2018, she studied Hindustani music on cello with Professor Stephen Slawek, disciple of Pt. Ravi Shankar. In 2018, she premiered Michael Harrison's *Kind of Glass*, with the composer at the piano. She is an active member of the *Density512* new music collective and regularly performs in Austin, TX. She also plays Baroque Cello and Viola da Gamba and has performed with Austin's Early Music Ensemble, Austinato.

Akshaya has performed Odissi dance worldwide with Nataraj Dance Company. Since 1999, she studied with Guru Ranjanaa Devi in Massachusetts, who worked under Gurus Mayadhar Raut and Deb Prasad Das. Akshaya was featured on the Nataraj Japan Tour in 2009 and numerous other shows in Massachusetts. She regularly performs traditional work, while practicing choreography that grows from the sounds of contemporary crossover music. *Enough to Unfold*, her collaboration with dancer/choreographer Namita Devadas and set to her own music, was premiered at National Sawdust (Brooklyn, NY) in June, 2018.