

# ArtStory

Pursuing quality of life.

## John Leavitt

### Genre:

Composer/Conductor

### Associations & Awards:

American Choral Directors Associate

American Society of Composers,  
Authors, and Publishers

Kansas Artist Fellowship Award,  
Kansas Arts Commission

W.A. Young Award,  
Friends University

### Selected Albums:

*Shall We Gather At the River*

*Jubilee*

*Wonder, Love and Praise*

*Requiem*

*What Child Is This?*

*The Children of Christmas*

*Silent Night, Wondrous Night*

*How Sweet The Sound*

*Adoration*

*Sweet Songs of Christmas*

*Christmas Gift*

*A Little Night Music*

### Notable Conducting Venues:

Carnegie Hall, New York

Kennedy Center for the  
Performing Arts, Washington, DC

***“The motivation is the sheer creativity. Writing music is not much different than painting. A painter starts with a blank canvas. The opportunities are endless because you can go as far as your imagination can take you.”***

***–John Leavitt***

If you've been to a high school choir or orchestra concert lately, or frequently take in a church choir performance, you've likely heard the music of John Leavitt.

An extraordinary composer of church and school music, Leavitt's prolific career has produced a compelling volume of sacred and secular music – both original and arrangements of traditional hymns and Christmas favorites. He teaches, lectures, and guest conducts across the country and is a regular guest conductor at Carnegie Hall and at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. This musical maestro is also a born-and-raised Kansas son.

He began in a high school band where he would create arrangements for a ragtag group of ever-changing instruments. Keyboard, his primary instrument, was the glue that held it all together. That soon bloomed into a love affair with composing music.

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A significant work in Leavitt's catalog is *Requiem*, his first large piece. Leavitt calls it an expressive work that reveals his eclectic style.

“So many historic requiems are written at the passing of a person and there's a great emphasis on death and dying. I wanted this work to be a celebration and to be commemorative.”

*Jubilee*, Leavitt's newest work, explodes in celebration. The score features original music and fresh settings of American spirituals including “This Little Light of Mine,” “Go Down Moses,” and “Amazing Grace.”

Leavitt's teaching career has led him to Friends University, Newman University and directing the Master Arts Chorale and Youth Chorale. His primary focus now is

composing and conducting. He notes that while composing is a passionate practice, it takes discipline.

“I think in all the arts there's a degree of pedagogy and craftsmanship if you're serious about what you do. A lot of people just see the passion aspect. Absolutely, I'm a passion-driven person with the art form. But composing is a discipline like any other job. You have to be faithful to the practice of your art.”

To see John Leavitt's full catalog and to hear his music, visit [johnleavittmusic.com](http://johnleavittmusic.com).

