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## bio

Called “the very model of a 21st Century musician” by critics of the Indianapolis Star, pianist Michael Kirkendoll has established himself at the forefront of contemporary pianism. A dedicated advocate for the music of the 20th and 21st centuries, Michael seeks out repertoire that combines beauty, adventure, and meaning to create musical journeys in the recital setting. A specialist in the theatrical piano music of Frederic Rzewski and others, critics have described Kirkendoll’s theatrical performances as “tours de force of skill, comprehension, and energetic, intelligent theatricality,” and also said “...to hear Mr. Kirkendoll perform *Sunflower Sutra* [by Jerome Kitzke] was an absolute wonder. Rarely have I seen any musician able to deliver text and poetry - all whilst playing insanelly difficult music - with such natural dramatic sensibility.” Michael was a finalist in the 2009 American Pianists Association Classical Fellowship Awards, where his performances were heralded as “inspired” showcasing “extraordinary” technical gifts and “superior intelligence.” Michael’s forthcoming DVD/CD release entitled *Acting Like a Pianist* (featuring theatrical piano music of Frederic Rzewski) will be released by Meyer Media in 2017. His previous CD, *Bison Circles: Music of Forrest Pierce*, is currently available on Meyer Media, and collaborations with the h2 Quartet can be found on Blue Griffin Records.

Michael is the founder of the Cortona Sessions for New Music in ([www.cortonasesions.org](http://www.cortonasesions.org)), which has produced over 500 world premieres and encouraged dozens of young performers and composers since 2010. Annually, members of the Cortona Collective (the faculty performance ensemble) present concerts featuring major contemporary repertoire alongside works of Fellows at universities and concert halls around the U.S. This new-music band includes members of the JACK String Quartet, International Contemporary Ensemble, Ekmeles Vocal Ensemble, h2 Saxophone Quartet, Boston Modern Orchestra, and other innovative and exciting soloists. In concert, they perform works by Cortona Sessions Fellows, and other important works spanning all aspects of contemporary composition. Michael is also a frequent performer with Kansas City’s newEar ensemble and performers in a variety of chamber music settings around the country.

Michael is Associate Professor of Piano at the University of Kansas, where he earned his doctoral and bachelor’s degrees, and also holds a masters degree from the Manhattan School of Music. In addition to teaching at the Cortona Sessions for New Music, Michael is also on the faculty of the prestigious International Institute for Young Musicians. When not at the piano, Michael can be found enjoying fine wine, cooking, golfing, or playing with his dog, Sam. Michael is also the author of the food and wine blog, *The Uncorked Pianist*, and can be followed on Twitter @UncorkedPianist. Michael Kirkendoll is proud to be a Yamaha Artist.