

Francis Battah - Biography

Montreal-based Quebec composer Francis Battah studied classical and jazz piano before earning a Bachelor's degree in Composition from the Université de Montréal and a Master's degree in Composition from McGill University. He studied with Denys Bouliane, Alan Belkin, Denis Gougeon, and Ana Sokolović.

His catalogue includes works for solo instruments, chamber ensembles, and orchestra. He has received commissions from, among others, the Orchestre métropolitain, Orchestre de l'Agora, Quatuor Bozzini, Quatuor Cobalt, Quasar, the Voix parallèles choir of Vincent-d'Indy, the Bakarleri collective, and pianists Philippe Prud'homme and Michel Raymond.

His music has been performed at events including the Festival Montréal Nouvelles musiques, the aDevantgarde Festival in Munich, the Concours de musique du Canada, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne Composition Forum, the Prix d'Europe, composition residencies of the Orchestre de la Francophonie, the finals of the Graham Sommer Competition, and Festival Soir.

His interests are wide-ranging: the influence of jazz in contemporary music, microtonality, idiomatic piano writing in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century tradition, and the creation of an imaginary folklore emphasizing melody and modality, among others.

In 2025, he was nominated for an Opus Prize as Composer of the Year. A recipient of grants from the Canada Council for the Arts, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, and the Conseil des arts de Montréal, he has won around a dozen competitions, including the Prix collégien de musique contemporaine (2018-2019 and 2022-2023), the Orchestre métropolitain composition competition L'Héritage de Beethoven (2020), the 2021 Grand Prize of the SOCAN Foundation, the 2022 Andrew Svoboda Prize, and the 2023 Pierre-Mantha Scholarship from the Prix d'Europe.

In Europe, he has won five prizes at the Antonin Dvorak International Composition Competition (2019 and 2023), including special prizes for Best Fugue and Best Orchestral Composition. In 2023, he won both first and third prize at the international Free Range competition, organized by the Alvarez Chamber Orchestra and Universal Edition.

Interested in the links between music and literature, Battah has composed melodramas on poems by Pierre Nepveu and Fernand Ouellette, in collaboration with pianist Philippe Prud'homme and actors Dany Boudreault, Béatrice Picard, and Monique Miller. In February

2018, his melodrama for piano, violin, cello, and narrator was presented as part of a touring project of the Conseil des arts de Montréal.

As an independent producer, he has organized numerous concerts. He has also recorded and released several of his works for piano and chamber ensemble. His scores are published by Doberman-Yppan, Nouveau Théâtre musical, and the Canadian Music Centre. Since 2023, he has taught ear training at Cégep de Saint-Laurent.