

When honoring him with its Goddard Lieberson Fellowship, the American Academy of Arts and Letters noted that "A rare economy of means and a strain of religious mysticism distinguish the music of James Primosch... Through articulate, transparent textures, he creates a wide range of musical emotion." Andrew Porter stated in *The New Yorker* that Primosch "scores with a sure, light hand" and critics for the *New York Times*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and the *Dallas Morning News* have characterized his music as "impressive", "striking", "grandly romantic", "stunning" and "very approachable".

Primosch's compositional voice encompasses a broad range of expressive types. His music can be intensely lyrical, as in the song cycle *Holy the Firm* (composed for Dawn Upshaw) or dazzlingly angular as in *Secret Geometry* for piano and electronic sound. His affection for jazz is reflected in works like the *Piano Quintet*, while his work as a church musician informs the many pieces in his catalog based on sacred songs or religious texts.

Born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1956, James Primosch studied at Cleveland State University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University. He counts Mario Davidovsky, George Crumb and Richard Wernick among his principal teachers.

Primosch's instrumental, vocal, and electronic works have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe by such ensembles as the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Collage, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the Twentieth Century Consort. His *Icons* was played at the ISCM/League of Composers World Music Days in Hong Kong, and Dawn Upshaw included a song by Primosch in her Carnegie Hall recital debut. Commissioned works by Primosch have been premiered by the Chicago Symphony, Speculum Musicae, the Cantata Singers, and pianist Lambert Orkis. A second Chicago Symphony commission will be premiered in October, 2009. He is currently at work on a commission for the Albany Symphony.

Among the honors he has received are a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Guggenheim Fellowship, two prizes from the American Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, a Regional Artists Fellowship to the American Academy in Rome, a Pew Fellowship in the Arts, the Stoeger Prize of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and a fellowship to the Tanglewood Music Center where he studied with John Harbison. Organizations commissioning Primosch include the Koussevitzky and Fromm Foundations, the Mendelssohn Club of Philadelphia, the Folger Consort, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Barlow Endowment, and the Network for New Music. In 1994 he served as composer-in-residence at the Marlboro Music Festival. Recordings of eleven compositions by Primosch have appeared on the Albany, Azica, Bard, Bridge, CRI, Centaur, and New World labels, with new discs of vocal and choral works planned.

As a pianist, James Primosch has been particularly active in performing 20th century and contemporary music, including works by Ives, Schoenberg, Bartok, Messiaen, Copland, Berio, Ligeti, Andriessen, Schat, Serocki, Crumb, Rochberg, Davidovsky, Perle, Martino and Harbison, as well as many younger composers. *The New York Times* characterized James Primosch as a "stylish and very successful performer", while the *Philadelphia Inquirer* called him "adept and daring". Primosch was a prizewinner at the 1977 Gaudeamus Competition for Interpreters of Contemporary Music, held at Rotterdam, and was subsequently heard on Dutch radio. Among other performances, Primosch has often appeared with soprano Christine Schadeberg in recital, and has played at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Painted Bride Art Center, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Spoleto USA Festival and numerous colleges and conservatories. Primosch has

played with such ensembles as the Cavani, Cassatt and Miami Quartets, the 20th Century Consort, the Penn Contemporary Players, and may be heard on recordings for New World, CRI, Crystal, and Innova. In February of 2000 he made his Lincoln Center debut, performing his own *Piano Quintet* with the Miami Quartet on a Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center concert. In the fall of 2007 he appeared at the Trondheim Chamber Music Festival in Norway. His widely varied performing experiences have included work as a jazz pianist and a liturgical musician.

In 1988, he began an appointment to the faculty of the University of Pennsylvania, where he directs the Presser Electronic Music Studio.

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