

## John Steinmetz Bassoon Concerto Receives First Performances

**A**s a follow-up to the interview of composer/bassoonist **John Steinmetz** in the last issue of the *Double Reed*, (Vol. 26, No.1, pp. 55-59) it is a pleasure to announce that two of the three commissioning orchestras unveiled his new *Concerto* for bassoon and orchestra in May, 2003. On May 3 and 4, bassoonist **Kenneth Munday** premiered the *Concerto* with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra in subscription concerts at the Alex Theater and UCLA's Royce Hall. Music director Jeffrey Kahane conducted. For a youth concert on May 9 and a Mothers' Day family concert on May 11 they reprised the 2nd and 3rd movements. Selected rehearsals were attended by members of *Sound Investment*, the orchestra's commissioning club, and by composer-members of *American Composers Forum*. Composer John Steinmetz met with both groups to harvest listener reaction and answer questions about his composing process.

Meanwhile, across the country in Keene, New Hampshire, the Keene Chamber Orchestra premiered the *Concerto* for their *Mothers' Day Concert* at the Colonial Theatre. **Joy Flemming** played the bassoon solo; music director Eric Stumacher conducted. In presentations on May 9 and 10, composer, soloist, conductor, and musicians from the orchestra previewed excerpts for children and for donors.

Composer John Steinmetz reports: "Both soloists played the *Concerto* beautifully, and the orchestras responded warmly and virtuosically to the music. These are very different kinds of orchestras, one a



**Joy Flemming**, principal bassoon, Keene Chamber Orchestra  
Photo credit: David Flemming

major ensemble of a major urban center and the other a genuine community orchestra with students, amateurs and professionals working together. I wanted the piece to be useful for a variety of orchestras playing in different contexts, but I was nervous about it! These orchestras were tremendously reassuring; I can't imagine a better launch for a new piece. Both groups were able to contact and communicate the spirit of the piece, rising

above the challenges, which turned out to be mainly rhythmic (near-constant meter changes in the first movement, African-inspired syncopations in the finale). In the audiences, lots of people, even people I don't know, came over to say they had enjoyed the music. Many told me about wonderful images, often connected in some way with my theme of humanity's connection to nature. My favorite review came from a friend in Keene, who told me that the intermission buzz in the ladies' room was all positive."

John Steinmetz, himself, will play the solo part for the first time on January 17, 18, and 19, 2004, with the Santa Rosa Symphony and conductor Jeffrey Kahane.



**Kenneth Munday**, principal bassoon, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra