

# Brian O'Neill: versatile percussionist, composer, bandleader

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## Performance Highlights (as percussionist)

- **Kennedy Center:** Klezwoods on Millenium Stage, November 2012.
- **Montréal Jazz Festival:** Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica on main stage (2 shows), June 2012.
- **Boston Opera House:** Kristin Chenoweth, June 2012; *Motown the Musical*, February 2015.
- **World Premiere:** Chris Vennel's "Losing the Shackles" (for percussion ensemble and percussion soloist): Guest artist (soloist) with Northern Arizona University Percussion Ensemble, April 2011.
- **Donna Summer's Crayons Tour:** Gilford, NH and Boston, MA, July 2008.
- **Boston Pops "WGBH Orchestra":** Opening ceremonies of WGBH TV's new studios, 2007.
- **Carnegie Hall, NYC:** Newton Symphony Orchestra, 2002.
- **Concerto competition soloist:** Sun Cities Symphony of the West Valley (Sun City, AZ), 1999.
- **Notable festival appearances:** Arizona Opera "Ring Cycle" Orchestra, B.O.M.B Festival, Boston Jewish Music Festival, Festival de México

## Ensembles: Jazz, world, chamber, eclectic, & pop

- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica - The 22pc Esquivel big band (arranger, artistic director, percussionist, pianist. 2005-present)
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica - Global jazz quartet (composer, artistic director, vibraphonist. 2009-present)
- **CORDIS:** Modern chamber music/post-rock (piano, 2011-present)
- **The Why** (Bert Seager) (jazz quartet) (2012-present)
- **Jeni Jol:** (Balkan-inspired jazz) (percussionist, 2009-present)
- **Klezwoods** (klezmer ensemble) (percussionist, 2009-present)
- **David Wax Museum** (guest drummer & percussionist, 2009-present)
- Previous/occasional performances prior to 2010 with Aljashu (Sephardic music ensemble), Birdsong at Morning (folk), Fa Diyez Ensemble: (Ottoman Classical ensemble), Choros Com Chocolate: (Brazilian choro ensemble), Newpoli (Italian folk), Juanito Pascual (flamenco), Kafana (balkan jazz), La Tuza (Mexican folk), Jazz Factory Orchestra (big band), Orchestra of This (jazz), Gato Malo (rock), WAITIKI (exotica), Archie Bell and the Drells, The Del-Larks, Laura Lee, Peter Erskine and Wallace Roney.

## Ensembles: Orchestral

- South Florida Symphony (2013-present)
- Boston Festival Orchestra (featuring members of the Boston Pops)
- Various Massachusetts orchestras including Mercury Orchestra, Hillyer Festival Orchestra, Merrimack Valley Philharmonic Orchestra, Charles River Sinfonietta Orchestra, Brahms Society Orchestra, Concord Orchestra, New Bedford Symphony, Quincy Symphony, Cape Ann Symphony, Newton Symphony, Longy School of Opera, New England Philharmonic, Longwood Symphony, Wellesley Symphony, Melrose Symphony, Summer MIT Symphony Orchestra
- Various Arizona orchestras including Flagstaff Symphony (principal percussionist), Arizona Opera Ring Cycle Orchestra, Flagstaff Festival of the Arts Orchestra

## Ensembles: Musical Theater (drumset & percussion)

- Boston Opera House (Boston, MA): *Motown the Musical* (Winter 2015) (percussion)
- North Shore Music Theatre (Beverly, MA): *Anything Goes* (Summer 2014) (drums & percussion)
- Prior to 2010, various appearances with: Merrimack Valley Players (Methuen, MA), Arlington Friends of the Drama

"...percussion master and musical polymath..."  
—*Boston Phoenix*

"Brian O'Neill isn't just a great musician, he's also a first-rate composer."  
—*Tony Sachs, Huffington Post*

"...If John Zorn is an exotica Picasso, O'Neill is his Georges-Braque counterpart in cubism's transposition to music...and may be...a stronger exoticist than Zorn..."  
—*Gordon Marshall, AllAboutJazz*

## Press for Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica

2012 Best World Music Act: "...a rigorous classical-jazz hybrid; are you listening Keith Lockhart?..."  
—*Boston Phoenix*

"...deliciously entertaining..."  
—*Wall Street Journal*

2011 Rising Star Big Band: "...incredible musicianship and artistic direction..."  
—*Frank Alyer, DOWNBEAT*

"...incredible precision and passion [at the Montreal Jazz Festival]..."  
—*Jazzlz*

(Arlington, MA), Weston Friendly Society (Weston, MA), Maverick Productions (Boston, MA), Footlight Club (Jamaica Plain, MA), Longwood Players (Boston, MA), and Quannapowitt Players (Reading, MA).

## Discography

- The Why: The Why (Bert Seager) (2015, independent)
- Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica: *Where Here Meets There* (2013, independent), *Third River Rangoon* (2011, independent), *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel* (2010, independent)
- Klezwoods: *The 30th Meridian: From Cairo to St. Petersburg with Love* (2012, independent), *Oy Yea!* (2010, Accurate Records)
- David Wax Museum *Everything Is Saved* (2011, independent)
- *Crazed Mugs Find Forbidden Island* (2011, independent)
- La Tuza: *Son del Otro Lado* (2009, Independent)
- WAITIKI: *Rendezvous in Okonkuluku* (2007, independent), *Charred Mammal Flesh, Exotic Music for BBQ* (2005, independent), *Paradise Lost and Found: Songs of Hawaii Old and New* (2007, Flea Market Music)
- More information on website's Compositions page and Projects page

## About *The Unforgettable Sounds of Esquivel*

"...4 stars...exquisite attention to details"  
—*Sunday Times London*

2 of the Top 10 Albums for 2011  
—*Huffington Post*

Licensed for play in in 7,000 Starbucks  
worldwide

"...the perfect soundtrack for your space-age  
bachelor pad..."  
—*WNYC*

## Notable Film, TV & Radio

- Dream Farm Radio - full episode and performance by Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica (quintet) (2015)
- WNYC New Sounds - feature spot about Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica and other "global Jazz" artists (2013)
- Music supervisor for the PBS film, *Plastic Paradise: A Swingin' Trip Through America's Polynesian Obsession* (2012)
- 2011 and earlier: WUMB; Channel 11 (Mexico City), KHON, WYEP, WBCN, WAAF

## Recent Awards

- 2012 International Artist of the Year nominee (*Boston Music Awards*)
- 2012 Best World Music Act for Mr. Ho's Orchestrotica (*Boston Phoenix* annual readers' poll)
- 2011 Boston Music Award's Song of the Year, David Wax Museum's "Born With a Broken Heart" (recorded percussion)

## Teaching & Masterclasses

- Percussion masterclasses at University of Nevada Las Vegas (2014), University of Massachusetts Lowell (2012, 2014), Frederick Maryland PAS Day of Percussion (2013), WUMB Radio (2011)
- New England Conservatory (substitute teaching): World Rhythms class (2010)
- Somerville High School Drumline (2007, 2008)

## Education and Professional Affiliations

- Member, American Federation of Musicians (Member of local 9-535)
- Member, Percussive Arts Society (PAS)
- Intermittent study with: Raquy Danziger (doubek), Glen Velez (frame drum), Jamey Haddad (frame drum, rhythmic systems), Rusty Scott (jazz theory and comping), Jerry Leake and Jon Singer (tabla).
- 2002: Percussion study in Salvador, Brasil: samba, capoeira, and candomble (2 week live/work study)
- Graduated *Summa Cum Laude* from Northern Arizona University with a Bachelor's of Music in Percussion Performance.
- 11 years of formal piano studies (age 6-17)
- Intermediate fluency: Spanish and Brazilian Portuguese