Originally from northern Ontario, John Kraus is an alumnus of Western University, London, where he studied Music Education. He studied clarinet with Jerome Summers, Robert Riesling and Robert Sheffield and conducting with Jerome Summers and William Gordon. As an undergraduate student John was invited to participate in the graduate conducting seminar at Western, where he first conducted the University Orchestra, performing the second movement of Brahms’ Symphony No. 3. The following year, John had the opportunity to work with Professor Gordon as his assistant, and conducted the University Wind Ensemble during the academic year. After graduating, John was able to work with Wayne Toews and Morihiro Okabe, both proponents of the conducting methods of Saito, as part of an intensive summer program in the early 1990’s.

As the founding music director of the [Durham Chamber Orchestra](http://www.durhamchamberorchestra.com/) (1996-2007), the Lakeridge Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (1998-1999), and the Music Director of the [Clarington Concert Band](http://claringtonconcertband.ca/) (2011-2013), the former music director and conductor of the [Northumberland Orchestra and Choir](http://www.northumberlandmusic.ca/) (May 2013 to November 2023), and as the current Music Director of the [Parkdale Symphony Orchestra,](https://www.parkdaleorchestra.ca) Ottawa (2022 to present), John has worked in many different genres and with many local and international talents, including Mary Elizabeth Brown, Anastasia Rizikov, Adam Nelson, Ron Korb, Quartetto Gelato, Susan Elizabeth Brown, Molly Johnson and the Sultans of String. John’s conducting credits include performances of Korngold’s Violin Concerto, Karl Jenkins’ The Armed Man; A Mass for Peace, Saint-Saens’ Christmas Oratorio, Michael Conway Baker’s Clarinet Concerto, Gloria for soprano, choir & orchestra by Poulenc, the Concerto for Piano and Orchestra in Eb+ by Lizst, as well as Canadian and world premiere’s of works by Canadian composers Michael Nunes, Vince Gassi, David Tanner and Brent Straughan. Other recent engagements include Brahms’ Symphony No. 3, Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto, the Faure Requiem, Vaughan Williams The Lark Ascending, Paganini’s Violin Concerto No. 1, the Saint-Saens Christmas Oratorio, a concert performance of Puccini’s Turandot, Strauss’ Four Last Songs and an evening Quartetto Gelato.

In the fall of 2017, John was nominated as one of five national candidates to be considered for the Heinz Unger Award. This honour, administrated by the Ontario Arts Council, recognizes an emerging professional conductor, who has demonstrated their skill and abilities and is making an impact in their chosen field. He has also been a member of [Orchestras Canada](https://oc.ca/en/), participating in webinars, on-going discussions about live music making and providing library resources to orchestras across North America.

John has conducted, performed and recorded as part of funk bands, jazz ensembles, musical theatre pit orchestras, wind bands, orchestras, choirs and chamber ensembles. As well John has assisted in the creation of many professional recordings as an editor, performer and producer. As clarinetist with the Lavender Chamber Ensemble, a collective of professional musicians from south and central Ontario, as a saxophone player with the Electric City Swing Band, and as a freelance performer, John has had the chance to perform solo and chamber works including Michael Conway Baker’s Clarinet Concerto, the Beethoven Septet and Mozart’s Kegelstatt Trio. He also hosts ‘Maestro’s Picks’, a weekly hour long Classical music radio program, that can be heard on Northumberland 89.7 and CKLU 96.7, Sudbury, ‘live’ and through podcasts.

John is an active member of the [Ontario Music Educators Association](https://www.omea.on.ca/) and leads school workshops with students and with teachers as well as annual conference sessions on 'best practices', creativity and composition, and technology in the Music classroom. As a dedicated educator with more than 25 years spent working with students, young and old, from around the world, John continues to share his passion for Music. Many of his students have gone on to study Music at the University of Toronto, McGill, Western, Laurier, Berklee College Boston, and have developed careers in broadcasting, education, entertainment law, composition and performance. John regularly conducted honour high school ensembles as part of the annual Conference of Independent Schools Music Festival (CISMF), held annually each spring at Roy Thomson Hall, Toronto. He works with amateur adult musicians who may have entered the arena for the first time or who have returned to something that they began as youngsters, working as a volunteer with the [Liftlock Bands](http://liftlockbands.ca/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) ‘New Horizons’ organization, Peterborough, and as an instructor at the Lake Field Music summer camp, Lakefield, Ontario. John has also worked as a coach with the woodwind, brass and percussion sections of the [La Jeunesse Youth Orchestra](http://www.ljyo.ca/), Port Hope and a guest conductor, in rehearsal, with the [Kawartha Youth Orchestra](https://www.kawarthayouthorchestra.org/), Peterborough. He regularly works with ensembles preparing for festivals as well as an adjudicator. John has been an active member of the [Canadian Music Festival Adjudicators Association](http://cmfaa.ca/)since 2014, hearing performances at the local, regional and provincial levels of competition.

In his spare time John enjoys skiing, playing golf, softball and goal for pick-up hockey games, reading, smoking any type of meat for dinners with friends and riding his motorcycle.