

Saman Shahi Bio (Long) (500 words)

Saman Shahi is an award-winning and published composer, pianist, conductor and educator based in Toronto. His music has been described as “*Powerful and empowering*” (The Wholenote), and “*Lucid and dramatic*” (Musicworks).

Saman's compositions, including some of his short film scores have been performed all over the globe. Saman's orchestral music has been performed by Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Youth Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra Toronto, and Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra to name a few. Alongside ICOT, he has received commissions from the National Ballet of Canada and Tirgan Festival for Ballet and Opera productions from 2012-2014.

His repertory as a composer includes 4 orchestral works, three operas (two with ICOT), two ballets works (with ICOT), and many works for choral, vocal and chamber forces. As a pianist and conductor, Saman has been an avid performer and advocate of new music in Canada with an ever-growing performing schedule with a variety of ensembles and musicians.

Most notably Saman was the conductor at the opening of Tirgan Nowruz Festival in 2018, where he gave the north American premiere of Grammy Award Nominated Hossein Alizadeh's "Neynava" at George Weston Hall.

He also finished a solo Piano tour around Ontario in 2019 titled "In Search of Polarity" featuring piano music of Iranian composers in Diaspora.

Saman holds a masters degree in composition from the University of Toronto, is an affiliate Member of the Canadian League of Composers, Associate Composer at the Canadian Music Centre as well as a SOCAN member. He is also one of co-founders and the Executive Director at ICOT, since 2011. He also serves as a board member at the Alliance for Canadian New Music Projects and Musicworks magazine.

In 2019, Saman was appointed as the new Music Director at the Peterborough Concert band, one of Canada's oldest and most committed community music groups. He also works as a composer and lead artist with the Canadian Opera Company as part of their after school opera program, where he and his co-facilitators teach young kids about opera, and create small operatic productions collaboratively. Saman has been an active member of the Circle music band, a rock fusion group in Toronto since 2011. The group has an international following, and to date has had 3 albums released with over 2 million views on streaming websites.

In 2020 Saman's debut composition album "Breathing in the Shadows" was recorded and released by Leaf Music. This album contains three of his song cycles. His song cycle "Orbit" in this album won the second prize in Canadian Amateur Musician's Associations' inaugural composition Competition in 2019.

Saman was also named the recipient of the 2020 Riversong Commission award by Whispering River Orchestra. He was also selected as a finalist in Kleidescope Chamber orchestra's international call for scores for his song cycle “Songs of a Wandering Soul” in 2020.

Saman regularly serves as a judge at the Juno Awards, East Coast music awards, FACTOR and other federal and provincial grating bodies.