

Neil B. Rolnick

<http://www.neilrolnick.com>

Since he moved to New York City in 2002, Neil Rolnick's music has been receiving increasingly wide recognition and numerous performances both in the US and abroad. A pioneer in the use of computers in performance, beginning in the late 1970s, Rolnick has often included unexpected and unusual combinations of materials and media in his music. He has performed his music around the world, exploring forms as diverse as digital sampling, interactive multimedia, and traditional musical theater. Throughout the 1980s and '90s he was also responsible for the development of the first integrated electronic arts graduate and undergraduate programs in the US, at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute's iEAR Studios, in Troy, NY. Rolnick's innovation as an educator has been to bring together the commonality of artistic creation across many disciplines, and this has led to his varied work with filmmakers, writers, and video and media artists.

Though much of Rolnick's work has been in areas which connect music and technology, and therefore considered in the realm of "experimental" music, his music has always been highly melodic and accessible. Whether working with electronic sounds, improvisation, or multimedia, his music has been characterized by critics as "sophisticated," "hummable and engaging," and as having "good senses of showmanship and humor."

Commissions under way in 2008 include: *The Economic Engine* for the Chinese Central Conservatory of Music, to be premiered in Beijing in 2008; *Extended Family* for the string quartet Ethel, and *Faith* for pianist Bob Gluck with interactive computer.

Works completed in 2007 include *Hammer & Hair* for violinist Todd Reynolds and pianist Kathleen Supové; *Love Songs* for the Albany Symphony, with soloists Theo Bleckmann and Todd Reynolds; and *The Bridge* for the Albany Symphony's Dogs of Desire ensemble. In 2006 Rolnick completed the *iFiddle Concerto* for the American Composers Orchestra, with soloist Todd Reynolds, which was premiered in Zankel Hall at Carnegie Hall in New York. In 2006 he also wrote *Uptown Jump* for the trio MAYA, and *Segal's Billboard* for harpist Jacqueline Kerrod, and Innova Recordings released his 13th CD, *Digits*, which received enthusiastic reviews in the *New York Times* and in *Time Out New York*. Rolnick appeared in both the 2005 and 2006 *MusicAcoustica* Festivals in Beijing, and at the 2005 *International Conference on Applied and Creative Arts* in Sarawak, Malaysia. Other pieces completed since 2003, all with interactive computer processing, include *The Shadow Quartet*, for Ethel, *Fiddle Faddle*, for Todd Reynolds, *Body Work* for Joan La Barbara, *Ambos Mundos* for the Quintet of the Americas, *Plays Well With Others* for the Paul Drescher Ensemble, *The Real Thief of Baghdad*, for Tyrone Henderson, *Digits* for Kathleen Supové (with video by R. Luke Dubois), and *Making Light of It* (on texts by Philip Levine).

From 1997-2001 Rolnick worked on *The Rise & Fall of Isabella Rico*, a musical theater work with Larry Beinhart. In 1995-96 Rolnick spent five months in Japan on a fellowship from the Asian Cultural Council. During 1994-95 Neil Rolnick created and premiered *HomeGame*, a full evening length performance work for actors, instruments, interactive video, and computer mediated story generation. In 1994, along with Albany Symphony Orchestra music director David Alan Miller, Rolnick was co-founder of the new "multimedia orchestra of the future," Dogs of Desire.

Mr. Rolnick's music appears on thirteen records and CDs, on the Innova, Deep Listening, Albany, Cuneiform, Bridge, O.O. Discs, Nonesuch, Centaur, CRI and 1750 Arch labels. He has received fellowships and grants from, among others, the Asian Cultural Council, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Fulbright Commission, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, Meet the Composer, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, the University of California, and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Neil Rolnick was born in 1947, in Dallas, Texas. He earned a BA in English literature from Harvard College in 1969. He studied musical composition with Darius Milhaud at the Aspen Music School, with John Adams and Andrew Imbrie at the San Francisco Conservatory, and with Richard Felciano and Olly Wilson at UC Berkeley, where he earned a PhD in musical composition in 1980. He studied computer music at Stanford with John Chowning and James A. Moorer, and worked as a researcher at IRCAM in Paris, France, from 1977 to 1979. He currently is Professor of Music in the Arts Department at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, in Troy, NY, where he was Founding Director of the iEAR Studios.