

THOMAS NICHOLSON  
Curriculum Vitae  
[www.superparticular.com](http://www.superparticular.com)

(Updated: December 2025)

#### SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Thomas Nicholson (b. 1995) is a Berlin-based Canadian composer whose work centres on just intonation. Combining rigorous theoretical and formal research with intuitive, practice-based experimentation, he seeks out points of contact in his music between acoustics, perception, and musical expression.

He studied composition with Christopher Butterfield at the University of Victoria and later with Marc Sabat at the Universität der Künste Berlin. His long-standing collaboration with Sabat has led to a number of artistic and scholarly projects, including in-depth work on tuning theory and music notation. In 2020, they undertook a major revision and expansion of the Helmholtz–Ellis Just Intonation Pitch Notation (HEJI), originally developed by Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz in the early 2000s. The updated system is now widely used across Europe and North America as a standard for notating music in extended just intonation.

Since 2014, his compositions have focused increasingly on the inherently microtonal qualities of just intonation. His work often draws from his interests in mathematics, physics, psychoacoustics, music history, and philosophy, as well as the visual clarity of graphic design. He is particularly drawn to intimate musical contexts, frequently writing for small ensembles of two to four performers, in which finely tuned relationships between tones become especially vivid.

In addition to composing, he develops tools and pedagogical materials to support musicians working with similar practices, addressing the conceptual and practical considerations of performing microtonal music on acoustic music. As a violist, he is a member of Harmonic Space Orchestra.

#### EDUCATION

- 2017–21 Master of Music, Universität der Künste Berlin (with Marc Sabat)
- 2013–17 Bachelor of Music, University of Victoria (with Christopher Butterfield)
- 2009–13 Private studies, St. Thomas University, Fredericton (with Martín Kutnowski)

#### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2023– Piano teacher, Musikschule Erkner and Musikhaus e.V.
- 2022– Freelance music engraver, Berlin
- 2019– Member of Harmonic Space Orchestra (HSO), Berlin
- 2018–21 Teaching assistant, Universität der Künste Berlin
- 2016–17 Assistant music director and organist, Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria
- 2014–17 Teaching assistant, University of Victoria
- 2014– Freelance music teacher, piano and composition
- 2014– Freelance composer

#### AWARDS, GRANTS & STIPENDS

- 2023 Work stipend, Senatsverwaltung für Kultur und Europa, Berlin
- 2020 Travel grant Germany–USA, Canada Council for the Arts, Ottawa
- 2018 DAAD Prize, Universität der Künste Berlin
- 2017 The John Weinzwieg Grand Prize, SOCAN, Toronto
- 2017 Awards for Young Composers, two 1st prizes, SOCAN, Toronto
- 2014–16 Study stipend, New Brunswick Arts Council, Fredericton

## PUBLICATIONS

2021 “A Compact Enharmonically Viable Subset of Harmonic Space: The Stern-Brocot Tree and Some Thoughts About Lattices and Spirals”, co-authored with Marc Sabat, *Živá hudba 11*, Prague

2020 “The Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation”, co-authored with Marc Sabat, *Plainsound*, Berlin

2020 “Farey sequences map playable nodes on a string”, co-authored with Marc Sabat, *Tempo* 74, issue 291, London

2018 “Microtonal Playback in Dorico”, *Scoring Notes*

2018 “Fundamental Principles of Just Intonation and Microtonal Composition”, co-authored with Marc Sabat, *Plainsound*, Berlin

## SOFTWARE

2018 Plainsound Harmonic Space Calculator (web app), *Plainsound*, Berlin

## RESIDENCIES, LECTURES & WORKSHOPS

2025 *Elsie Hamilton in 26 Letters*, with Rebecca Lane, MIKRO/TONAL, Kiel

2025 Just intonation workshops, Ensembles Contrechamps and Dedalus, Geneva

2024 *La Semaine du Son: L'infini du son*, GMEA, Albi

2023 Mikroskop IV, lecture and workshops, EnsembleSpectrum, Bratislava

2023 *Harmonic Space*, workshop, Tulkinnanvaraista, Helsinki

2023 Rencontres de la création musicale, seminars and workshops, GMEA, Sylvanès

2022 *Expériences*, residency, GMEA, Albi

2022 *The Art of the String Multiphonic*, conference, FHNW, Basel

2020 MicroFest Prague 2020, co-presented keynote lecture with Marc Sabat, Czech Institute for Microtonal Music, Prague

2020 Beyond: Microtonal Music Festival 2020, conference, University of Pittsburgh

## FESTIVALS & SERIES

2025 Festival Mixtur, Barcelona  
VANG VII, Madrid

2024 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Huddersfield

2023 Festival AFEKT, Tallinn and Berlin  
Edition Festival, Stockholm

2022 SALT New Music Festival, Victoria

2021 Festival Riverrun, Albi  
Louth Contemporary Music Society, Dundalk  
FREIRAUM, Konzerthaus, Berlin

2020 Harmonic Space Festival 2020: James Tenney, KINDL and KM28, Berlin

## CATALOGUE OF COMPOSITIONS

### 36. *Pipe Dream* (2025), 20 minutes

Solo pipe organ in any tuning with at least two manuals and pedals

### 35. *Ultramarine* (2025), 16 minutes

Solo harp in a modified 84-EDO tuning

Performances: 03.12.2025, Cara Dawson, KM28, Berlin

### 34. *Enharmonium* (2025), 6 minutes

Bass flute, bass trombone, electric guitar, violin, two violas and contrabass

Performances: 18.10.2025, Harmonic Space Orchestra, Festival Mixtur, Barcelona

33. *Crooked Dances* (2025), 15 minutes  
 Solo piano in 12-EDO

32. *Monotone-Expansion* (2024), open duration, collaboration with Rebecca Lane and Sam Dunscombe  
 Open instrumentation with pre-recorded playback  
 Performances: 10.10.2025, Harmonic Space Orchestra, KM28, Berlin

31. *Free and Easy Wandering* (2024), 23 minutes  
 SuperCollider

30. *Night falls light fall* (2024), open duration, collaboration with Marc Sabat  
 Solo cello with live electronic processing in SuperCollider  
 Performances: 03.12.2023, Lucy Railton, Sophia Club, London

29. *Doppelzelt* (2023), 30 minutes, collaboration with Rebecca Lane  
 Bass flute, viola and electronic tones  
 Performances: 03.11.2023, Rebecca Lane and Thomas Nicholson, Tulkinnanvaraista, Helsinki  
 15.01.2024, Rebecca Lane and Thomas Nicholson, Keith Bar, Berlin

28. *Minimal Surface* (2023), 15 minutes  
 Voice, bass/alto flutes, trombone, violin, viola, cello and contrabass  
 Performances: 28.10.2023, Harmonic Space Orchestra, KM28, Berlin  
 29.10.2023, Harmonic Space Orchestra, Festival AFEKT, Tallinn  
 31.10.2023, Harmonic Space Orchestra, Äänen Lumo, Helsinki  
 01.11.2023, Harmonic Space Orchestra, Himera Festival, Turku  
 05.12.2023, Harmonic Space Orchestra, Festival AFEKT, Berlin  
 24.11.2024, Harmonic Space Orchestra, HCMF, Huddersfield

27. *Slow Burn* (2023), 17 minutes  
 SuperCollider

26. *Time Falling* (2021-23), 24 minutes  
 Bass flute and contrabass  
 Performances: 14.10.2023, Rebecca Lane and Jon Heilbron, Lindenkirche, Berlin

25. *Old Town* (2023), 18 minutes  
 Film with electronic music made in SuperCollider  
 Performances: 31.03.2023, KM28, Berlin

24. *Rassla* (2023), 17 minutes  
 SuperCollider, optionally with acoustic instruments and/or voices

23. *Sieve of Eratosthenes* (2023), Open duration  
 Two pianos in 67-limit just intonation

22. *Nocturne* (2022), 18 minutes  
 Flute, bass flute, alto saxophone, bass trombone, accordion in 12-EDO, electric guitar in 84-EDO,  
 harp in 84-EDO, violin and cello  
 Performances: 06.08.2022, residency musicians, GMEA, L'Athanor, Albi

21. *Harmonium Glistening* (2021), 18 minutes  
 At least six instruments and/or voices, possibly with electronic accompaniment

20. *Triple Resplendence* (2021), 7 minutes  
 Alto flute, viola and trombone

19. *Chanter* (2021), 15 minutes  
 Solo cello

18. *Per* (2018/20), 12 minutes  
 Orchestra: 3 Flutes, 3 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba,  
 bass drum, timpani, harp and strings

17. *Fields Flowering* (2020), 8 minutes  
 Violin, viola and cello

16. *Wenn* (2020), 8 minutes, text by Luisa Rüster  
 High voice or alto flute, violin, clarinet in A and bass clarinet  
 Performances: 11.10.2020, Harmonic Space Orchestra, KM28, Berlin

15. *Rondo for Marcus Pal* (2020), 27 minutes  
 SuperCollider

14. *98 Chords for Catherine Lamb* (2020), 10 minutes  
 Horn, viola and suspended cymbal  
 Performances: 04.12.2020, Ensemble Ilinx, UdK Berlin

13. *Bercer* (2019), 11 minutes  
 Solo cello  
 Performances: 14.07.2019, Émilie Girard-Charest, HfM Hanns Eisler

12. *Atlas 2012* (2015/19), 14 minutes  
 First version, 2015: alto saxophone and electric guitar with e-bow  
 Second version in just intonation, 2019: viola and acoustic guitar with ebow  
 Performances: 30.08.2019, Fredrik Rasten and Thomas Nicholson, KM28, Berlin  
 29.01.2016, Adam Jasieniuk and Thomas Nicholson, Simon Fraser Uni., Vancouver  
 25.10.2015, Adam Jasieniuk and Thomas Nicholson, University of Victoria

11. *Anstatt* (2019), 10 minutes  
 Clarinet, violin, cello and accordion in 12-EDO  
 Performances: 04.05.2019, Neuköllner Originaltöne, Berlin

10. *Just/Chords Melodies* (2019), 13 minutes  
 Solo piano in Sabat II well temperament  
 Performances: 07.01.2019, Thomas Nicholson, KM28, Berlin  
 15.03.2019, Thomas Nicholson, KM28, Berlin

9. *Still* (2018), 6 minutes  
 Violin and viola  
 Performances: 07.01.2019, Marc Sabat and Thomas Nicholson, KM28, Berlin

8. *Endless Wander* (2018), 9 minutes  
 Bass flute, violin, viola and cello  
 Performances: 31.05.2023, EnsembleSpectrum, Nová Cvernovka, Bratislava  
 10.11.2023, EnsembleSpectrum, b-minor, Trnava

7. *Schwer Abschied nehmen wenn ich Taschentuch sehe* (2018), 45 minutes  
 Collaboration with L. Rüster, J. Du, M. Färber and L.-J. Schindlbeck  
 Three dancers, light, object installation, violin and SuperCollider  
 Performances: 23.09.2018, Urbanraum, Berlin

6. *Gram* (2018), 15 minutes  
 Baroque alto flute, viola and keyboard, with optional video installation  
 Performances: 16.10.2018, Natalie Pfeiffer, Alice Bordarier and Thomas Nicholson, UdK Berlin  
 25.11.2018, Natalie Pfeiffer, Alice Bordarier and Thomas Nicholson, UdK Berlin

5. *Branch* (2018), 8 minutes  
 Any three sustaining instruments and/or voices  
 Performances: 14.07.2018, Marc Sabat, M.O. Abbott and Thomas Nicholson, HfM Hanns Eisler

4. *Servicemaster* (2017), 55 minutes, collaboration with Kim Ferris-Manning  
 Site-specific installation, sculpture and film  
 Performances: 05. to 07.09.2017, Christ Church Cathedral, Victoria  
 07.01.2019, KM28, Berlin

3. *Motte* (2017), 40 minutes  
 Flute (+ piccolo), alto saxophone (+ contrabass clarinet), bassoon (+ contrabassoon), horn,  
 tubular bells, piano in 13-limit just intonation, violin and viola  
 Performances: 27.03.2017, Student ensemble, University of Victoria

2. *That/Which* (2016), 5 minutes  
 Orchestra: 2 Flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba,  
 tubular bells and strings  
 Performances: 16.11.2016, Fredericton Symphony Orchestra, Christ Church Cathedral, Fredericton

1. *About* (2016), 17 minutes  
 Orchestra: 3 Flutes, 2 oboes, 3 clarinets, 3 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, percussion,  
 harp, organ and strings  
 Performances: 24.05.2016, University of Victoria Symphony Orchestra, University of Victoria