Aaron Zigman

Composer

Combining deep classical roots with his background in songwriting and production, Aaron Zigman – who has composed more than 60 Hollywood films, including *The Notebook* (2004), Sex and the City I & II (2008 and 2010), and *A Jazzman’s Blues* (2022) – brings a rare degree of versatility to his classical compositions.

In November 2023, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra and Yu Long premiered Zigman’s 90-minute oratorio, *Émigré.* Set against the backdrop of the Jewish migration to Shanghai during WWII, *Émigré* is co-commissioned with New York Philharmonic, with lyrics by Pulitzer Prize-winner Mark Campbell and additional lyrics by songwriter Brock Walsh. The American premiere took place in February 2024 with New York Philharmonic. Further performances are planned for the 2024/25 season with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and Beijing Music Festival. A full recording of *Émigré* was released on Deutsche Grammophon in January 2024. Recorded during the week of the world premiere in Shanghai, the album features the opening night cast and lead commissioner Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, alongside Lanzhou Concert Hall Choir and members of the New York Philharmonic Chorus conducted by Long Yu. The album was shortlisted for Opus Klassik’s World Premiere Recording of the Year Award.

2019 saw the world premiere of Zigman’s Tango Manos*,* a concerto for piano and orchestra. Written for and performed by Jean-Yves Thibaudet, *Tango Manos* was co-commissioned by the Beijing Music Festival, Radio France and San Francisco Symphony. The world premiere performance was given by China Philharmonic conducted by Huang Yi. *Tango Manos* was premiered in France by Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France conducted by Mikko Frank, and in the USA by San Francisco Symphony under the baton of Fabien Gabel.

Further classical works include Zigman’s Rhapsodyfor cello and piano, performed at The Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center in La Jolla by Alisa Weilerstein and Inon Barnatan, plus big band and chamber orchestra arrangements of *Tango Manos*.

Zigman began training as a classical pianist at age five. At age eighteen he studied orchestration with legendary composer and orchestrator George Bassman. Zigman soon became an in-demand writer, producer, arranger, and orchestrator for artists including Aretha Franklin, Natalie Cole, John Legend, Quincy Jones, Phil Collins, Christina Aguilera, Dionne Warwick, Carly Simon, Ray Charles, Tina Turner, The Four Tops, and Seal. His career as a film composer began in 2000 after director Nick Cassavetes heard his symphonic tone poem Rabin (1994)*,* composed in memory of Yitzhak Rabin, the late Prime Minister of the State of Israel, and performed by Los Angeles Jewish Symphony. Zigman and Cassavetes have since collaborated on six films.

Zigman has received numerous other accolades and awards, including an Emmy in 2005. He lives in California and is currently working on a new TV mini-series based on the story of Helmuth Hübener called *Truth and Convinction.*

[](https://www.instagram.com/aaronzigman/)

[](https://www.facebook.com/AaronZigmanMusic)[](https://open.spotify.com/artist/74M3iphMpn1MA2YUe2Iigb?si=_gDVCXf0RxSABGgflg-VDg)

[**Aaron Zigman’s website**](https://www.aaronzigman.com/?fbclid=IwAR2uvCafXS8kou1B7Fn5Id3WpU3J7PbiM1qDhFU6H61tf3FVtf9DVtO5_Bo)