

## **Biography: Maurice Patrick Byers**

Maurice Patrick Byers began music as an aspiring concert pianist studying with Olegna Fuschi. As a 16 year old, Miss Fuschi took him to the Chigiana in Sienna, Italy where he played Liszt's B minor sonata and Robert Ward's "Lamentation".

He subsequently changed to studies in composition with Louis Mennini and Robert Ward at the North Carolina School of the Arts (NCSA). Patrick is a graduate of the high school division of NCSA. He also earned his Bachelor degree in composition from NCSA. He continued his studies with Karel Husa, and orchestration with Sir Leo Arnaud, with whom their collaboration on the documentary "Amazon!" resulted in an invitation to the Royal Geographic Society, London for a presentation of the film and music. The film aired on The Discovery Channel in the US, the first film score to utilize a Peruvian samponia, used thereafter in other film scores and commercials by other composers.

The 1982 national tour of "Jazz Is", music composed and arranged by Mr. Byers, aired on National Public Television. A journey to find an "African Mozart" produced two films, African Adagio, and Symphony in Soweto, both airing on NC PBS 1992, followed by the composition "Music for Soweto MAMS", for viola and orchestra made possible with an NEA composers grant. Amadi Hummings was solo violist at the premiere.

In New York City, as president of Composers Group International, Inc., along with fellow composers from the city and an Empire State Partnership; dance, art, and original music for school curriculum was developed by the partnerships with American Ballet Theatre, Martha Graham Dance School, and the Nassau County Art Museum.

Mr. Byers is resident composer for the Laguardia Arts High School in New York City. He has composed over 30 scores for Shakespeare festivals and has composed for the Alabama Shakespeare Festival since 1994.

With a Surdna Foundation fellowship Mr. Byers travelled to Vietnam, 2002, to create a dance score for Tran Van Lai's October Ballet Company. Collaboration with US Probation in Washington created "Share the Fame" for Native American youth on reservations for their music and dance.

Mr. Byers' opera, "Incident at San Bajo" was produced by Riverside Opera Ensemble. It premiered March, 2001, at the Theatre for the New City in Manhattan, directed by Stephen Pickover, conducted by Nathan Matthews. The opera company presented premieres of songs by various American composers May 2004 at Merkin Concert Hall, performed with the program's composers, Scott Gendel, Patrick Byers, Stephen Dembski, Nathan Matthews, and David Del Tredici present.

Music faculty from the North Carolina School of the Arts recorded and at Merkin Hall, November 2003, gave NYC premieres of "Moby Dick" sonata, "Music History Quartet" Duo pianists, Ralph Neiweem and Claire Aebersold gave Chicago and New York premieres of 'Great Movements' sonata for four hands 2005-06, also broadcast on Chicago public radio WFMT. Mr. Byers is a member of ASCAP.