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The Indianapolis Quartet Releases Premiere Recording of Robert Paterson's String Quartets Nos. 1,2,3

Paterson's trademark technique and humor shine in this complete collection of his string quartets.



[The Indianapolis Quartet](#) is set to release the world premiere recording of composer [Robert Paterson](#)'s first three string quartets. The album, on [American Modern Recordings](#), is out on **July 15**. Called a “modern day master” by the *New York Times*, Robert Paterson wrote his first quartet in 2000, the second in 2019, and the third in 2020. When the Indianapolis Quartet premiered the third quartet at Carnegie Hall in 2020, it was hailed as a “tour de force of tight ensemble and interplay” by *New York Classical Review*. That

performance inspired Paterson and the quartet to pursue a complete recording of all his music for string quartet to date.

When asked about the time between his first and second quartets, Paterson states:

“I think I waited so long because I was looking for just the right quartets to commission and premiere these works. I really like working as closely as possible with chamber ensembles (or any



ensembles, for that matter) when I compose new works, so it's important for me to really get to know the ensembles I am working with. I like to hang out with the group members and really get to know who they are and what they are all about, because that makes the pieces more personal, and ultimately, much more interesting. I like creating stories behind the pieces I compose."

Paterson originally composed his String Quartet No. 2 for the Euclid Quartet, which is coincidentally, also based in Indiana. Right on the heels of that quartet, the Indianapolis Quartet commissioned Paterson to compose his String Quartet No. 3. Violinist Joana Genova discusses getting to know Paterson and his music:

"I immediately felt that Robert's musical style was connected to the personality of our quartet – as a group and as individuals. We laugh a lot when we work together. There is a certain energy flowing between us – we always search for color and depth, for a fresh interpretation. One of my personal favorite movements is 'Logy,' described as three boys fiddling around while the mother is quipping at them to stop. But then again, I love every single movement of each quartet for a different reason. I am partial to the way Robert personalized Quartet No. 3. The quartet met with him over face time to discuss the commission and to make a 'wish list.' He immediately picked up on the dynamic between the four of us and came up with a creative piece that is filled with drive, humor, beauty, and constant shifts in mood. In that way, it's emblematic of our group."

All three highly colorful works have various similarities: they all use copious extended techniques, but not for the sake of the techniques themselves, but as an integral part of the music itself. He also uses quotes in all three works: the loveably campy "Love Boat" theme in Quartet No 1, quotes from music by Edvard Grieg in String Quartet No. 2, and snippets of various anthems in the last movement of String Quartet No. 3. All three quartets are crafted as multiple-movement works, and they are all imbued with Paterson's characteristic wit, technical prowess, and vibrant personality.





The Indianapolis Quartet **ROBERT PATERSON –** **STRING QUARTETS 1-3**

Release Date: July 15, 2022

Format: Digital, CD

[American Modern Recordings](#)

TRACKS

String Quartet No. 1

1. *I. Fast and Sprightly*
2. *II. Logy*
3. *III. Sad, Luscious Adagio*
4. *IV. Energetic Polka*

String Quartet No. 2

5. *I. Colored Fields*
6. *II. Rigor Mortis*
7. *III. Dolente*
8. *IV. Scherzando*
9. *V. Collage*

String Quartet No. 3

10. *I. Twist and Shout*
11. *II. Poet Voice*
12. *III. Auction Chant*
13. *IV. Effects Pedal*
14. *V. Anthem*



CREDITS

The album was recorded by the Indianapolis Quartet at Ruth Lilly Performance Hall in the Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center, at the University of Indianapolis, and was produced by Adam Abeshouse.





ROBERT PATERSON

Described by the press as “a modern-day master” (AXS.com) and the “highlight of the program” (New York Times), Robert Paterson has won numerous awards for his music in virtually every classical genre. The Classical Recording Foundation at Carnegie’s Weill Hall named Paterson Composer of The Year in 2011, and his music has been on the Grammy ballot for the past six seasons. His works have appeared on National Public Radio’s Best of the Year lists for classical music and regularly appear on radio playlists across the United States. Paterson’s music has been performed by over one hundred outstanding ensembles, including Nashville Opera (for the world premiere of *Three Way* with a libretto by David Cote), Opera Orlando, Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Delaware Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, and the Buffalo Philharmonic. Recent commissions include *Ghost Theater* for the Albany Symphony

and the first ever commission for the New York Choral Consortium’s annual “Big Sing” event. Paterson’s awards include the A.I. duPont Composer’s Award from the Delaware Symphony, a three-year Music Alive grant from the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA, and an American Composers Forum commission through the Jerome Composers Commissioning Program. He resides in New York City and Saratoga Springs, NY with his wife, Victoria, and son, Dylan, and together he and his wife co-direct Mostly Modern Projects, a non-profit that focuses on performing and recording music by living composers.

THE INDIANAPOLIS QUARTET

The Indianapolis Quartet—with members Zachary DePue, violin; Joana Genova, violin; Michael Isaac Strauss, viola; and Austin Huntington, cello – serves as quartet-in-residence at the University of Indianapolis. Founded in 2016, the ensemble has been praised for “its energetic, often kinetic, enthusiasm, and each player’s individual virtuosity and flexibility” (*New York Concert Review*). The members’ palpable rapport and interpretive skills bring about performances of a unique emotional style that have earned the group critical acclaim and audience adoration.

The Indianapolis Quartet garnered accolades for its Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall debut in March 2020, premiering Robert Paterson’s String Quartet No. 3 “in a tour de force of tight ensemble and interplay” (*New York Classical Review*), along with works by Debussy, Schumann, and Frank Felice.

The ensemble has performed at Lutkin Hall at Northwestern University in Chicago, Indiana



Landmarks Center, Tippecanoe Chamber Music Society in Lafayette, Indiana, Illinois Wesleyan University, St. Francis@4 series in Cincinnati, and the Duckwall Artist Series at Butler University, among other engagements. They have also served as ensemble-in-residence at the Taconic Music Festival in Manchester, Vermont, Sonoran Chamber Music Festival at Arizona State University and at Indiana State University's 53rd annual Contemporary Music Festival.

They have also given numerous live performances on Vermont Public Radio, WBAA Classical 101.3 FM in West Lafayette, Indiana, and on WISH-TV in Indianapolis.

Guest artist collaborations on their home series at the Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center in Indianapolis and on tour have included acclaimed performances with renowned concert artists Mark Kosower, Todd Palmer, Atar Arad, Eric Kim, Drew Petersen, Soyeon Kate Lee, Carrie Dennis, Nick Canellakis, and Orli Shaham. "The quartet and Shaham fashioned a reading of great tenderness and variety, serious as all get-out when it needed to be, exuberantly driven when appropriate, and fully responsive to that summit of Brahmsiness, the Allegro non troppo." (Jay Harvey Upstage).

In addition to their extensive repertoire of classical, romantic and 20th-century works, the Indianapolis Quartet has commissioned and performed new works by Robert Paterson, Frank Felice, Matthew Bridgman, and John Berners. The ensemble can be heard on composer Frank Felice's monograph recording *Reflections and Whimsies: Chamber Music for Strings and Voice*.



LINER NOTES BY ROBERT PATERSON

String Quartet No. 1

My original intent with this work was to write a set of four independent miniatures. After writing the first maximally-sized one, I decided to change course: these four “miniatures” are now my String Quartet No. 1.

Although these four movements are designed to be independent, small amounts of material are used interchangeably between each movement. Most notably, material from the first two movements is used in the third, and material from the third movement is used in the fourth.

The most prominent aural feature of the first movement, *Fast and Sprightly*, is the recurring “clarion” motive. This motive evolves into various thematic gestures and also reappears in the next two movements. Another prominent feature of the first movement is the use of jazz references. The string quartet is required to “swing,” a style of playing usually only utilized by jazz musicians and big bands.

The second movement, *Logy*, begins by parodying North American, southern-style country waltzes. While composing this movement, I had visions of my mother interrupting “Three good ol’ boys fiddlin’ on a porch in Rabun Gap, GA,” quipping at them to stop. The quipping is represented by the first violinist interjecting the “Rob-ert” theme. This strange, surrealistic daydream probably originates from memories of my mother calling my name from the other side of the bedroom door when I was a boy.

A section called “Andrew Lloyd Webber Disease” occurs in the middle of the second movement. This section is a schizophrenic alternation of a sick, dissonant, violin duo with an Andrew Lloyd Webber-sounding viola and cello duo. By the end of the movement, my mother joins the “Good ol’ boys” for a final song, after they have all become sick from eating too many boiled peanuts.

The third movement, *Sad, Luscious Adagio*, uses material from the first and second movements, but at a much slower tempo. Each player has a featured solo in this movement: the cellist plays a solo in double-stops and the violinist plays one made up of almost entirely artificial harmonics. The second violin and viola solos are intended to highlight the instruments’ singing qualities and the performers’ lyrical abilities. As with Logy, I use material recycled from previous movements.

Although the fourth movement, *Energetic Polka*, is not a strict polka, it has a polka-like beginning. It also contains a few short “quotes,” the most notable one being the appropriation of the melodic line from the theme song from the television show *The Love Boat*.

Material from other movements is also used in Energetic Polka, particularly by the cello. The cellist never has a chance to play the “Pseudo-fugato” theme in Logy, so the cellist “aggressively” reintroduces it in this movement. Energetic Polka ends with a section entitled “Hyperfast shimmy and shake.”



String Quartet No. 2

In some ways, String Quartet No. 2 is similar to my String Quartet No. 1: the five movements are stylistically diverse, I use a few snippets of pre-existing music, and the music, while idiomatic, is technically demanding. As with my first quartet, this work explores technical and aesthetic ideas I didn't have a chance to explore in other works.

The first movement, *Colored Fields*, is inspired by abstract expressionist painters such as Mark Rothko, Kenneth Noland, and Barnett Newman, but also pointillist painters such as Georges Seurat and Paul Signac. There are textures that emerge and submerge using articulations that gradually shift from soft to loud, or short to long, and there are a few transitions that utilize a technique I call pitch phasing or phase modulation, as opposed to tempo phasing. In these transitions, two or more instruments gradually modulate (raise or lower) notes, motives, or phrases by gradual, very refined, microtonal, non-chromatic increments, settling on new pitch areas that directly reflect the previous areas, just modulated up or down. The movement ends softly with a virtual desaturation of the rhythmic material. I remove notes, one by one, until there's nothing left.

The second movement, *Rigor Mortis*, is inspired by a comic strip by David Lynch that newspapers ran for many years. In this strip, Lynch sketched a stressed-out, pitch-black dog, looking very mean and almost buzzing with anger; it looked like it was about to explode. Every strip began with an accompanying paragraph that read, "The dog who is so angry he cannot move. He cannot eat. He cannot sleep. He can just barely growl. Bound so tightly with tension and anger, he approaches the state of rigor mortis." This made me envision musicians playing with such ferocity and tension that the music seems to eventually cancel itself out, anger imploding in on itself. The movement begins with loud barking, represented by scratch tones on the strings. It then moves to a section representing the insane, growling dog running in circles. Next, there is a section inspired by some of the philosophical sentences Lynch used in this comic strip series. Then we hear the dog barking again, but he hears a familiar theme reminding him of his long-lost love, so he simmers down for a bit. However, he soon remembers his predicament and becomes angry again. The movement ends with more furious barking: he is overcome by distilled tension, imploding inward with a final, loud, buzzing unison tremolo.

The third movement, *Dolente*, is sad, lush, and mournful. The only request I had when writing this quartet was to incorporate a Norwegian fiddle tune or theme by Edvard Grieg, so I chose themes from Grieg's String Quartet No. 1. The form of this movement mimics the form of a song by Edvard Grieg's entitled *Spillemaend* (Minstrels, or Fiddlers). The poem that Grieg set in 1876 as the first of *Six Ibsen Songs* (Op. 25) is based on the Norwegian folktale of the fossegrim, a male water spirit who could teach the art of violin-playing, but often at the price of personal happiness. In some versions of the story, the poor violinist drowns in the end. Like the song, and echoing the second movement, this movement beginning with the protagonist's longing, his desire for the beloved. Next, he encounters the fossegrim, who promises that becoming a master of music will allow the protagonist to become master of his beloved. In the final stanza, the protagonist becomes a master fiddler, but he is now a cursed, wandering musician deprived of earthly love, so he drowns himself. As in Grieg's work, the fossegrim is



represented by tremolos, chromatic descents, unexpected dynamic contrasts, and dissonant harmonies such as fully-diminished seventh chords and augmented chords.

The humorous fourth movement, *Scherzando*, capitalizes on effects that at times, often make the string players sound inebriated. I make use of copious glissandi and tempos that fluctuate between 3/4 and 6/8, giving a sense of unease.

The final movement, *Collage*, is similar to the first movement in that it is inspired by the visual arts, and specifically, collage painting and works by surrealists. Many themes from the first four movements are brought together in this odd-metered movement.

String Quartet No. 2 commissioned by J. K. Billman and is written for and dedicated to the Euclid Quartet.

String Quartet No. 3

String Quartet No. 3 consists of five movements that explore “other voices,” either literally or figuratively. In a literal sense, this could mean speaking or singing in a way that is not considered normal or even out of one’s control. It could also mean speaking differently for a desired effect. Figuratively, “other voices” could mean a voice that is not one’s own. All five movements touch on these definitions in one way or another.

The first movement, *Twist and Shout*, uses musical patterns that sound like stuttering or someone who has a severe form of Tourette’s Syndrome. I use these sounds as a technical point of departure, incorporating jagged rhythms, erratic melodic patterns, and sudden volume shifts throughout the movement.

The second movement is entitled *Poet Voice*, and uses this style of reciting poems as a point of departure. In particular, this movement is based on a video of Louise Glück reading her poem “The Wild Iris,” which is included in a book of poems of the same name for which Glück won the Pulitzer Prize. Glück’s poem compares human suffering and finding a voice to the growth of a wild iris that makes a “passage from the other world” underground, despite the difficulty of breaking through. In the image of the wild iris, the explosion of color symbolizes new life. In this movement, I mimic Glück’s speech patterns and structure the movement around the sound of her voice and the content of her poem, essentially giving new life to her poetic reading.

The third movement, *Auction Chant*, is inspired by North American auctioneering, which is a rapid-fire, rhythmic repetition of numbers and “filler words” spoken by auctioneers in the process of conducting an auction. This movement is also inspired by country fiddle music, which is a type of music often played in areas where auctioneering takes place.

In the fourth movement, *Effects Pedal*, I mimic sounds made by electronic effects pedals—and in particular, a vocal effects pedal, but without the use of actual electronic effects on the stringed instruments. I also use musical effects that sound somewhat like swallowing helium,



which raises your voice when you inhale it, or sulfur hexafluoride, which lowers it.

The final movement is entitled *Anthem*. In this patriotic-sounding, yet slightly humorous movement, I weave together various sports themes and state songs from around the United States that are used to rile up fans at sports games.

String Quartet No. 3 was commissioned by The Indianapolis Quartet..

– Robert Paterson



THANKS. LET US KNOW IF YOU'D LIKE A PROMO.

