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Patrick Burke: *Flourish*

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PSO), one of the top orchestras in the country, hosts an annual *Composer of the Year* program in which a composer of national prominence is chosen for several performances and commissioned works.



The 2013-2014 season was different, however. Maestro Manfred Honeck designated it the “Year of the Pittsburgh Composer” in support of the many outstanding composers working in the City of Pittsburgh.

School of Music faculty member, Patrick Burke, was chosen along with 4 other Pittsburgh composers for a special project called *The Elements*—a newly commissioned work of 5 movements, each by a different composer.

“The unifying theme was the elements (earth, fire, water, metal, wood),” said Burke. “Each of us chose 1 or 2 elements to use as a metaphorical theme in our piece.”

The Elements premiered as a companion to Holst’s masterpiece *The Planets*, which was performed by the PSO in February 2014.

“My work, *Flourish*, used the elements of earth and water to guide the shape of the music,” Burke said. “I grew up in Pittsburgh, so the idea of earth (hills) and water (rivers) seemed like obvious choices. The title refers not only to my hope for the city of Pittsburgh, but also my son Isaiah, who was due to be born on premiere day but actually arrived a week and a half later. In September, I traveled with the symphony to Chapel Hill, NC for a repeat performance of the work, and I look forward to further performances in the future.”

Elizabeth Bloom, classical music critic for the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, said the following in her review:

“Patrick Burke’s *Flourish*, inspired by Pittsburgh’s hills, rivers, is a hopeful tribute to its future,” she said. “The music started with a pensive horn solo and jumpy strings but filled in fully with a rocking pulse and gorgeous melodies from the strings. Mr. Burke’s work brought out gorgeous sonorities from all sections.”



Incore

TODD GOODMAN

Todd Goodman (M.M. Composition, 2005) actively strives to open up the world of the fine arts to a wide range of audiences.

As an educator, Goodman teaches musicianship and composition at the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Charter School near Pittsburgh, PA. In 2012, he received a nomination for the inaugural GRAMMY Music Educator of the Year award and was chosen from more than 30,000 applicants to advance to the quarterfinals.

Goodman is also the founder and artistic director of the student-based contemporary art group, Ensemble Immersion. Based at the Lincoln Park Performing Arts Center, Ensemble Immersion combines music, dance, literature, film, visual arts, drama, set design, and audience interaction to create unique artistic experiences for audiences.

As a composer, Goodman has used pop culture to introduce opera to audiences who normally would not attend an operatic performance. On Halloween 2013, Goodman’s *Night of the Living Dead: the opera* was premiered by the Microscopic Opera at the Kelly Strayhorn Theater in Pittsburgh, PA. The opera, which is based on the classic horror film by George Romero, has the potential to draw audiences from both the opera and horror movie fan bases, increasing the potential of introducing operatic performance to new audiences. Regaled by judges as “...audacious, scary, sometimes campy – but always dead serious...,” *Night of the Living Dead: the opera* has won Goodman the 2014 American Prize in Composition-Theater division.

“I’m so blessed to be able to live my dream and create new art every day,” Goodman said. “And I hope that the notes I write bring joy to those who hear them.”