

5-21-2003

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Lawrence University

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### Recommended Citation

Lawrence University, "Lawrence University's Jazz Studies Director Wins International Composition Commission" (2003). *Press Releases*. Paper 238.

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## Lawrence University's Jazz Studies Director Wins International Composition Commission

*Posted on: May 21st, 2003 by Rick Peterson*

Lawrence University music professor Fred Sturm has been named the recipient of the 2003 ASCAP/IAJE Commission In Honor of Quincy Jones for Established Jazz Composers of International Prominence.

The commission, widely considered the world's most prestigious jazz composition award for established composers, is presented by the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) in cooperation with the International Association of Jazz Educators.

Sturm, the director of jazz studies and improvisational music at Lawrence, will write a new composition in the coming months and conduct its premiere performed by an all-star ensemble of jazz musicians next January at the 2004 IAJE Conference in New York City. The commission prize includes a cash award of \$7,500.

"The ASCAP/IAJE commission comes with no strings attached," said Sturm. "It's basically anything goes. It will be created completely from scratch, but I'm hoping to write something that is very cutting edge."

In addition to his ASCAP jazz commission, Sturm was recently selected to work on a pair of upcoming recording projects.

In September, he travels to Frankfurt, Germany, where he will serve as arranger/conductor for the recording of "Bodacious Cowboys: 3 Decades of Steely Dan," a tribute to one of rock music's most creative and enduring ensembles. Sturm will conduct the Hessischer Rundfunk (Public Radio for the State of Hessen) Jazz Band for the project. Next March, the Lawrence University

Jazz Ensemble will perform the same program in a campus concert.

Sturm also will serve as arranger/conductor for the 2004 BMG/Arista Records release of Brazilian pianist, singer and composer Eliane Elias. In addition to arranging all the works on the Elias project, Sturm will travel to London in November to conduct the London Symphony in a recording of the CD's orchestral components.

“Any of these three projects alone would be cause for celebration,” Sturm said. “Put all three together and you have a combination of sheer exhilaration and terror. If I had the luxury of spreading these projects out over a period of a couple of years, that would be heaven, but when the phone rings and you're asked to contribute, you say ‘YES!’

“Opportunities like this don't always come along and you may only be asked once, so you have to take advantage of them when they present themselves. The coming months are going to be extremely busy, but equally exciting and rewarding.”

A 1998 Grammy Award nominee, Sturm directed the Lawrence jazz studies program from 1977-91 and served as professor and chair of jazz studies and contemporary media at the Eastman School of Music in New York from 1991-2002, directing the internationally acclaimed Eastman Jazz Ensemble, conducting the 70-piece Eastman Studio Orchestra and coordinating the Eastman jazz composition and arranging program. A 1973 Lawrence graduate, he returned to the Lawrence conservatory faculty in the fall of 2002.

In Sturm's 25-year university teaching career, Downbeat Magazine has cited his ensembles as the finest in the United States and Canada eight times.