



## James McGowan, Composition

James McGowan is an Associate Professor of Music at Carleton University, where he teaches music theory, composition, and musicianship. He is a passionate educator and has won ten teaching awards, including being named Carleton University Chair in Teaching Innovation (2020–23) for his work in developing and supporting experiences in the arts on campus and in the community. He is Managing Director of Carleton Jazz Camp, an instructor in improvisation and piano at the CAMMAC Music Centre, an Instructor of Music at Discovery University (in partnership with the Ottawa Mission), and serves as Chair of the Lotus Centre for Special Music Education in Ottawa. He is a published author of articles on jazz theory and music theory pedagogy.

Dr. McGowan is an award-winning composer (including SOCAN, Glenn Gould Composition Scholarship, John Weinzweig Scholarship, and Canadian University Music Society). He has had commissions by various groups including the Etobicoke School of the Arts choir and orchestra program, Alexander Singers and Players (Toronto), the Atlantic Voices Choir of Ottawa, and Carleton

University Choir. His works have recently been performed (or accepted for performance) by the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra, Rocky Mountain Symphony Orchestra, Coro Vivo, and other ensembles.

As a solo and collaborative pianist—at home in jazz, classical, and improvised musics—he performs regularly throughout Ottawa and beyond. The 15-member James McGowan Ensemble released its jazz-classical fusion album *Reaching In* in 2023 featuring his compositions and poetry, supported in part by a “Concept to Realization” grant from the Canada Council for the Arts. The ensemble is releasing the continuation of the epic work in 2024 with the album *Reaching Out*. “This is an excellent example of a composer thinking beyond one particular musical style and focusing on what needs to happen to convey the story that starts from within. The writing is first-class, as is the playing, and the storytelling so vivid and emotionally connected. It is not often I hear such an affecting work of art that is equally theatrical, classical, and jazz inspired.” Simon Defty, *Simply Jazz Talk* (UK). In recent years, he has released five albums as leader or co-leader, including the critically acclaimed album *4K*, which features his work as composer, pianist, and leader of the quartet Modasaurus.