

Currently Composer-in-Residence with the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, JAMES AIKMAN and his music have quietly, consistently received prestigious honors and notable performances for several decades. Ever since Joshua Bell and Charles Webb performed and recorded Aikman's first violin sonata while Bell and Aikman were students at Indiana University Jacobs School of Music during the 1980s, each Aikman piece has continued to evoke a particular *musical* image, with its own distinct, emotive effect. His music has variously been described in periodicals such as Fanfare Magazine, Gramophone: Sounds of America, The Strad, and the New York Times, as "richly sonorous," "fascinating and inventive," "plaintively beautiful," "exciting, inventive and fresh!" Reviewing Aikman's 'Venice of the North Concerti' for Naxos American Classics, Lawrence Vittes of Gramophone wrote: "This could easily be a best-seller in the USA if there were any mechanism to make innovative American composers the talk of the town."

Aikman's first orchestral work, A Bottle of Notes and Some Voyages, was selected by Michael Morgan, John Corigliano, and Sir Georg Solti for a reading in Orchestra Hall, Chicago. At the same time, David Loebel, Donald Erb, Leonard Slatkin, and Michael Tilson Thomas chose the work through the American Symphony Orchestra League for readings and performances by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra and by Miami's New World Symphony in the League of American Orchestras American Repertoire Project. Aikman's vocal music, from his song cycle, Spring is purple jewelry, won G.Schirmer's Young American Art Song Competition and was sung and performed by multiple Grammy vocalist, Dawn Upshaw and pianist, Gilbert Kalish in Carnegie Hall. His recent Venice of the North Concertos (one for violin, one for saxophone), were premiered in Saint Petersburg during the Palaces of St. Petersburg Festival featuring Charles Wetherbee, violin, of the Carpe Diem String Quartet; Taimur Sullivan, saxophone, of the Prism Quartet; and the St. Petersburg State Symphony led by Russian/American conductor, Vladimir Lande. The National Gallery of Art in Washington D. C. hosted the American premiere of Mr. Aikman's Violin Concerto performed by Mr Wetherbee with the National Gallery Orchestra led by Maestro Lande during the 64th American Music Festival.

“Aikman has previously proven himself as a master of a number of different styles of music,” according to music critic and composer, David DeBoor Canfield. Composing what has become a significant body of substantial individual musical statements, James Aikman and his work in a variety of musical genres first came to the international stage during his graduate school days at Indiana University. This first international acclaim came through performing and recording electronic music and provided Aikman a ticket to Europe after winning First Prize in the Groupe de Musique Experimentale de Bourges, France. Tragoidia/Komoidia was created and recorded with colleague Armando Tranquilino at Indiana University’s Center for Electronic and Computer Music. Based on the two principal forms of ancient Greek drama, T/K was released and distributed by Harmonia Mundi with support from the French Ministry of Culture. Aikman’s work appeared during Holland’s Gaudeamus International Musicweek and he was subsequently asked to create the music for two Dutch documentaries on the rich history of art in The Netherlands’ culture. He has also received grants, prizes, commissions and fellowships from notable Indiana composer families such as Hoagy Carmichael and Kate and Cole Porter, several competitive Dean’s Awards in Orchestral and Chamber Music Composition from Indiana University, generously sponsored by Charles Webb. Further support has come from The Pasadena, California Arts Commission, The Pasadena Young Musicians’ Orchestra, The Michigan Philharmonic, The Linton Chamber Music Society of Cincinnati, and the United States Fulbright Fellowship Program. Then, upon returning from Holland, he was invited by William Bolcom and William Albright and elected to membership in the Michigan Society of Fellows, The University of Michigan, sponsored by the Ford Foundation.

James has served through teaching at Indiana University, The University of Michigan, Butler University and as Composer-in Residence with the San Miguel de Allende International Chamber Music Festival and Cathedral Arts of Indianapolis. Aikman’s most recent work—commissioned and premiered by the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, led by Maestro Matthew Kraemer—*Peacemakers: A Filmic Oratorio*, received a 2016 Masterpiece Grant from the Indiana Arts Commission, and was named a Legacy Project by the State of Indiana Bicentennial Commission (1816-2016).

A WFYI documentary of *Peacemakers'* premiere in Schrott Center for the Arts, produced by James Simmons and Clayton Taylor, won multiple regional *Special Event Coverage 2017 Emmy Awards* from the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, NATAS' highest such honor.

Aikman's principal composition teachers include Michael Schelle, Butler University; Frederick Fox, Earle Brown, Harvey Sollberger, and Donald Erb, Indiana University; Bernard Rands, Brian Ferneyhough, David Felder and Paul Lansky, SUNY@Buffalo Festival; William Bolcom, Earl Kim, Jacob Druckman and John Corigliano, Aspen Music Festival and School; Gunther Schuller and Donald Erb, Schweitzer Institute of Music/Sandpoint Festival, Leslie Bassett at the University of Michigan, and privately with Louis Andriessen in Amsterdam. Aikman music can be heard on Centaur Records, Cathedral Arts, Albany Records, Partial Music Recordings, *Cultures Electroniques* (Harmonia Mundi), Indiana University Trustees Press, and Naxos American Classics.

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“To create, to seek one's true potential, requires effort, consistent and dedicated. To write music is an honor. Too many take art for granted, and this reduces its quality as well as its impact on humanity. We each have a duty to aspire to the greatness that has been passed to us through the ages in *all* fields of endeavor — to know it, to reach it, and to advance it.” - James Aikman