

For nearly three decades, composer and pianist Jack Perla has been creating new musical works for stage and recording, using a palette that includes symphonic, operatic, choral and chamber music, as well as multiple jazz idioms. He was recently commissioned by the Houston Grand Opera (HGO) to create a one-act opera with San Francisco playwright Eugenie Chan, for the multi-year "Song of Houston" project, funded by the Mellon foundation. "Song of Houston" is an ongoing series of new works that share the stories of Houstonians who define the unique character of that city. The new work, **Courtside**, is scheduled for premiere in 2011, and is a part of the East West component of "Song of Houston", which celebrates the city as a meeting place for Eastern and Western cultures, and explores the stories of first- and second-generation immigrants. Jack is also currently developing his first full-length chamber opera, **Love/Hate**, with writer Rob Bailis, co-commissioned by ODC Theater (San Francisco), Urban Arias (Arlington) and American Opera Projects (New York). In September 2010, Center City Opera presented scenes from Love/Hate as part of the Philadelphia Fringe Festival of the Arts. In March 2009, **Love/Hate** was presented in early development by the Manhattan School of Music (MSM) Opera Program, at both MSM and at the Galapagos Artspace (Brooklyn, New York). The complete work is scheduled for its premiere run in 2012, with performances in New York (American Opera Projects), Arlington (Urban Arias), Philadelphia (Center City Opera Theater), San Francisco (ODC Theater) and Houston (Houston Grand Opera, HGOco).

Another project in development is **Pretty Boy**, an electro-acoustic piece commissioned by the Paul Drescher Ensemble, with original text by Canadian playwright and poet David Brock. The work is a song cycle based on the final capture and last moments in the life of American bank robber and folk hero Pretty Boy Floyd, and will feature tenor Thomas Glenn.

Jack is at work on two new – and distinctly different – recordings, due out in 2011 and 2012: one with jazz baritone Percy Howard for the English label Voiceprint; and an all vocal disc produced by Grammy Award-winner Judith Sherman and engineered by Grammy Award-winner Leslie Ann Jones, featuring Marnie Breckenridge, Thomas Glenn (Doctor Atomic, San Francisco Opera, The Metropolitan Opera), Melody Moore (English National Opera), and other beloved American opera singers.

Recent performances include an all Jack Perla vocal program for the Noe Valley Chamber Music Series (May 2010) in San Francisco, and a featured performer/composer appearance on the bill of the White Pines Festival in Minnesota (June 2010) with renowned violinist Jorja Fleezanis, trumpet virtuoso Charles Lazarus (The Minnesota Orchestra) and the Miro Quartet.

On a Train Heading South, Jack's innovative score for his collaboration with choreographer Brenda Way and visual designer Alex V. Nichols, commissioned by ODC Dance (San Francisco), toured the U.S. in 2005 - 2006 to extensive critical praise, culminating in performances at the Joyce Theater in New York City. Jack was Artist-in-Residence at ODC Theater from 2006 to 2009, in a program supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Walter and Elise Haas Fund and the San Francisco Foundation. He participated in American Opera Projects' "Composers and the Voice" program from the fall of 2007 to 2008, and Tapestry New Opera's (Toronto) "LibLab" program during the summer of 2008.

The James Irvine Foundation commissioned Jack in 2002 to compose **Pixels at an Exhibition**, premiered in 2003 by Patrick Summers conducting the Oakland East Bay Symphony, which also commissioned '**Trane of Thought** in 1999, noted in the press for its "high-energy impact" and for Jack's "superb jazz performance". He has received awards, grants and fellowships from the American Composers Forum (NCCCP, 2008), the Argosy Foundation Contemporary Music Fund (2006), the American Music Center

(CAP 2005), Meet the Composer (2003), the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (1990), Yaddo (1985), the MacDowell Colony (1995) and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (1990). Jack's music has been performed and/or presented by the Louisiana and Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestras, Oakland East Bay Symphony, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Absolute Ensemble (New York City), New Music Chicago, Music at the Anthology (New York), Yerba Buena Arts Center (San Francisco), Merkin Concert Hall (New York) and the British Music Information Center (London).

In 1997 Jack received the Thelonious Monk Institute's Jazz Composers Award, designated by Terrance Blanchard, Pat Metheny and Michael Brecker. Subsequently Jack performed at the Texaco New York Jazz Festival, The Knitting Factory (NY), the Tampere Jazz Festival (Finland), the Big Sur, Monterey and Pacifica Jazz Festivals, throughout California, and at the Millennium Festival (England). He has performed with Seamus Blake, Rodney Whitaker, Gene Jackson, Kenny Davis, Kermit Driscoll, Craig Handy, Scott Wendholt, Steve Smith, Kai Eckhardt, Paul Hanson and many others. In 1998, he toured Japan and was featured on the Tokyo television program LP Jazz Time. Jack's debut CD, "Swimming Lessons for the Dead", features Roman Candles, the piece that won the award. Swimming Lessons received prominent coverage and garnered wide critical praise in the U.S. and European jazz press, including Downbeat Magazine and Jazz Times.

Jack's second Jazz CD, "The Visit", features Will Kennedy (The Yellowjackets), Zakir Hussain (Shakti, John McLaughlin), Paul McCandless (Oregon, Bela Fleck), Karl Perazzo (Santana), Darol Anger (Turtle Island String Quartet), Mike Marshall, Alex Ligertwood (Santana). Metro Santa Cruz said about the disc: "The Visit brings together a stellar and eclectic collection of the Bay area's finest jazzers for far-ranging aural expeditions - from Oregon-like world fusion jazz with reed player Paul McCandless to taut cosmopolitan funk with violinist Darol Anger and tabla master Zakir Hussain. Jack Perla's genius is composition. With broad swaths of color detailed by many fine strokes, he crafts pieces of glittering beauty, melodies that sneak into a listener's consciousness and deeply insinuate themselves with each iteration or variation."

Jack has also performed and recorded with several of India's most prominent musicians, including Zakir Hussain, Aashish Khan, Krishna Bhatt and Ronu Majumdar. He is featured on "Night Spinner", George Brook's 1998 recording produced by tabla master Zakir Hussain, with Hussain, Sultan Khan (Sarangi) and Aashish Khan (Sarod). From 1987-91 Jack led the group Music Without Walls, which featured Marty Ehrlich, Mark Feldman, Eric Friedlander, Pheeroan Aklafl and John Goldsby. The group performed extensively in the New York area.

Jack Perla earned his DMA in composition in 1999 from the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Jacob Druckman, Martin Bresnick and Lukas Foss, and earned his BM from the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with John Corigliano and Ludmila Ulehla. He joined the Music Department faculty of Santa Clara University in the fall of 2007, where he teaches Composition, Jazz Piano, and courses in Orchestration, Music Technology and Jazz History.