



Bio: Michael Kirkendoll, piano

Bridging the gaps between old and new, Michael Kirkendoll is a not your everyday pianist. Equally at home in the worlds of Beethoven and Haydn as in those of Frederic Rzewski and John Cage, Michael's concerts are unique musical experiences leaving audiences eager for the next performance. His performances in the U.S., Europe, and Southeast Asia have garnered great praise by audiences and critics alike. Following multiple performances as a finalist in the American Pianists Association Classical Fellowship Awards, critics hailed him as "the very model of a 21st Century musician", calling his performances "inspired" showcasing "extraordinary" technical gifts and "superior intelligence." His performance of John Corigliano's *Piano Concerto* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra "dazzled from the moment he sat down at the keyboard" and his collaboration with the Parker String Quartet in the Shostakovich Piano Quintet "had you hanging on every phrase." Michael's 1999 tour of France's Loire Valley featuring music by Chopin, Beethoven, and Ravel was heralded as "astonishing, regal, and eloquent" (*La République*, Orléans). Similar praise came after Michael substituted on 36 hours notice for a performance of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto in Merkin Hall, New York City.

A dedicated advocate for the music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Since 2006, he has premiered nearly one hundred new works as either soloist or collaborator. His talents for this music extend far beyond the typical pianistic arsenal of octaves and arpeggios. Michael possesses a deep and powerful voice and a lack of inhibition allowing him to perform with great skill some of the 20th-21st centuries most avant-garde works for theatrical pianist, including Frederic Rzewski's *De Profundis* and Jerome Kitzke's *Sunflower Sutra*. Michael's work with Frederic Rzewski led to the 2007 premiere of the *Nanosonatas, Book 1*. In addition to the music of Rzewski and Kitzke, his programs feature a diverse range of contemporary styles, with music by such composers as David Rakowski, Charles Ives, Bruno Mantovani, Jacob Ter Veldhuis, Olivier Messiaen, and David Lang.

In 2002, Michael began a duo with flutist Mary Fukushima. Today, they are known as *DuoSolo*, and are devoted to promoting the music of living composers in genre-bending concerts featuring both solo and duo repertoire for flute and piano. In 2006, *DuoSolo* made their Carnegie Hall debut with a program of music from the last 60 years including the NY premiere of Gabriela Frank's *Sueños de Chambi: Snapshots for an Andean Album*. The performers were deemed "powerhouses" by the New York Concert Review, and Michael's playing was lauded as "thought-provoking" and "without fault." *DuoSolo* has since performed around the U.S., Europe and Asia, giving world premieres of music by a diverse group of composers. Michael is also president of the DuoSolo Foundation, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization to support the commissioning, performance, recording, and promotion of contemporary music. Under the auspices of the DuoSolo Foundation, DuoSolo directs the Cortona Sessions for New Music, a summer festival dedicated to bringing composers and performers together for world premiere performances, held in Cortona, Italy.

Michael's programming philosophy is to make the concert experience filled with emotional hills and valleys of laughter, nervousness, and passion, keeping both himself and his audiences connected and involved throughout the program. With a repertoire spanning the centuries, Michael is dedicated to educating and finding new audiences, wherever he goes. Seeking out interesting venues from museums to jazz clubs and lecture halls, he always introduces his music in an informed and personal way, making concerts a shared experience for both performer and listener.

Michael is currently Assistant Professor of Piano at Oklahoma State University. He has earned degrees from the University of Kansas (DMA, BM) and the Manhattan School of Music (MM). When not at the piano, Michael can be found enjoying fine wine, cooking, golfing, or playing with his dog, Sam. Michael is also the author of the food and wine blog, *The Uncorked Pianist*.