

MICHAEL TORKE began studying piano just before his fifth birthday with Audrey Wood, in Milwaukee, and she encouraged him to write pieces of his own almost immediately. Ms. Wood arranged that Michael, at age nine, begin composition and theory lessons with Sr. Theophane Hytrek at Alverno College. Later he studied bassoon with Robert Thompson at U.W.M. and played principle bassoon with Music for Youth, the youth orchestra in Milwaukee. It was at MFY that Michael met John Downey, and worked privately with him on an orchestra piece written for the youth orchestra that was premiered at the PAC in 1979. During his high school years he studied piano with Rebecca Penneys and composition with Burt Levy at the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music. He graduated from Wauwatosa East High School in 1980, and began college at the Eastman School of Music that fall. Michael is now based in New York City, is an internationally acclaimed composer, and has an impressive list of commissions.