

LENNY WILLIAMS, COMPOSER



Lenny Williams has composed original music for over 600 documentary films, winning national Emmy Awards in 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2007 in the category “Outstanding Achievement in a Craft: Music and Sound.” Since 1995, he has worked extensively with National Geographic Television and Film, the Discovery Channel, Court TV, WNET, CNN, TLC, PBS, Animal Planet and The History Channel.

Mr. Williams has also won five BMI awards, and has contributed music to two Grammy award-winning recordings. He won a Teton award at the Jackson Hole Wildlife Film Festival (2007) for Outstanding Musical Score, and a Panda Award for Best Music in 2008 from the United Kingdom’s prestigious Wildscreen Festival.

Mr. Williams graduated from the Peabody Conservatory of Music in 1983 with a BM degree in music composition. Soon after graduation, he began a career as a jazz pianist and composer in Washington, DC. He eventually became a regular performer at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, performing with the National Symphony Orchestra, the Kennedy Center Opera Orchestra, and for productions of nationally touring musicals.

From 1993 to the present, he has been a full-time pianist with the political satire group “The Capitol Steps.” From 1988 to 1996, he was the pianist for the late **Eva Cassidy**, whose posthumous recordings have sold over eight million copies worldwide. He currently lives in Kensington, MD, with his wife, Joan Gregory, and three children, Eleanor, Samantha and Grady.

2009 Johansen International Competition *Commissioned Work: “Scherzo”*

The inspiration for this piece came from my fascination with musical encores, pieces that are commonly performed at the end of a concert. These short, virtuosic pieces are usually challenging for the performer, giving the audience an exclamation point to the programmed works. Historically, the encore could be a short adaptation of a longer work, an original improvisation on an existing theme, or simply any smaller work that highlights the performer’s strengths. My piece is an attempt to capture the energy of the encore using a musical language that is somewhat modern but firmly rooted in tonality. My hope is that this *Scherzo* will capture the improvisatory spirit of the unaccompanied showcase. — Lenny Williams, March 2009