

Mark Lortz
Composer/Arranger/Percussionist/Educator

Mark Lortz has earned accolades in every facet of his music career as a composer, arranger, percussionist and educator.

The prolific composer and arranger – whose works include pieces for concert band marching band, choir, chamber and symphonic orchestra – describes his music as “driving, intense and passionate.” He was named a 2007 finalist in the prestigious Columbia Orchestra American Composer Competition and won top honors at the 2006 Alabama Orchestra Association National Composition Competition for his original orchestral work, *Deus Ex Machina (God and the Machine)*, based on his personal experience in a near fatal car accident. The Alabama Orchestra Association premiered the piece in February 2007.

Lortz’s orchestra composition *American Overture* received its world premiere in February 2007 by the Kislovodsk Symphony Orchestra (Kislovodsk, Russia) conducted by Dr. Brenda Leach. In addition, Lortz, who, in his youth, gained valuable experience performing with the multi-world champion Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, which he later instructed, has arranged dozens of works for the United States Naval Academy Drum and Bugle Corps and the world champion Reading Buccaneers Drum & Bugle Corps, among others. His considerable body of work also includes the transcription for symphonic band of Philip Glass’s *Concerto Fantasy for Two Timpanists and Orchestra*, jointly commissioned by the Peabody Conservatory of Music, University of Arizona, University of Florida, University of Alabama and Kutztown University. In April 2007, Lortz was the Executive Producer for the University of Arizona Wind Ensemble’s recording of the piece with noted timpanists Jonathan Hass and Gary Cook. His original music and arrangements are recorded on Albany Records, Dallas Brass Records, Mark Custom Recordings and Moulin D’Or Recordings.

In a review of one of his live performances, *The Washington Post* declared, “The percussionist, Mark Lortz, raised a splendid clatter.” Citing his drumming skills, *The Oregonian* praised Lortz as “the man who really stopped the show.” He has performed as principal or adjunct timpanist and/or percussionist with such leading ensembles as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Opera, the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra and the Baltimore Choral Arts Society. He has also appeared as a guest soloist with the New York Pops Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Oregon Symphony, the Cedar Rapids Symphony and others in concert halls throughout the country, including Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall. Versed in all styles of music, he served as associate music director and principal percussionist for the North American tour of “Phantom of the Opera,” and has nearly a dozen recordings to his credit, including four with the Baltimore Symphony under the baton of David Zinman.

In 1996, Lortz was appointed orchestra and band director at Westminster High School in Westminster, Maryland. He was named one of “50 Directors Who Make A Difference” in 2006 by *School Band and Orchestra*, a national music industry publication, and was subsequently recognized by the Maryland House of Delegates as the only music teacher from Maryland to win this prestigious honor. During the past six years, he has developed curriculum for a variety of music programs for the Carroll County Public Schools, which nominated him as a finalist for Teacher of the Year in 2002.

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Lortz, in addition to serving as the Festival Coordinator for Carroll County Public Schools, currently oversees the high school's orchestra, concert and marching bands, percussion wind ensemble, colorguard and music technology programs. The bands and orchestra regularly sweep regional and national music festivals and, during his tenure, the school has received awards for its exemplary music programs from both the Music Educators National Conference and the Maryland Music Educators Association. Among his numerous accomplishments, Lortz led the marching band to unprecedented first place wins in the 2003 Bands of America Regional Championships and the 2002 Tournament of Bands Atlantic Coast Championships, making it the first and only school in Maryland ever to garner top honors at these highly regarded competitions.

A passionate and dedicated teacher, Lortz produces an annual recording, featuring each of the school's music ensembles. To expose students to music, he takes them to see the Baltimore Symphony and other ensembles in concert and arranges for leading professional musicians to present special clinics in the classroom. His considerable accomplishments and personal commitment, coupled with Westminster High School's selection as a Grammy Signature School national finalist for two consecutive years (2005 and 2006), have secured Lortz's reputation as a renowned educator.

Recently appointed an adjunct music professor at McDaniel College, Lortz frequently adjudicates at music competitions throughout the Mid-Atlantic region. He is also in demand as a clinician, having guest conducted and presented master classes in performance and composition at the Peabody Conservatory of Music, Indiana University Purdue-Fort Wayne, Southern Oregon State University, University of Alabama and University of Arizona, among other collegiate institutions.

In 2006, Lortz was inducted into the Pi Kappa Lambda honorary music society, which includes such luminaries as Nadia Boulanger, Elliott Carter and Eugene Ormandy. Other awards include a Peabody Career Development Grant, a Peabody Institute Merit scholarship and an Ashcraft & Gerel AFL-CIO Union scholarship for graduate and post-graduate studies. He is a member of the American Federation of Musicians, American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), the Maryland Band Directors Association, the Music Educators National Conference and the Maryland Orchestra Director's Association.

Lortz holds a Bachelor of Music in percussion performance and a minor in composition and piano from the Peabody Conservatory of Music of the Johns Hopkins University, where he also earned double Masters degrees in music composition and music education. His primary composition teachers were Dr. Christopher Theofanidis, Morris Cotel and Judah Adashi. He studied commercial arranging with John Wasson and wind conducting with Dr. Harlan Parker. Additionally, Lortz earned Maryland State Music Education Teacher's Certification, with an emphasis in conducting and composition, from Peabody, and is skilled in state-of-the art digital music sequencing, musical notation and audio editing computer programs.

A self-professed Internet and e-mail junkie, Lortz, who lives in Owings Mills, Maryland, is an avid *Simpson's* fan and enjoys boating on the Chesapeake Bay.

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