

A 1971 graduate of Borger High School, **John Bayless** was born in Borger. He started to play piano by ear at age four. His mother, a singer and musician, was his first teacher. John's childhood heroes were Leonard Bernstein and Liberace. At age 13 he was the youngest church organist in the State of Texas, playing for his hometown Baptist Church and for services at the Synagogue in Amarillo. At Borger High School, students would continuously ask him to play the popular song of the day, and playing by ear, he played it "his way" until he graduated May of 1971. When he was 15 he won a scholarship to the Aspen School of Music where he met and first studied with the legendary Adele Marcus. At 17, he was off to New York City to attend the Juilliard School of Music.



John was invited to participate as a composer in the inaugural class of New York University's Musical Theater Masters Degree Program where he studied with Leonard Bernstein, Julie Styne, Arthur Laurents, Betty Comden and Adolph Green. Maestro Bernstein was particularly intrigued with John's talent at improvisation and composition and a lifelong friendship ensued. John was artist in residence for the London Symphony Orchestra's Leonard Bernstein Festival, performing at a gala for Queen Elizabeth II.

As a performer, both solo piano and with orchestra, his extensive background includes appearances at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, The Hollywood Bowl and London's Barbican Center. Over the past nineteen years John has performed hundreds of concerts across the United States from Hawaii to Maine, and also Europe and Japan. He has been featured on many television and radio programs including NBC's Today Show and Rosemary Clooney's Christmas show. As composer and performer he has received commissions from The Virginia Waring International Piano Competition, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, and on PBS, where his music can be heard on many series and specials.

As a teacher John has conducted Master Classes at Juilliard, Kent State, Dennison University, University of Houston and The Royal Academy of Music in London.

A prolific recording artist, John's numerous CD's have topped the Classical and Classical Crossover Charts since the mid-80's and many are still available today. His best selling collections include, Bach on Abbey Road (Billboard Magazine's top 10 Classical Crossover recordings of the 1980's), Bach Meets The Beatles, and, The Puccini Album (Billboard Magazine's #1 top selling album for 19 weeks),

In 2008, John suffered a stroke, but it has not stopped his music making.