

Since his arrival in the mid-1960s, Paul Patterson has been one of the most prominent and widely-respected figures on the British compositional scene. Unusually enquiring and open-minded even within his generation of composers, he has long been an instrumental force in ridding the British compositional scene of any elements of insularity and narrow-mindedness. This achievement finds a reflection both in his long-standing activity as a teacher and in his music which, if unquestionably British in inflection, is just as unmistakably international in outlook.

From the outset, it was clear that Patterson's was a talent out of the ordinary. Establishing himself with the outrageous entertainment Rebecca (1965) and a sinewy Trumpet Concerto (1969), he would consolidate a burgeoning reputation with the effervescent Comedy for Five Winds (1972) and Timepiece (1973), this last written for the King's Singers who, by making it one of their pieces-de-resistance, turned it into his most widely-travelled work, with over 1000 performances to date.

Since then, he has built a sizable and impressively diverse corpus of works, ranging from chamber and orchestral music to choral and vocal works, alongside educational works of various shapes and sizes. Most prominent amongst these is the phenomenally successful Little Red Riding Hood for narrators and orchestra (1992), which has been performed all over the world since its premiere.

Amongst his orchestral works, the Concerto for Orchestra (1981) and the Violin Concerto (1992) stand out, alongside his coruscating orchestral seascape White Shadows on the Dark Horizon (1988) and the bracing Sinfonia for Strings (1982). out of a voluminous series of chamber and instrumental works, a muscular String Quartet (1986) must be singled out, together with his sparkling Cracowian Counterpoints for 14 players (1977), the brass quintet Mean Time (1985), the multi-faceted Luslawice Variations for solo violin (1984) and the witty Westerly Winds for wind quintet (1998).

But it is in the field of choral music that Patterson has made his most notable contribution. Choral works have punctuated Patterson's oeuvre throughout his career, from the volcanic Kyrie for chorus and piano (1972), the angry Requiem (1973) and the phantasmagoric Voices of Sleep (1979) to the more accessibly extrovert Te Deum (1988), Magnificat (1993) and, more recently, the Millennium Mass (1999).

Patterson's music has been performed by many orchestras in the UK and abroad, most notably the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, the Philharmonia Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, the Orchestra of St. John's, Smith Square, the London Sinfonietta, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the BBC Philharmonic, the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, the Academy of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the European Community Chamber Orchestra, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, the Hague Residentie Orchestra, the Toulouse Chamber Orchestra, the Polish Chamber Orchestra, the Albany Symphony Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, the Caracas Symphony Orchestra, the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

Conductors who have championed his music include Norman de Mar, Klaus Tennstedt, Franz Welser-Most, Yan Pascal Tortelier, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Richard Hickox, Barry Wordsworth, Nicholas Cleobury, Owain Arwel Hughes, Geoffrey Simon, Richard Pittman, Elgar Howarth, John Lubbock, Howard Williams and Ronald Spigelman.

His instrumental and chamber music has enjoyed the advocacy of innumerable committed exponents, most prominently Tasmin Little, Kenneth Sillitoe, Bradley Creswick, Erich Gruenberg, Grigori Zhislin, Kostanty Kulka, Maurice Hasson, Rivka Golani, Yuri Bashmet, Mstislav Rostropovich, Osian Ellis, Nicholas Daniel, Linda Merrick, Ifor James, Michael Thompson, John Wilbraham, the Delme' String Quartet, the Varsovia String Quartet, the Vega Wind Quintet, the Galliard Ensemble, the King's Singers, the London Gabrieli Brass Ensemble, London Brass Virtuosi and the Black Dyke Mills Brass Band.

At this point it would be customary to draw some kind of conclusion, but in Patterson's case such an approach would not make sense. For his is a career which is still flourishing and continually expanding, as the massive recent success of works such as Little Red Riding Hood, the Violin Concerto, the Magnificat and the Millennium Mass testify. And such a career will surely continue to flourish for a long time, with plenty more surprises still to come from this versatile and multi-faceted composer

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