Ben Salwey – Long Bio

Ben Salwey (b.2002) is a British-American percussionist and composer from the UK, with a particular passion for musical cultures from around the world. His love for music was fuelled at a young age by some of the incredible film scores of Brian Tyler, Alexandre Desplat and Alan Silvestri. Since then, Ben has composed for a diverse range of ensembles and mediums, including for theatre, film, concert hall and jazz venues. His influences range from Ibraham Maalouf and Hiromi Uehara to Japanese jazz-accordionist, Coba and French classical composer, Francis Poulenc. Whilst his musical style usually leans towards classical, jazz and various musics from around the world, it is difficult to define his music as belonging entirely to any of these genres, and so he usually describes it as "some sort of fusion between some things". Particular highlights include having his piece *Grainy Nature* (orchestra + jazz band) performed by the Manchester University Symphony Orchestra and his score for Michael Bryceson's *Letters From My Dad (Who is Dead)* (electroacoustic) taken to the Edinburgh Fringe. Ben was a *soundcheck* artist for the Manchester Jazz Festival (2024-25) and has won best-score awards for film festivals such as the Hollywood Gold Awards (2023), Indo Singapore International Film Festival (2023) and Milan Gold Awards (HM (2022)).

As a student at the University of Manchester and Royal Northern College of Music (with support from the incredible Oglesby Foundation), Ben has studied with percussionists and educators including Dave Hassel, Simone Rebello, Paul Patrick, Paul Turner, Liz Gilliver and Andrea Vogler. In 2024 Ben also spent two months in New York to himself in the city's Latin-Jazz and salsa scenes, learning from and listening to some of his percussion idols including Carlos Maldonado, Ivan Llanes and Keita Ogawa. Whilst with a strong background in orchestral music, Ben's main passion as a percussionist is in its traditions from cultures around the world. Since coming to Manchester he has been involved in its various folk scenes through ensembles and collectives such as the Manchester Troubadours and Klezmorim of Manchester, and has performed alongside musicians such as Chris Emerson (The Hallé), Carlos Maldonado (Arturo O'Farrill's Afro Latin Jazz Orchestra) and percussion soloist, Kai Strobel.

Ben has recently moved to Santiago, Chile, where he is immersing himself in Chilean percussion and the city's larger musical-cultural scenes.

Another of Ben's passions is in music education. Ben has worked across the world, ranging from Bangkok to the UK, USA and now Chile, where he has taken a variety of different roles. These include as classroom-educator, instrument-teacher and workshop-facilitator roles in settings that range from international schools to NGOs. Ben was thrilled to have recently been asked back to the University of Manchester to coach the rhythm section for the University's Big Band in Afro-Cuban percussion.