

Richard Sussman – Full Bio

Richard Sussman is an accomplished jazz pianist, composer, music technologist, and educator. His varied career as a performer has included performances and/or recordings with such diverse artists as **Lionel Hampton, Lee Konitz, Buddy Rich, Houston Person, Randy Brecker, Steve Slagle, Blood Sweat & Tears, David Sanborn, Marty Balin, Country Joe McDonald, Carly Simon, and Donna Summer**. His jazz discography includes five albums of original music as a leader, including the critically acclaimed "**Free Fall**" (Double-Time Records), "**Live At Sweet Rhythm**" (Origin Records), and "**Continuum**" (Origin, 2012), highlighting original compositions by Richard performed by an all-star quintet featuring Tom Harrell or Randy Brecker-trumpet & Flugel Horn, Jerry Bergonzi-tenor sax, Mike Richmond-bass, Jeff Williams-drums, and Richard-piano & synthesizer, with a cameo appearance by guitarist Mike Stern on one tune. "**The Evolution Suite**" for Jazz Quintet, String Quartet, and Electronics, is a live recording funded by a Chamber Music America grant and released on Zoho Records in October, 2016. His most recent recording, "**Synergy – Bobby Kapp Plays the Music of Richard Sussman**", features original compositions for violin, clarinet/bass clarinet, tenor sax, French horn, piano, bass, and drums will be released September 1, 2023. With **Synergy**, Sussman continues his exploration of the integration of contemporary jazz harmonies and improvisation with avant-garde classical compositional techniques and instrumentation.

Richard's large-scale jazz and orchestral compositions have been performed by the **Village Vanguard Orchestra, the Westchester Jazz Orchestra, the Metropole Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music Jazz Orchestra, and the American Composers Orchestra**, to name a few. He was selected to be a participant in the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute, sponsored by the American Composers Orchestra, in August 2012, and was subsequently selected to compose a new composition for orchestra which was premiered by the ACO in June, 2013.

Richard's original composition "**Ivories Tower**", commissioned by ASCAP in honor of jazz legend **Hank Jones**, was premiered by the Chicago Jazz Ensemble under the direction of Jon Faddis in February 2009. The work was subsequently expanded and performed by the Metropole Orchestra (May, 2009) with Hank Jones as the featured soloist. His meeting with Hank Jones led to further arranging work with the maestro, including editing and music preparation for The Hank Jones Songbook of Hank's little known original tunes (2010). This was to be followed by a studio date of the material with arrangements by Sussman, a project that unfortunately never materialized due to Hank's untimely passing in the summer of 2010.

Richard has an ongoing and active commitment to music education. He has been a member of the jazz faculty at the Manhattan School of Music since 1986 where his responsibilities have included private composition lessons, teaching and developing curriculum for jazz arranging classes, as well as managing all aspects of the Electronic Music Technology Studios and related courses for the Jazz Department. Richard's book "**Jazz Composition and Arranging In the Digital Age**", co-authored with Michael Abene (Oxford University Press, 2012), has been hailed as a comprehensive and trend-setting text for jazz composers in the 21st century. Richard Sussman is a skilled and experienced clinician, and is available for master classes and residencies in the areas of jazz composition, arranging, theory, improvisation, and many areas of music technology, including film scoring. He has presented clinics and performances at many national and international conferences including IAJE, The College Music Society, Association for Technology In Music Instruction, The Jazz Education Network (JEN), and NAMM.

Richard also participated as a performer/clinician in the First China Jazz Education Festival in Shanghai in 2012, and has since toured China on a regular basis teaching master classes, private students, coaching ensembles at major conservatories, and performing at top jazz venues in Shanghai, Beijing, Guongzhou, Chengdu, and Hong Kong. For his trip to China in May, 2014, he authored the book "**Jazz Theory and Improvisation**", translated to Mandarin and published by Shanghai Music Publishing House in 2020.

Richard has directed much of his creative energy over the years towards exploring ways of integrating elements of jazz improvisation, contemporary classical compositional techniques, electronics, and contemporary pop music. In 2014 he received a Chamber Music America New Jazz Works Award to create a new composition for jazz quintet, string quartet, and electronics, providing an opportunity to further explore this ongoing interest. The piece was premiered in December, 2016 at Symphony Space in New York City, and is now available as a CD and Digital Download on Zoho Records. He also received the College Music Society Fund Technology Award in 2013 for developing a two-year Masters degree program in Music Technology and Contemporary Media at the Manhattan School of Music. Richard continues to build a presence in the avante-garde, hybrid world of New Music, with recent appearances at the **Tribeca New Music Festival, Composers Concordance Festival, Tania Leon's Composers Now Festival**, and the **Sirius Quartet Progressive Chamber Music Festival** in New York.

Richard has received numerous awards including two **NEA** grants in Jazz Composition, an **ASCAP** Jazz Composition Award in 2008, and the **Chamber Music America** New Jazz Works grant in 2014. His extensive work in the field of film and TV has included scoring hundreds of episodes of children's and adult TV shows for major networks including Nickelodeon, Disney, ABC, NBC, and CBS, as well as many independent films and music for advertising. Richard continues to perform, tour, and compose for various ensembles internationally. **Richard Sussman is a Yamaha Artist.**