

## The Alfred I. duPont Composer's Award



Alfred I. duPont

Alfred I. duPont (1864-1935) was a remarkable man. He was a businessman, a musician, an inventor, a communicator, and a philanthropist. Of all his accomplishments, one of the greatest is evident today in the Delaware Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. duPont had a great passion for music. He played four instruments and took great pleasure in composing music, mostly marches. His infectious enthusiasm enabled him to gather enough musicians to form an orchestra in Wilmington, which he rehearsed and conducted. At first, the group was referred to as “Al’s Band,” since there were few strings and the men marched in parades on national holidays. Mr. duPont, however, always referred to his ensemble as an orchestra.

In time, the group was dubbed the “Tankopanicum Orchestra” by Mr. duPont and was considered the most popular musical organization in Wilmington at the turn of the twentieth century. The word “Tankopanicum” is a traditional Native American name associated with the Brandywine Creek. It means “rushing waters of the Brandywine” and refers to the gorge that runs from the Bancroft Mill up to Rockland.

The first rehearsals were held in the DuPont Company’s machine shop. When a piano was needed, the musicians gathered in the parlor of the duPont family residence, Swamp Hall. By 1904, rehearsals were being held in the Hagley Community House at the foot of Breck’s Lane.

The orchestra was composed of many of the duPont powder mill workers as well as other local citizens. Some of the early members included the superintendent of a cotton mill, a family doctor, a millwright apprentice, a blacksmith, a machinist, a hardware store worker, and many members of the duPont family. Mr. duPont conducted and played first violin, clarinet, cornet, or the piano, depending on what was needed.

Mr. duPont continued with the “Tankopanicum Orchestra” until his hearing loss forced him to stop. The orchestra gradually changed and grew over the years, becoming “The Wilmington Orchestra,” “The Wilmington Symphony Club,” “The Wilmington Symphony Orchestra,” and finally, “The Delaware Symphony Orchestra.”

The A. I. duPont Composer’s Award is made possible by the Alfred I. duPont Foundation. It was instituted in 1985 by the DSO to honor him. This award recognizes a distinguished living American composer or conductor who has made a significant contribution in the field of contemporary classical music. Past winners are among the most celebrated composers of

recent history, including Morton Gould, John Adams, Robert Ward, Phillip Glass, George Crumb, Libby Larsen, Jennifer Higdon, Aaron Jay Kernis, Kevin Puts, Christopher Theofanidis, and Andre Previn.

## Recipient Robert Paterson



Robert Paterson

A 'modern day master' and often the 'highlight of the program' (*The New York Times*), Robert Paterson's music is loved for its elegance, wit, structural integrity, and a wonderful sense of color. Paterson was named The Composer of The Year from the Classical Recording Foundation with a performance at Carnegie's Weill Hall in 2011. His music has been on the Grammy® ballot yearly, and his works were named 'Best Music of 2012' on National Public Radio. His works have been played

by the Louisville Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, American Composers Orchestra, Austin Symphony, Vermont Symphony, BargeMusic, and the Albany Symphony Dogs of Desire, among others. Paterson's choral works were recorded by Musica Sacra and maestro Kent Tritle, with a world premiere performance at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City in 2015.

Season highlights included The Nashville Opera world premiere of THREE WAY in January, 2017 and then Nashville performed the opera at BAM in Brooklyn, June, 2017. The New York Premiere of his opera, The Whole Truth with a libretto by Mark Campbell, sold out in January 2016, at Dixon Place in New York City. Other premieres & commissions include Shine for the American Brass Quintet, Moon Music for the Claremont Trio, and Graffiti Canons for the Volti Choir of San Francisco. Notable awards include winner of the Utah Arts Festival, the Copland Award, ASCAP Young Composer Awards, a three year Music Alive! grant from the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA, and yearly ASCAP awards. Fellowships include Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, and the Aspen Music Festival.

Paterson holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music (BM), Indiana University (MM), and Cornell University (DMA). Paterson gives master classes at colleges and universities, most recently at the Curtis Institute of Music, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. Paterson is the Artistic Director of the American Modern Ensemble and resides in NYC with his wife Victoria, and their son, Dylan. For more information, visit [robertpaterson.com](http://robertpaterson.com).