

John Stephens, Composer

2000 Johansen International Competition for Young String Players

John Stephens was born in Washington, DC, and beginning at age 8 studied piano, followed by trumpet, cello, and harmony. During the 1960s, he held a trumpet chair regularly with the summer National Symphony Orchestra (NSO), known as the Watergate Symphony.

His career as a composer has brought him numerous awards and scholarships. He received a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from Catholic University and was elected to Pi Kappa Lambda, the honorary society for music graduates. Other awards included four scholarships to the Bennington Composers' Conference at Bennington, VT, where he appeared as composer and orchestral player with the conference's resident orchestra. His first work for string orchestra was awarded a National Young Composers' Award, as was his first choral piece.

He has written music for every medium that has been performed at concerts by the Watergate Symphony, at the Donnell Series for Contemporary Music in New York City, the Phillips Collection, the American University Chamber Music Society, the American Camerata, the Contemporary Music Forum, the Mississippi Symphony Orchestra, the Music Teachers National Association, and the Strathmore Hall Arts Foundation, which honored him with a full concert of his works. In 1988, he was awarded the Maryland State Arts Council Individual Artist Fellowship in Music Composition. In 1998, he was awarded a fellowship grant for his preparation of the *Three Symphonic Etudes for Solo Timpani and Orchestra*, written for, and dedicated to, Fred Begun, principal timpanist with the NSO. NSO premiered the work under Leonard Slatkin on April 10, 1999.

Dr. Stephens's music is published in the United States by MMB and by TAP Music and in France by Vandoran. He has served on the faculties of Catholic University; George Washington University; American University; and, with the American Camerata, as Artist in Residence at the University of the District of Columbia. His *Creations for Trombone & String Quartet* and *Three for Four Plus One* were released on AmCam Recordings.

Dr. Stephens's conducting experience led him to the Academy of Music in Basel, Switzerland, where he studied with Pierre Boulez. He was Music Director for Clar-Fest International in the 1980s and early 1990s. He served as music director of the John Cage Festival Orchestra and as conductor of the Sistrum New Music Ensemble. He served as tour conductor with the Lydian Chamber Players and as music director for jazz pianist Keith Jarrett in his appearances with members of the NSO. He served as principal conductor for the American Camerata and Artistic Director/Producer for AmCam Recordings. His many recordings have included the music of Ives, Brant, Krenek, Sapieyevski, Moss, Villa-Lobos, Cyr, Gershwin, Boulez, Schoenberg, Debussy, and Woollen. He received the Alice Ditson Award from Columbia University for his recordings and several National Endowments grants for his educational production "New Sounds for Young Ears," a program for young students based on 20th-century music.