

Kenji Bunch - Violist

A versatile musician, Kenji Bunch enjoys an active performing career as both a classically trained violist and as an improvising fiddler, and has also emerged this past decade as one of the most prominent American composers of his generation.

As a founding member of the Flux string quartet, and now with the new music group Ne(x)tworks, Mr. Bunch has become one of New York's premiere interpreters of new and experimental music. His landmark recording of Morton Feldman's six-hour String Quartet no. 2 (Mode Records) with the Flux Quartet received critical praise worldwide. Recognized for his own groundbreaking original works for viola, he frequently performs in recital and in workshops throughout the country with pianist Monica Ohuchi, and was featured in the Jan. 2006 Journal of the American Viola Society, and on NPR Performance Today performing his own work. In addition to being a frequent guest artist in chamber music concerts and festivals, including Spoleto USA, the Broyhill Chamber Ensemble, and the Craftsbury Chamber Players, he also plays fiddle in the bluegrass band Citigrass, and has performed with many prominent rock and jazz musicians including The Who, Ornette Coleman, Bobby McFerrin, Phish member Mike Gordon, and Col. Bruce Hampton and the Code Talkers.

Hailed as a "composer to watch" by the New York Times, Mr. Bunch has had works performed this past season by the New World, Colorado, Honolulu, East Texas, Stockton, Missouri, Asia America, and Mobile Symphonies, and by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. Mr. Bunch's music is regularly performed and broadcast worldwide, and has been recorded on the EMI Classics, RCA, Kleos Classics, GENUIN, Pony Canyon, Capstone, and Crystal labels.

After early viola studies with Pierre d'Archambeau in his native Portland, Oregon, Mr. Bunch studied at the Juilliard School, receiving his Bachelor and Master of Music degrees in viola with Toby Appel, and in composition with Robert Beaser. Upon graduation from Juilliard, he received both the Lillian Fuchs Prize in Viola as well as the William Schuman Prize for Outstanding Leadership in Music, the school's highest honor.

Also a dedicated teacher, Mr. Bunch currently teaches viola at the Juilliard School Pre-College and at the Mark O'Connor Strings Conference in San Diego. He was a visiting professor in composition at Bennington College in Vermont in 2002 and frequently conducts master classes and workshops in viola, composition, improvisation, music appreciation, and as a consultant in arts education.

Mr. Bunch plays a 1992 viola custom made for him in Oregon by the luthier Mark Moreland.