MICHAEL KUREK

Short Biography

Throughout his stylistic evolution from modernism to postmodernism to a fully narrative traditionalism, Michael Kurek's ever-present integrity of craft and his music's emotional power have steadily earned him both national and international recognition, with performances by symphony orchestras and chamber ensembles on five continents and downloads on six. He has received some of the nation's most important composition awards and has enjoyed world-wide publication, recording, and broadcast of his works for the concert hall. His numerous prizes for composition include the prestigious Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Academy's highest annual "lifetime achievement" award in music (now called the Arts and Letters Award; the Academy had earlier also awarded him their Charles Ives Prize). His 2017 album, The Sea Knows, made its debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical chart, and all of his works on Spotify are currently approaching a total of a million streams, just to name one of the online streaming services offering his music. On March 18, 2022, the governor of Tennessee signed into law a bill from the State House of Representatives and Senate naming Michael Kurek "Composer Laureate of the State of Tennessee." Kurek served seven years on the Classical Music Nominations Committee for the Grammy Awards and is presently Professor Emeritus of Composition at Vanderbilt University. A published author, he now spends his time composing and writing books and articles about music (see "Books" link on this site).