



## 2009 Young Virtuoso Piano Festival Judicator



### Professor John Pickett PhD

John Pickett has received critical acclaim for his performances in the U.S., Europe and Asia. His performances in Krakow and Katowice, Poland earned him praise from The Gazeta Wyborcza for his "perfect sound balance, great intuition and sensibility," and The Trybuna Slaska for his "ravishing" *Rhapsody In Blue* of George Gershwin. In June of 2006 he performed the Rhapsody at Carnegie Hall with orchestra to more than 2,000 people.

In October of 2004 John Pickett performed recitals and masterclasses throughout Estonia. The Narvaleht noted that "this musician has a special relationship with the piano" and that "he showed special affinity for the understanding and performance of achmaninoff." In 1994 John Pickett was a finalist in The First International Competition of 20th century Piano Music held in Orleans, France, and was invited back to France the following year to perform solo recitals in Paris and Orleans. Le Loiret wrote that Samuel Barber's *Sonata* "is a work that fits him like a glove: rhythmic energy, melodic inventiveness and a fugue as part of fireworks finale." John Pickett also performed a solo recital at the Conservatoire de Paris as part of an American music festival which featured the 1994 and 1996 laureates of this competition. He also premiered his own piano work at this event entitled, *Paris Poem 1997*. Following his Carnegie Recital Hall debut The New York Times praised his "impeccable" pianism. His performance of Rachmaninoff's *3rd Concerto* with The Charlotte Symphony won him "a spontaneous standing ovation." The Charlotte Observer added, "Rachmaninoff is a master melody maker and so is Pickett."

John Pickett is an active chamber musician who appears frequently with Seattle Symphony members in chamber concerts. He recently performed Beethoven's Triple Concerto with violinist Mikhail Schmidt and cellist Amos Yang with the Yakima Symphony and in 2005, within a ten-day span, gave performances of the Complete Brahms Piano Quartets with members of the SSO and the string faculty of The University of Washington.

A dedicated teacher, John Pickett's students have been past winners of the Washington State Music Teachers State Solo and the WMEA Competitions, regularly serve as graduate teaching assistants, participate in study abroad programs and go on to do graduate work at internationally recognized music institutions. He has given masterclasses at The Ecole Normale, The Krakow Conservatory, The Chautauqua Summer Institute and Conservatorio de la Rosas, in Morelia, Mexico. John Pickett serves as the director of The CWU Sonata Festival which annually brings more than 400 pianists from around the state to campus.

John Pickett has won awards for both his popular and art songs. He was a finalist in the 2004 National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) art song competition for his setting of the Wallace Stevens poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird*. His sacred songs have been performed throughout the Northwest. John Pickett has also received awards from the Billboard and Downbeat songwriting competitions and has been published by the Hal Leonard Company. In March of 2008 John Pickett's musical, *Lion on the Loose!* was performed in its newly orchestrated concert version and now appears on the CWU cable channel. John Pickett is Professor of Music at Central Washington University in Ellensburg. He is a graduate of both The Juilliard School and Indiana University. He received Central Washington University's Distinguished Professor Award in 2005.