

Steven Stucky, Composer

Pretty Prairie native is well-known composer

The following article was excerpted and slightly edited from the May 7, 2004 article in the Hutchinson News written by Joyce Hall.



Steven Stucky is recognized as one of the leading composers of his generation. His music is praised for its beauty of sound, imaginative use of color and clarity of large-scale form.

Stucky was born in Hutchinson in 1949, and spend many childhood days on his grandfather's farm near Pretty Prairie. On his last visit to Kansas in 2001, he attended the 125th anniversary celebration of the Swiss Mennonites in Moundridge, and wrote "A Hymn of Heritage" for that celebration.

Stucky now lives in Ithaca, NY, and said his fascination with music began at a young age. After his family moved to Salina, he began playing the viola at age 10.

"I picked up music on my own," he said, "before I could play an instrument or read music or really do much about it." He went on to music at Baylor and Cornell Universities and credits the generosity and encouragement of his high school and college teachers for inspiring him.

Stucky, a conductor, writer, lecturer and teacher, has contributed to many major musical publications in America and Britain.

He says his music follows in the symphonic tradition, like Beethoven and Mozart, but closer to modern classical idioms. His biggest influences are early 20th century composers, such as Stravinsky, Debussy or Ravel.

He has taught at Cornell University since 1980, where he serves as Given Foundation Professor of Composition and artistic director of the music group [Ensemble X](#).

He has been working for the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 1998 - composing music, vetting scores of other living composers that are submitted for possible performances, helping choose programs, and helping educate the audience to hear new things.

Stucky has a tendency, he said, to postpone starting a piece until he's kicked it around in his head for a while. The Los Angeles Philharmonic performed his latest work, Second Concerto for Orchestra, in March of 2004.

He is now taking a much-needed break and working on a chamber piece for Arizona Friends of Chamber Music and a choral piece for Chanticleer, based in San Francisco.

Among the highlights of his career are the world premieres of the percussion concerto Spirit Voices for the Singapore Symphony in 2003 and Jeu de timbres for the National Symphony of Washington, D.C.

Other Biographies of Steven Stucky:

- An [Interview with Steven Stucky](#)
- [Steven Stucky Vita](#) at Cornell University
- [Bio of Steven Stucky](#) on Ensemble X
- [Wikipedia Entry](#) for Steven Stucky

STEVEN STUCKY'S AWARDS

- 2005: Pulitzer Prize for music for "Second Concerto for Orchestra."
- 2003: Bloch Lecturer, University of California at Berkeley
- 2002: Goddard Lieberston Fellowship, American Academy of Arts and Letters
- 2001: Aaron Copland Fund for American Music recording grant
- 1998: Barlow Endowment Commission
- 1997: Bogliasco Foundation Fellowship, Centro Studi Ligure (Italy)
- 1995: Special Commendation, National Association of Composers USA
- 1991: Koussevitzky Music Foundation Commission
- 1989: Finalist, Pulitzer Prize in Music ("Concerto for Orchestra")
- 1986: John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship
- 1982: ASCAP Deems Taylor Award (for "Lutoslawski and His Music")
- 1978: Composer Fellowship, National Endowment for the Arts
- 1975: First Prize, American Society of University Composers Competition
- 1974: ASCAP Victor Herbert Prize for composition

E-Mail for Steven Stucky, ses6@cornell.edu