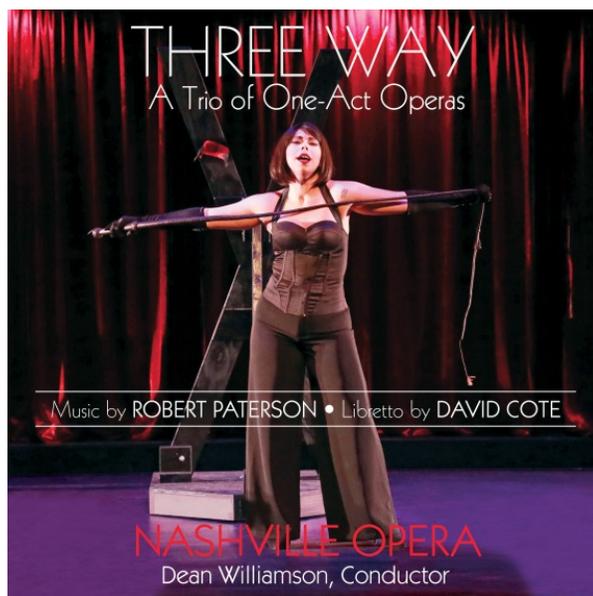




Contact: Jennifer Wada Communications
718-855-7101
jennifer@wadacommunications.com
www.wadacommunications.com

AMERICAN MODERN RECORDINGS PRESENTS
THE ORIGINAL NASHVILLE OPERA CAST RECORDING OF
THREE WAY
MUSIC BY ROBERT PATERSON, LIBRETTO BY DAVID COTE
A TRIO OF ONE-ACT OPERAS ABOUT CRAVING & CONNECTION
Release Date: November 17, 2017



Three Way CD cover ([download](#) in hi-res)

Featuring Eliza Bonet, Melisa Bonetti, Samuel Levine, Wes Mason, Danielle Pastin, Courtney Ruckman, Jordan Rutter, Matthew Treviño
Conducted by Dean Williamson

Three Way is an excellent comic opera that will appeal to audiences well steeped in opera as well as those who are new to the experience. ... Paterson is a highly skilled composer who writes in a melodic, tonal style. His versatility was most impressive and his scoring was superb. ... Cote's libretto was lively and delicious.

– Arlo McKinnon, *Opera News*

Cleverly told over three acts, this was a sophisticated, exceptionally romantic, and even tender take on the silly vagaries of sex. ...young newcomers to opera will delight in this lighthearted work. ... Clearly the kind of three way worth having.

– Joel Rozen, *Parterre Box*

Eliza Bonet and Matthew Treviño did so well as the antagonists of Safe Word that it seemed only fitting that, as Jillian and Bruce, they oversaw the frolicking of Masquerade. Danielle Pastin brought out Maya's frustrations, Courtney Ruckman displayed a pert lyrical soprano as "a wife seeking spice" and Melisa Bonetti and Jordan Rutter stood out as the postgender couple.

– George Loomis, *Opera Magazine*

In three acts, the composer and librettist explore a trio of carnal situations, often with surprisingly touching – and funny – results.

– Bruce Hodges, *Musical America*

Paterson and Cote never judge the characters or their choices — their common humanity is amplified by the music.

– Eli Jacobson, *Gay City News*

While gender-bending performers have graced opera stages for centuries, Masquerade contains what may be the first characters that self-identify as gender fluid in song.

– Stephen Raskauskas, *WFMT*

An intriguing treatise on power, passion and human connection. Paterson's music is quite mesmerizing ... rich and vibrant.

– Amy Stumpfl, *The Tennessean*

On November 17, 2017, American Modern Recordings releases the world premiere recording of Robert Paterson's [Three Way](#), a "titillating and clever" (*Time Out New York*) trio of one-act operas for eight singers and chamber orchestra. Exploring the possible future – and the eternal questions – of love, sex, and need with Robert Paterson's "strikingly sonorous ensemble writing" (*Opera magazine*) and David Cote's "witty, perceptive libretto" (*New York Observer*), *Three Way* is "clearly the kind of three way worth having" (*Parterre Box*). Co-produced by Nashville Opera and American Opera Projects, the work received its world premiere January 27-29, 2017, in Nashville, and its New York premiere June 15-18 at BAM.

The Companion (Act I) is about Maya and her live-in lover Joe, a biomorphic android. *Safe Word* (Act II) explores an encounter between a dominatrix and her businessman client that goes places no one expects. And Act III, *Masquerade*, dramatizes a party at a mansion in which four couples don masks and shed their outer selves.

The AMR recording features Nashville Opera conducted by Dean Williamson, and the original cast: Eliza Bonet, Melisa Bonetti, Samuel Levine, Wes Mason, Danielle Pastin, Courtney Ruckman, Jordan Rutter, and Matthew Trevino. Produced by multi-Grammy® winning producer Blanton Alspaugh, it was recorded at the famed Ocean Way Nashville Studios in June of this year.

Watch arias from *Three Way*:

From *The Companion*: ["Broken Machines"](#) (Wes Mason)

What do you want?/The perfect man?/Or an imitation of the image of perfection?/The difference between you and me/Is this: I know my home is empty.

From *Safe Word*: ["Pain and Release"](#) (Eliza Bonet)

My pleasure, your pain/Your leisure, my gain/It hurts so exquisitely/I'm so glad you could visit me.

From *Masquerade*: ["Why So Shy?"](#) (Jordan Rutter)

If we stop caring/With whom we do it/And how we do it/And why we do it/People would share.

Entire playlist: [Arias from *Three Way*](#)

The *Three Way* recording is a two-disc package, with a booklet including notes on the production and the entire libretto. It is priced at \$14.99 on [Amazon](#). Those purchasing the recording on [iTunes](#), for a price of \$19.99, receive two bonus tracks of interviews with the singers.

"A Sexbot, a Dominatrix and a Swinger Walk into an Opera: About the Creation of *Three Way*" – An Excerpt from the Liner Notes

For centuries, operas have been written about sexual obsession, coercion, deviance, and defiance. Forbidden love, unchecked lust, and tragic romance are the bread and butter of the classical repertoire. But few works chart the outer edge of human desire and invite the laughter of recognition at the same time. Composer Robert Paterson and librettist David Cote went there.

A few years ago, after a frustrating experience with securing rights, the two decided to create an original, chamber-size work that could be presented in whole or parts. But about what? Sexuality, subcultures and fetishes bubbled up in their meetings as a rich, contemporary vein to explore. First came a story about a dominatrix and her client, which would include role-play, extreme emotions and physical danger—ripe territory for an opera. Next, they went back and mined their lifelong fondness for science fiction, to fashion a story about technology and its discontents. The final frontier was inevitable: a party at which guests from different walks of life shed their social norms—and clothes— to melt into genderless, pansexual anarchy. Thus: three one-act comic operas about craving and connection were born.

As the ideas took shape, Paterson and Cote wove in cheeky allusions to classic operas that shared their themes: *The Companion* owes a debt to the "Olympia" act of *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*; *Safe Word* namechecks the femmes fatales of *Salome* and *Tosca*.

In his compositional approach, Paterson embraced a principle of melody and unity. "I want it to feel good for the singer, in the sense that I don't want to write against the voice," the composer explains. All told, *Three Way* contains a dozen detachable, bona fide arias that Paterson and

Cote have collected into two songbooks. "I think a lot about setting the instruments around the voice so the voice has space to be heard," Paterson adds. "I want the words to be as clear as I can make them. I probably do more experimental stuff in the instrumental writing around the voice than I do with the voices themselves."

In terms of the libretto, Cote also wanted maximum clarity for the stories and characters. "I wanted the dialogue to be realistic but not banal, a little heightened, but not gratingly poetic," he says. "Sometimes abstract, poetic language is called for, but that takes a good ear for character and story. Some of the arias are quite traditional, virtually Broadway song lyrics." Cote explained the special storytelling challenges for the last act, *Masquerade*, set at a swingers' party. "You know how they say, 'Show, don't tell' in writing classes?" he asks. "Can't really do that with an orgy—unless you're after shock for shock's sake. And you can't simply 'tell' either, that's just sung-through graphic banter. Our solution was to craft a comedy of manners, in which words dance around messy realities and mixed emotions."

(Some quotes originally appeared on [The Log Journal](#) and [New Music Box](#).)

Robert Paterson's music is acclaimed for its elegance, wit, structural integrity, and a wonderful sense of color. Paterson was awarded Composer of The Year from the Classical Recording Foundation, at Carnegie's Weill Hall in 2011. His music has been on the Grammy® ballot yearly, and his music was included in "Best of 2012" on National Public Radio. His works have been performed by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, among others. Paterson gives master classes at universities, including the Curtis Institute of Music, Aspen Music Festival, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Paterson is the Artistic Director of the American Modern Ensemble and American Modern Recordings, and resides in New York City with his wife, violinist Victoria Paterson, and their son, Dylan. Robert and Victoria have founded the Mostly Modern Festival (www.mostlymodernfestival.org), a new summer music festival launching in 2018 devoted (mostly) to the music of our time. www.robertpaterson.com.

David Cote is a playwright, librettist and journalist based in New York. Opera libretti include *The Scarlet Ibis* and *Fade* (Stefan Weisman) and the Black Lives Matter monodrama for baritone and orchestra *Invitation to a Die-In* (Nkeiru Okoye). David's song cycle with Robert Paterson, *In Real Life*, had its New York premiere in April. His choral works with Paterson, *Did You Hear?* and *Snow Day*, were sung by Musica Sacra, conducted by Kent Tritle and released on *Eternal Reflections* (American Modern Recordings). Plays include *Otherland* (O'Neill National Playwrights Conference finalist) and *Fear of Art*. As a journalist and critic, David writes about theater and other topics for *The Village Voice*, *What Should We Do?* and elsewhere. He was the longest serving theater editor and chief drama critic of *Time Out New York* (2003-17). His reporting and reviews have also appeared in *American Theatre*, *Opera News*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*. Fellowships: The MacDowell Colony. He lives in Manhattan with his wife, audiobook narrator Katherine Kellgren. www.davidcote.com

American Modern Recordings AMR1048

THREE WAY – A Trio of Operas About Craving and Connection

By Robert Paterson, libretto by David Cote

John Hoomes, Director, Nashville Opera CEO & Artistic Director

Dean Williamson, Conductor

Amy Tate Williams, Accompanist

The Companion

Danielle Pastin, Soprano (Maya)

Samuel Levine, Tenor (Joe)

Wes Mason, Baritone (Dax)

Safe Word

Eliza Bonet, Mezzo-soprano (Domme)

Matthew Treviño, Bass (The Client)

Masquerade

Danielle Pastin, Soprano (Connie)

Courtney Ruckman, Soprano (Jessie)

Eliza Bonet, Mezzo-soprano (Jillian DeBridge)

Melisa Bonetti, Mezzo-soprano (Tyler)

Jordan Rutter, Countertenor (Kyle)

Samuel Levine, Tenor (Marcus)

Wes Mason, Baritone (Larry)

Matthew Treviño, Bass (Bruce DeBridge)

Recorded at Ocean Way Nashville, Studio A, June 22-24, 2017

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Executive Producers: Nashville Opera, John Canning, W. Gordon Harris, Robert & Victoria Paterson, Gary & Mindy Peacock, Rick & Kathleen Teller

Recording Engineer: John Newton

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Photo of Paterson and Cote: Kent Meister

Photo of Three Way Production Team: Victoria Paterson

World premiere production photos: Steven Pisano and Anthony Popolo

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