Emmy Award Nomination Latest Triumph for Lawrence University Grad Garth Neustadter

Lawrence University

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The budding film composing career of Lawrence University graduate Garth Neustadter received a major boost Thursday (7/14) when the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences announced its 63rd annual Primetime Emmy nominations.

Neustadter was among five nominees for original dramatic score in the Outstanding Music Composition category for his work on the American Masters documentary “John Muir in The New World,” which aired on PBS in April. Neustadter’s score was performed by Lawrence Conservatory of Music students.

Brian Pertl ’86, dean of the conservatory, said this is a proud moment.

Unlike all of the other Emmy Award categories, in which the production company submits materials for the Academy’s consideration, the composition category requires the composer to submit the proper materials.
“I felt that it would be good experience to go through process of submitting, but I never expected these results,” said Neustadter, who earned a bachelor of music degree summa cum laude in violin and voice performance from Lawrence in 2010. He currently is pursuing graduate studies in music composition at Yale University.

The Emmy nominations are typically revealed in a live television broadcast at 5:30 a.m. Pacific time and also posted on the official Emmy Awards website. Neustadter was attending a film scoring session in Aspen, Colo., at the time and had to improvise.

“I didn’t have regular internet access, so I drove 10 miles to find Wi-Fi access to read about the results,” he said. “It was a surreal experience to see my name. I am incredibly honored and humbled to be in the company of the veteran and talented composers in this category. I’m excited to meet the other nominees, including composer Alf Clausen of ‘The Simpsons,’ who has earned 30 nominations in his career.”

The 2011 documentary on the life and legacy of naturalist, author and scientist John Muir was written, produced and directed by Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Catherine Tatge, a 1972 Lawrence graduate. During the filmmaking process, Tatge turned to her alma mater, reaching out to Brian Pertl, dean of the conservatory, for a student to possibly write the film’s score. Pertl recommended Neustadter.

“Writing the score for the John Muir documentary has been an incredible opportunity and learning experience,” said Neustadter, a native of Manitowoc. “I am grateful to everyone involved in the project.”

Kimberly Clark Professor of Music Fred Sturm, who served as Neustadter’s faculty composition mentor as a Lawrence student, said he was elated but not surprised at his protege’s latest triumph.
“I’ve admired Garth’s music for several years now and I know the effort and artistry he dedicates to his work. I’m also familiar with the composing of each of his fellow nominees and though it may seem a stretch for a college graduate student to be included in that elite group, Garth absolutely deserves to be there. I won’t be surprised if he takes home the gold on this one.”

The Emmy nomination is the latest in an ever-growing list of accomplishments for Neustadter. He earned first-prize honors (second place behind the grand prize winner) in the 2007 Young Film Composers Competition sponsored by Turner Classic Movies. A year later he was commissioned by TCM to write an original score for a restored version of the 1923 silent film “The White Sister.” In April 2010, he was named one of 37 national winners of the 2010 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Award for his 15-minute composition written for full orchestra and choir based on a Spanish text entitled “Oh llama de amor viva.”

This past April, Neustadter earned his fifth Downbeat award in the magazine’s annual student music competition for a five-minute arrangement of the 1946 Walter Gross jazz classic “Tenderly” he wrote for studio orchestra and vocalist in 2010.

The Emmy awards will be broadcast live on Fox Sunday, Sept. 18 from Los Angeles with actress Jane Lynch of “Glee” as host.