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“And the Emmy Award goes to … Garth Neustadter ’10!”

Lawrence University

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“And the Emmy Award goes to…Garth Neustadter ’10!”

UPDATE: Garth Neustadter ’10 talked to Lawrence this afternoon about what it was like to hear his name called at the Emmy Awards, and also how Lawrence prepared him for a career in scoring films.

Garth Neustadter’s young career has already earned its share of accolades, but none bigger than the 2010-11 Primetime Creative Arts Emmy Award he received Saturday (9/10) at the Nokia Theater in Los Angeles.

Garth Neustadter ’10

The 2010 Lawrence graduate was honored in the Outstanding Music Composition for a Series category for his original score used in the American Masters documentary “John Muir in the New World,” which was written, directed and produced by Catherine Tatge, a 1972 Lawrence graduate. The film, which chronicles the life and legacy of naturalist, author, and scientist John Muir, was broadcast last spring by PBS on Earth Day.

Neustadter, 25, who earned a degree with majors in violin and voice performance, wrote the score while still a student. The music
was performed by students in the Lawrence Conservatory of Music.

“Of course I was shocked when I heard my name called and it took a few seconds for it to sink in,” Neustadter said from Los Angeles. “Then I realized I only had a limited amount of time to go up to the stage, accept the award and make a short speech. They only give you 45 seconds from the time they announced the award, so you have to think fast and hurry up to the stage. Everything was kind of a blur, I couldn’t think very clearly.”

In addition to thanking the Lawrence musicians who performed the score, Neustadter said he thanked people he worked with at PBS and Global Media Village, which is Tatge’s production company.

“I also mentioned John Muir because I thought it was important to recognize the legacy that he has left,” he said.

Neustadter’s parents joined him for the ceremony. He was seated at a table that included Rickey Minor, musical director of the band for “The Tonight Show with Jay Leno.” Minor also was an Emmy nominee (he didn’t win).

“I had a great time talking to him,” Neustadter said of Minor. “He was very nice and offered his congratulations.”
He said he was surprised by how heavy the Emmy Award actually is. He’s planning on taking it back to Yale University with him, where he is a graduate student pursuing a master’s degree in music composition. Assuming he can get it by TSA officials.

“I have to make sure I can bring it back on the airplane,” he explained. “It comes with two very sharp and pointy wings and I guess it could be be perceived as a weapon by the security folks. I have to figure that out yet.”

In addition to his course work at Yale, Neustadter is currently working on a score for a silent film for Turner Classic Movies and Warner Brothers, 1925’s “The Circle,” which featured legendary actress Joan Crawford’s film debut. He plans to have the score completed by next January.
“It’s just been a really amazing experience. It was such an honor to be included among the other composers who were nominated. They’ve all been in the business so long. The win is definitely the icing on the cake for me.”

The Emmy Award is just the latest accolade in a growing list of accomplishments for the Manitowoc native. 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 ASCAP Foundation Morton Gould Young Composer Awards for his 15-minute composition written for full orchestra and choir based on a Spanish text entitled “Oh llama de amor viva.”

Earlier this year, Neustadter was recognized with 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.