

ROBERT PATERSON Long Biography

“Robert Paterson could probably set a telephone book to music and create something that captivates.” --Gramophone

Robert Paterson’s music has been praised for its elegance, wit, rhythmic vitality, and wonderful sense of color that “often seems to shimmer.” In the 2016-17 season he will have the first evening-length, fully-staged opera production of his career: *Three Way*, a trio of comic operas with libretto by David Cote “about craving and connection,” co-produced by Nashville Opera and American Opera Projects, will have its world premiere in Nashville and its New York premiere at the Brooklyn Academy of Music.

Paterson’s music has been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, New York New Music Ensemble, California EAR Unit, and Ensemble Aleph in Paris. In 2011, he was named Composer of The Year by the Classical Recording Foundation with a performance and celebration at Carnegie's Weill Hall. His music is featured in more than 20 recordings and has been on the Grammy® ballot annually since 2012.

Recent performances of Paterson’s works include *Ghost Theater*, commissioned by the Albany Symphony, *Dark Mountains* with Jaime Laredo and the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, and *A Dream Within a Dream*, commissioned by the Chamber Choir of Europe. His work *The Book of Goddesses*, performed by the ensemble MAYA on recording, was named one of the Top 10 favorite pieces of the year by NPR’s Best Music of 2012; his most recent recording is the highly-praised *Eternal Reflections*, a disc of choral music performed by Musica Sacra conducted by Kent Tritle. He is the founder and artistic director of American Modern Ensemble, and he directs the affiliated record label, American Modern Recordings (AMR), which is distributed by Naxos.

Last season’s highlights include the New York premiere of his opera *The Whole Truth* with a libretto by Mark Campbell, showcased at Opera America. *Walt's America*, a work for soprano, baritone, and chorus, was premiered by the Gulf Coast Symphony, *Moon Music* by the Claremont Trio, and *Graffiti Canons* by the Volti choir of San Francisco. His work *I See You* for string orchestra was performed by an all-star orchestra, conducted by Delta David Gier, consisting of the JACK Quartet, Del Sol Quartet, PUBLIQuartet and string players from the American Modern Ensemble in 2015. In Aspen, *Shine* received its world premiere performance by the American Brass Quintet, which is continuing to feature the work on its tour programs.

In addition to writing orchestral works and operas, Paterson is passionate about composing for choir. *Eternal Reflections*, an album of Paterson’s choral music was recorded by Musica Sacra led by Kent Tritle, released in 2015. Paterson was one of the Volti choir's first Choral Arts Laboratory composers, and won the Cincinnati Camerata Competition for his setting of “Do Not

Stand at My Grave and Weep” (text by Mary Frye). The panel chose his work for its “expressive choral writing, text painting and imaginatively beautiful textures.”

Having written more than 80 works to date, Paterson has received accolades and won awards for his works in virtually every classical genre. His awards include the Copland Award, a three-year Music Alive! grant from the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA, the American Composers Forum, the Utah Arts Festival Commission Competition, Cincinnati Camerata Composition Competitions, and two ASCAP Young Composer Awards. Fellowships include Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, the Aspen Music Festival, the Hambidge Center for the Creative Arts and Sciences, and the Atlantic Center for the Arts.

In the late 1980s, Paterson pioneered the development of a six-mallet marimba technique. He presented the world’s first all six-mallet marimba recital at the Eastman School of Music in 1993, and released the first-ever album of six mallet music, *Six Mallet Marimba*, in 2012 (AMR) to a sold out crowd at the Rubin Museum in New York. In 2005, Paterson founded the American Modern Ensemble (AME), which spotlights American music via lively thematic programming. He serves as artistic director for AME as well as house composer, frequently contributing new pieces to the ensemble, and he directs the affiliated record label, American Modern Recordings (AMR), which is distributed by NAXOS.

Born in 1970, Paterson was raised in Buffalo, New York, the son of a sculptor and a painter. Although his first love was percussion, he soon discovered a passion for composition, writing his first piece at age 13. He holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music (BM), Indiana University (MM), and Cornell University (DMA). Paterson gives master classes at numerous colleges and universities, most recently at the Curtis Institute of Music, Aspen Music School & Festival, the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He resides in New York City with his wife, Victoria, and son, Dylan, and summers in Maine, where he is the director of the composition program at the Atlantic Music Festival.

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