

John M. Kennedy
Composer, Conductor, Double Bassist

www.johnmkennedy.net

American composer **John M Kennedy** produces an eclectic group of work, ranging from mixed ensemble and solo pieces to multi-media works (which he refers to as his “things and gadgets” series) and a group of “Songbooks” inspired by Whitman. In 2010-2011 his “Duo Concerto” for violin, clarinet and chamber ensemble will be premiered in Norway and next year a new work for the Olympia Youth Orchestra will be premiered. His current projects include a work for violinist Jay Zhong and a viola and ‘cello duo for the Avendo ensemble in Columbus, Ohio. In addition to composition, he has presented at conferences in the US, UK and Canada, most recently at the University of Surrey, Guildford, UK at the AHRC Diasporas, Migration and Identities Programme/CRONEM Conference 2009 ”Diasporas, Migration and Identities: Crossing Boundaries, New Directions” and at regional meetings of the College Music Society on “Modernist Compositional Gesture in Wayne Shorter’s ‘Nefertiti’”.

After years as a self-taught Rock bassist, Kennedy began formal training at the Berklee College of Music in Boston, studying Jazz bass and arranging, and continued at the Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory, studying composition and double bass. After completing the B.Mus. in double bass performance he received a commission by the Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra (1985) and was awarded First Prize in the Ohio Federation of Music Clubs Young Composer Contest. As a fellowship student in composition at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Kennedy studied with Leslie Bassett, William Albright, Fred Lerdahl and Eugene Kurtz. An advocate for the music of our time, Kennedy is actively involved in the performance and dissemination of works of living composers. Leslie Bassett, Antoine Bonnet, William Kraft, Henry Brant, Chinary Ung and Kui Dong, have all worked with him as a conductor.

Recognition for his work includes the Charles Ives Prize from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, grants from Meet the Composer, Inc., Young Composer and annual Standard Panel Awards from ASCAP since 1991, the American Composers Forum, Los Angeles and Creative Leave and Creative Activity Grants from California State University, Los Angeles. An active performer, he is music director of the Chamber Players of Los Angeles, and as a double bassist he has performed with UK spoken word artist Anthony Joseph.

As music director of the Chamber Players-Los Angeles he has conducted works of Stravinsky and will produce a concert exploring the music and influences of Frank Zappa next season. He has lectured for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, interviewing many composers including Sir Harrison Birtwistle, Christopher Rouse, Jerry Goldsmith, Elmer Bernstein, Osvaldo Golijov and Esa Pekka Salonen. Since 1994 he has taught music composition and directed the New Music Ensemble at California State University, Los Angeles.