

Short (100-word) Biography – Michael Kurek, Composer

American composer Michael Kurek's music, hailed for its lush neo-romanticism, has garnered performances in fifteen countries on five continents. His many awards for music include the prestigious Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (the Academy's top lifetime achievement award in composition), and he has served on the Classical Nominations Committee for the Grammy Awards. His 2017 album, *The Sea Knows*, was No. 1 on *Billboard's* Traditional Classical Chart. He holds the doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan and serves on the faculty of Vanderbilt University. For more information, go to www.michaelkurek.com.



Medium-Length (250-word) Biography – Michael Kurek, Composer

American composer **Michael Kurek's** recent music, hailed for its lush neo-romanticism, has garnered performances by numerous symphony orchestras and chamber groups throughout the U.S and in fifteen countries on five continents. His works have been heard nationwide on NPR and other countries' national radio broadcasts, also profiled in national print media and music journals. Kurek has received several important awards for his music, including the prestigious Academy Award in Music from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (the Academy's top lifetime achievement award), also the Academy's Charles Ives Award and national awards or fellowships from the American Symphony Orchestra League, BMI, NEA, Meet the Composer, MTNA, the Tanglewood Music Center's Fromm Fellowship in Composition, and others. His 2017 album, *The Sea Knows*, was No. 1 on *Billboard's* traditional classical music chart, and he has served on the Classical Nominations Committee for the Grammy Awards. He has been a popular guest composer at universities and an adjudicator of the national composition contests of ASCAP and others. His teachers included the German composer Hans Werner Henze, French composer Eugene Kurtz, and Pulitzer-prize winning American composers William Bolcom and Leslie Bassett. He holds the doctorate in composition from the University of Michigan and serves on the faculty of Vanderbilt University, where he chaired the department of composition for fourteen years. The Panhellenic Council and all ten sororities of the university recently presented him with the award "Best Music Educator at Vanderbilt." For more information, go to www.michaelkurek.com.



Long Version (865 Words) – Michael Kurek, Composer

"A new and exciting musical voice....Michael Kurek...writes in an effortlessly vibrant tonal idiom which suits him naturally and without any forced self-consciousness...Kurek simply follows his expressive instincts and gives us music which falls consistently and naturally into place, with its ceaseless tides of lyrical ebb and flow, embellished with impressionistic atmosphere and a sure sense of dramatic pacing.... He has the potential to become known as one of the major figures of his generation."

-- Fanfare Magazine

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 throughout the United States and on five continents (excluding only Antarctica and Africa). 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 (the Academy had earlier awarded him their Charles Ives Prize). His 2017 album, *The Sea Knows*, made its debut at No. 1 on the Billboard Traditional Classical chart.

Kurek has garnered a MacDowell Fellowship from the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire; a Fromm Fellowship in Composition at the Tanglewood Music Center; a Fellowship at the Wellesley College Composers Conference; and first-place wins in many national composition competitions, along with important awards and recognitions from Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI), the American Symphony Orchestra League, Meet the Composer Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Music Teachers' National Association.

He serves on several professional boards and committees, including voting membership in The Recording Academy, with six years on their Classical Grammy Awards Nominations Committee in Los Angeles. His service has also included many years of membership on the Board of Directors of the John W. Work III Memorial Foundation, which awards minority music scholarships nationally. A popular guest composer at Universities and music schools, Dr. Kurek also serves as an adjudicator in national music competitions, such as the Music Teachers National Association's MTNA-Shepherd "Distinguished Composer of the Year" award, the Golden Key Honor Society, the Young Texas Artists Music Competition, the National Federation of Music Clubs Young Composers Competition, the Marion Richter American Music Awards, and the Victor Herbert/ASCAP Awards.

Michael Kurek's music has been performed and/or heard on radio or TV throughout the U.S. and, internationally on five continents, multiple times in France, England, Germany, Japan, Korea,

Denmark, Czech Republic, Russia, Portugal, Australia, Brazil, the Netherlands, and Sweden. A variety of professional soloists and chamber groups have performed his works during numerous guest composer residencies at universities, music festivals, conferences, and concert venues (e.g., the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D. C.). Michael Kurek's works have been featured by the principal professional symphony orchestras of cities as diverse as Atlanta, Indianapolis, Green Bay, Nashville, Bridgeport, Lansing, and Fargo, by the Pacific Symphony Orchestra in Los Angeles, the Czech Radio Philharmonic in Prague , the Tomsk Philharmonic (Russia), the Reutlingen Philharmonie (Stuttgart, Germany), Australia's Brisbane Philharmonic, and several university orchestras and chamber ensembles worldwide. He has been profiled in numerous magazines, journals, and newspapers, and his music has been widely broadcasted on classical radio stations, including nationally on NPR's "Morning Edition" and nation-wide on Germany's "KlassikRadio." A BMI-affiliated composer, he has been published by Gems Publications, International Music Service, Lyon & Healy , The Tuba Euphonium Press, and Spectrum Music Press (Los Angeles). His works are available internationally on compact disc through New World Records, Parma/Navona Recordings and over 50 major digital download distributors, including Naxos International.

Professor Kurek served for fourteen years as Chair of the Department of Music Composition at the Blair School of Music of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and has now given up the administrative part of his position (while continuing to teach), in order to devote himself more fully to an increasing number of commissions. He previously held positions at the State University of New York at Fredonia and at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University. His own teachers included European composers Hans Werner Henze and Eugene Kurtz, along with American Pulitzer-prize winners Leslie Bassett and William Bolcom at the University of Michigan, where he received the Doctor of Musical Arts degree in composition. In 2006, the Panhellenic Council and all ten sororities of Vanderbilt University presented Michael Kurek with the award "Best School of Music Educator at Vanderbilt." For more information, go to the Michael Kurek web site at www.michaelkurek.com.

At the American Academy of Arts and Letters May, 1994 Ceremonial in New York, composer Ned Rorem read aloud the following citation: *"Michael Kurek's music harmonizes in a charming and compelling way, intense lyricism with intellectual depth, clear and elegant formal design, and with a richly imaginative orchestral surface. His harp concerto exemplifies his ability of displaying a musical narrative that is as accessible as it is demanding. His musical world is an intensely traditional one, accented and punctuated by gestures and rhythms of today."*



