

# Clipper Erickson | pianist, music educator

## Biography

Believing that music is a form of communication, Clipper Erickson speaks the language with pure passion. After making his orchestral debut at age 19, in Los Angeles, Calif., Erickson began performing as a soloist with orchestras and in recital throughout the United States. His moving playing also has echoed through some of the most famous concert venues in the world, including the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory and the Kennedy Center in Washington. Critics use words like “color,” “power” and “excitement” to describe his performances, with one writer at The Standard Times in New Bedford, Mass., stating, “Astounding would be one way to describe his ability to get from the piano ... more sound than I have ever heard.”



Even though he has played all over the world, Erickson has a special interest in the music back home: specifically how American composers reflected American history and how America views itself in its music. This encompasses the wonderful and pervasive influence of African-American music in all its forms in all kinds of American music. He also likes to promote new composers, always choosing pieces that “speak” to everyone not only the initiated.

And it’s not just his music that draws audiences in; Erickson’s unusual, creative programming is also responsible for his overwhelming response. With a casual demeanor, he enhances each performance with entertaining conversation and humorous stories about composers and their music. This ability to bring a down-to-earth character to classical music brings enjoyment for all audiences.

Erickson’s commitment to making classical music accessible to everyone led to his participation in the roster of Pennsylvania Performing Arts on Tour. This affiliation, as well as being an alumnus of the Xerox Pianist Program of Affiliate Artists, has given him the opportunity to perform for diverse audiences and illuminate great music for all listeners. He has brought innovative programs to school children, residents of nursing homes, church groups and prisons and appears several times each year before such groups, including churches in the area where he lives in suburban Philadelphia, Pa.

Erickson studied piano at Indiana University, The Juilliard School and Yale University. He is the recipient of many honors throughout his career and has won prizes at several international competitions including the Busoni Competition, the William Kapell Competition and the American Pianists Association auditions. He has taught piano at Bucknell University and is currently on the faculty of Westminster Conservatory in Princeton.