



COMPOSER

film • concert • radio

# MARK ORTON

[www.markortonmusic.com](http://www.markortonmusic.com)

## BIO pg.1

**Mark Orton** grew up in a musical family. The son of a conductor, he began formal study of both piano and guitar at the age of four. By the beginning of high school he was exploring jazz, classical, and world music, and had begun his studies in both composition and theory with Danny Deutsch. Orton went on to study composition at The Peabody Conservatory with Jean Ivey, and at The Hartt School Of Music with David MacBride and Robert Carl. After college, Orton served as one of the chief engineers at The Knitting Factory in New York City, working with artists ranging from Laurie Anderson and the Kronos Quartet to John Zorn and Sonic Youth. He used this experience to become a touring engineer, traveling in Europe, Asia, and America with, among others, Bill Frisell, John Lurie and The Lounge Lizards, and Mr. Bungle.

In 1995, Orton relocated to San Francisco with the other members of **Tin Hat Trio**, a newly formed composer collective comprised of Orton on guitars, Carla Kihlstedt on violin, and Rob Burger on prepared piano and accordion. The group's quest to create genre-defying music that blurs the line between composition and improvisation has produced five major label releases: 1999's "*Memory Is An Elephant*," 2000's "*Helium*," 2002's "*The Rodeo Eroded*," 2004's "*Book of Silk*," and their latest, 2007's "*The Sad Machinery of Spring*," the first recording to feature the new quintet version of the band. (now simply called **Tin Hat**)

"*Memory*" includes an homage to Enrico Caruso with guest tenor **Mike Patton** of Faith No More/Mr. Bungle fame. "*Helium*" features a collaboration between the trio and **Tom Waits** for the CD's title track, with music by Orton and lyrics co-written with Waits. "*Rodeo*" features Orton's arrangement of the standard "Willow Weep For Me," with **Willie Nelson** as vocalist. Mark arranged each of these tracks for the trio with chamber orchestra, providing a blue print for the larger ensemble projects that the group has since embarked upon.



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## BIO pg.2

Outside of Tin Hat, Orton is active as an award winning film and radio composer, nominated for **Best New Composer** by *The International Film Music Critics Association* in 2006. He continues to compose concert music for a wide range of ensembles from chamber groups to full orchestra. He is a multi-instrumentalist, performing on all manner of guitars, keyboards and percussion. Orton has written and performed scores for films including "**The Good Girl**," directed by Miguel Arteta and starring Jennifer Aniston and Jake Gyllenhaal, "**The Real Dirt on Farmer John**," directed by Taggart Siegel, "**Sweet Land**," directed by Ali Selim and starring Ned Beatty and Alan Cumming, and Tennessee Williams' "**The Loss of a Teardrop Diamond**," starring Bryce Dallas Howard and Ellyn Burstyn. He has also contributed existing music to both television and film including the NBC drama **ER**, 2005's "**Everything is Illuminated**," directed by Liev Schreiber and starring Elijah Wood, and the Oscar nominated "**Mushroom Club**," (best documentary - short subjects 2006) directed by Steven Okazaki. Other film scores include the documentaries "**Beyond Conviction**," "**Comrades in Dreams**," "**Orthodox Stance**," and "**Seneca Falls**."

Orton performs with two of his own groups: **Imaginary Icebergs**, an ensemble of strings and clarinets with Orton on guitar, banjo, and harmonium and **The Steel Trio**, comprised of bass clarinet, drums, and lap steel guitar. He is a member of the Alt-Country outfit **The Old Joe Clarks**, as a guitarist and vocalist. He is busy as an arranger as well, working alongside producer Larry Klein arranging strings for Madeline Peyroux and Vienna Teng among others. He has written extensively for modern dance including top dance companies: **Pilobolus**, **Donald Byrd/Spectrum Dance Theater**, and **Lawrence Goldhuber**. Additionally, he is a founding member of "**Famous Last Words And Music**," an artist collective devoted to the production and live performance of experimental radio theatre. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his wife and son.