

Music by **ROBERT PATERSON**



Lyrics & Libretto by **DAVID COTE**



**AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE**

Steven Osgood, Conductor

Marnie Breckenridge, Soprano • Jorell Williams, Baritone

## From Fantasy to Real Life

*In Real Life* was originally conceived as a set of dating app songs for a soprano and piano called *In Real Life* (retitled *In Real Life I*), commissioned by Austin Chamber Ensemble's Artistic Director Martha Mortensen Ahern, in honor of its 35th season. Getting into the heads (and hearts) of five different women looking for romance was so much fun, we wondered, what would a similar cycle for baritone sound like? Millions of people have relatable stories searching for love online, what sort of men are out there, looking and longing? The result was *In Real Life II*, a set of songs representing the male romantic quest.

As a full evening program, *In Real Life* consists of three pieces for solo singer and ensemble or piano: *In Real Life I* (for soprano), *In Real Life II* (for baritone), and *Extraordinary*, a final duet for soprano and baritone. These works may be performed together, separately, one cycle after the other, or with the songs alternating from soprano to baritone, back and forth. If the cycles are performed together, we envision the duet ending the evening.

By the time you listen to this recording, we may even have written mini-monologues to weave between songs, creating a music-theater work in which audiences can follow each character's journey. Like all romantic affairs, it's a work in progress!

— Robert Paterson & David Cote

### Tracks

#### *In Real Life I*

Marnie Breckenridge, Soprano

1. A Regular Woman 4'24"
2. Late Bloomer 5'21"
3. Anastasia 4'44"
4. Collateral 7'16"
5. Rewind 4'45"

#### *In Real Life II*

Jorell Williams, Baritone

6. Ain't No Frog 4'11"
7. Sola Fide 5'59"
8. Die With Me 4'09"
9. Still Vamping 5'07"
10. Nice-Plus 5'35"

#### 11. *Extraordinary* 8'52"

Marnie Breckenridge, Soprano; Jorell Williams, Baritone

**TOTAL TIME: 60'30"**

## American Modern Ensemble

Steven Osgood, conductor  
Marnie Breckenridge, soprano  
Jorell Williams, baritone  
John Romeri, flute  
Keve Wilson, oboe  
Nuno Antunes, clarinet  
Matthew Ward, percussion  
Blair McMillen, piano  
Robin Braun, violin  
Peter Sachon, cello

### Program Notes

#### *In Real Life I*

Forty million Americans do it: join a dating app hoping to find true love in digital space. *In Real Life I* is a song cycle for soprano and chamber ensemble or piano that explores the humor and heartbreak of this modern ritual. Five women fill out their dating-site profiles, opening a window into their worlds. The first song is "A Regular Woman," in which a lady outlines the exact sort of man she's looking for with absurd specificity, perfect for today's on-demand culture. "Late Bloomer" is a sweet and wistful portrait of a woman who learns in her 40s that her tastes have changed radically. Next, in "Anastasia," we hear from a Russian (or a bot?) looking for a husband—with all the broken English that entails. With "Collateral," the mood turns dark, as a war widow contemplates returning to the dating pool. Finally, "Rewind" is a nostalgic anthem by a 35-year-old whose divorce has made her feel like an awkward teen again. Can she learn something from her younger self? Funny and sad yet full of hope, *In Real Life I* is about reality, fantasy, and second chances.

*In Real Life I* was commissioned by Austin Chamber Ensemble Artistic Director Martha Mortensen Ahern, in honor of its 35th season.

#### *In Real Life II*

As a follow-up to *In Real Life I* Robert and I agreed the concept of five characters looking for love online should have a male counterpart. Written for baritone and chamber ensemble or piano, *In Real Life II* looks at five contemporary men clicking their way to second chances and romance. In "No Frog" we meet a prototypical player, a guy who fluffs his profile, but the truth keeps slipping out. The tone shifts with "Sola Fide," in which a U.S. veteran of the war in Afghanistan explains the tattoo on his chest and the wounds inside. An older gentleman envisions one last fling in the irreverent "Die With Me." In "Still Vamping," a gay man muses ruefully on his start-and-stop romantic history. Finally, in "Nice-Plus," an everyday, unassuming singleton reveals his hidden passion.

*In Real Life II* was commissioned by American Modern Ensemble with funding from the Gerson Family Foundation.

## ***Extraordinary***

After two cycles of longing, loss, and sparks of hope, Robert and I knew our singers had to meet. We wrote this scene/duet to cap *In Real Life I* and *In Real Life II*, for a man and a woman who connect online and decide, during a rather complicated time, to go on a date. In the scene, Brian and Angela met on a dating app and exchanged messages over the course of a couple of weeks. They've shared pictures (a pet, their bookshelves, and so forth) and now they've arranged to meet. It's in a park after work, and they're both a little nervous, since this kind of feels like a date, right? To make things weirder, it's in the middle of a pandemic, prompting the use of face masks and social distancing. As they meet, sit, and chat, we hear their inner thoughts as they pass through stages of awkwardness, panic, warming up, and real attraction.

*In Real Life I*, *In Real Life II*, and *Extraordinary* Program Notes Copyright © 2021, David Cote.  
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## Lyrics

### ***In Real Life I***

#### **1. A Regular Woman**

"Click any and all qualities you desire in a mate."

Hmm...

I'm a regular woman with regular taste,  
in search of a normal, everyday man.  
Just your average lady ready for a date,  
with a fairly predictable set of demands.  
Click. Click. Click...

I want a biracial,  
nonsmoking,  
bilingual,  
semi-vegan locavore,  
with impeccable taste in clothes.  
Who is outdoorsy,  
but also domestic,  
a culture vulture,  
but unpretentious.  
I hope this is someone you know?

He should be spiritual,  
but not dogmatic.

A dreamer,  
yet pragmatic.

Worldly, sophisticated,  
with an all-American, can-do attitude.

I don't expect a miracle,  
(I know the Earth is spherical),  
all I ask for is an ordinary dude.  
Click. Click. Click...

Blonde-haired, nice build, and hazel-eyed.  
And when I say blonde, it's okay if it's dyed.  
And please, no tattoos—alright, one or two.  
Piercings? Can I get back to you?  
No drugs, no scars, and you must drive a car.  
No mommy issues or time in jail.  
No kids, weird pets, or mortgage debt.  
And yet, say "yes," and you might be the male!

I'm a regular woman with regular taste.  
An everyday lady waiting for a date.  
Click. Click.

#### **2. Late Bloomer**

Woman seeking...woman...seeking...women.

Woman seeking...

women.

Woman seeking women.

The phrase curls up like a cat and purrs.

A palindrome, almost. So anyway...

But when I say that I'm a woman seeking women,  
I don't mean women, like two dozen,  
like I'm starting a harem.

Just one will do!

This is new to me, ladies; please be patient.

Happily married for twenty-three years

to a man I loved, a storybook guy.

Then I land on the far side of forty.

Something has shifted, the angle tilted.

I'm staring at Karyn from work.

Her hair, her eyes. Karyn's laugh,  
her yoga legs, and perfect size.

Karyn from Human Resources.  
She glowed from within.

I was always what they call a late bloomer:  
Blossoms open as everyone sleeps.  
A late bloomer, growing slowly,  
deep in the night with the secret I keep.

After work at a bar after drinks,  
Karyn kissed me,  
wrecked me, trashed me.  
It's like I'm driving along, flowing with traffic,  
Karyn leans in and I'm suddenly Sapphic.  
(Don't worry, won't get graphic.)  
I mean there's a fender bender  
regarding gender.  
Through smoke, fire, sirens wailing,  
only option: Surrender!

So here she comes, girls: the late bloomer.  
Takes a little longer, but well worth the wait.  
A late bloomer, out of step with the crowd.  
But you have to start somewhere, with someone,  
start living out loud.

### 3. Anastasia

This is crazy but I do it—  
throw myself out there  
to you in the space.  
My aspiration is you catch me,  
and hold me tight.  
My character is not very wide,  
but all my girlfriend say,  
I have the golden heart.  
I enjoy mountain walking, small animals  
and sunset just dying.  
Maybe you live in city, maybe you live in field;  
maybe you are cowboy?  
I dream in American like I dream in color.  
Here is black and white and gray.  
Here is only sleepwalkers.  
Maybe you are prince to kiss me awake?

I am good girl, loyal as dog, but beware bite!  
Ha ha ha!  
And, as you can see, humor.  
Laughing is salubrious,  
I hope you would say yes,  
and we can chuckle together.

I would tell you my life, not a happy life,  
but I believe in happy conclusion.  
My life I tell you later.  
Look at my picture: See I stay busy with dance.  
You will not be bored of me; I keep the flame high.  
I am almost certified Ph.D. physiotherapy.  
Body and age do not matter to me.  
I want to find a kind man.

Lies I don't need, children's games: stay in nursery,  
don't you think, dear?  
I have lots of concern, care, fret in my life, and no soothing.  
You are the friend of my future, I believe.  
This message is not very large,  
and if I have something to say and write,  
then I think we should first make a small pace,  
which may be followed by fast run.  
And we know each other more!

### 4. Collateral

I lost my man in a burning land.  
They took a wrong turn down a bad road,  
front two tires dug into the sand,  
something down there had to explode.

Maybe that bomb wasn't so big,  
but we heard the blast in San Antonio.

Two years in the rearview.  
After all the medals, letters, cemetery guns,  
the grief groups and the TV interviews,  
I'm putting away the black.  
God help me, I'm folding up the black,  
like they folded up the flag,  
and handed it to me.

Maybe that bomb wasn't so big,  
but we saw the flash in San Antonio.

I've got two kids, growing so fast.  
Maybe one of these mornings they won't even ask:  
When is Daddy coming home?

I'm telling you because you have to know:  
I'm collateral.  
The torn, the deaf, the blind.  
Some pieces so small they get left behind.  
Collateral, the walking wounded.  
We heal up fast, but we never forget.

Maybe that bomb wasn't so big,  
but it ripped through my heart In San Antonio.

They say the war is over.  
The armies have gone home.  
Cannons still and silent,  
treaties signed, caskets closed.  
The war inside is never over.  
You can keep your peace!  
I'm looking for a fighter.  
I'm looking for someone to fight for me.

## 5. Rewind

Divorced at thirty-five, I feel  
time is running backwards, world in reverse.  
I'm a teen again, green and seventeen again.  
Aching for a boy to take me to the prom.  
Not that I care, not that I care.  
Brittle. Jokey. Awkward. Dreamy.  
What can I learn from the girl that I was?

Rewind:  
Let the years fall away.  
Rewind:  
Feel the fire in your heart.  
Rewind:  
You were scared but you fought  
against the lies you were taught.

Rewind:  
From a woman to a girl  
in a strangely spinning world.  
Rewind.

I did go to the prom with Darren Pulaski,  
who was gay—which he noted, when he asked me.  
He was a good dancer, he made me look good.  
We cleared the floor for several songs,  
stole cheap rosé and watched the dawn.  
And Darren cried,  
which made me cry.

Rewind:  
When summer went forever.  
Rewind:  
When no one understood.  
Rewind:  
The future was right now,  
and we would show you how.

And now the future is thirty-five and divorced.  
Clicking strange pictures, being clicked on by strangers.  
What would she say, what would the girl say?  
When I was seventeen, and stupid, and brilliant, and brave?  
Don't waste a moment,  
but don't chase the moment.  
Rewind, but remember:  
Only love has power over time.

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## *In Real Life II*

### 1. Ain't No Frog

They say the ladies have to kiss  
a lot of nasty frogs  
before they find a prince,  
a man to be their boss.  
Well, I am here to let you know:  
The frogs have left the palace.  
They're hoppin' on their little legs;  
I wish those toads no malice.

Yeah, I am the real thing:  
a masculine phenomenon.  
A man to be your king,  
whose attributes go on and on . . .

I slayed the IQ test.  
They said I was the best.  
I work out every day—well, almost every day.  
Not on Thursday.  
That’s the day when Man Up meets.  
Man Up is my men’s rights group.  
I bring coffee and cupcakes. Anyway . . .

I am a Shaolin monk who took an oath of purity.  
A tenth-level wizard who casts a spell of ecstasy.  
A four-star general in the war of love.  
Can I hold your hand? WHAM! Fit you like a glove.

We can take the party back to your place.  
I live with my mom, it’s okay, it’s temporary.  
One thing about my back, it can get a little hairy.  
Hope that’s okay; I like to manscape when I can,  
but it can get expensive, and speaking of expenses,  
I’m starting my own bitcoin, it’s the future,  
Message me: I’ll hook you up.

If you like what you see,  
this prince don’t come for free;  
It will cost you several million kisses.  
You ladies must be sick of mackin’ on the toad,  
Cash in on the love bonanza you are owed.  
Just got a text my Toyota has been towed. Shit!  
This prince has got to go and he’s no frog.  
I ain’t no frog. No frog. You’re the frog.

## 2. Sola Fide

If y’all clicked on my picture:  
Yeah, that’s my chest; that’s my ink.  
Got it the night before we deployed  
from Fort Bragg to Afghanistan.  
I was hungover pretty fierce  
and the tat burned under my fatigues  
dry heaving on liftoff,  
and didn’t think about tomorrow.

“Sola Fide” inked over my heart.  
“By Faith Alone” is what it means in Latin.  
And no, I don’t speak Latin.  
It’s a dead language,  
A million years old,  
but it lives on me.

Landing at Bagram, my first tour,  
kinda like we landed on the moon—  
a moon of ghosts and dust and bombs.  
Place felt a million years old.  
They didn’t train us for the boredom.  
Every day was one extreme.  
Either contact with a bad guy  
or a family invites you to tea.

Don’t ask for my stories.  
Don’t search for my scars.  
Don’t try to fix what’s broke.  
Just hold me.  
When dreams in the night wake me up,  
I got pills for that.  
When the anger rises, got pills for that.  
And if the pills run out, hold me.

“Sola Fide,” by faith alone.  
May be a dead tongue,  
a million years old,  
but it lives on my skin,  
and I’m still young.  
I’m breathing through it,  
I’m breathing today.  
And I want to have faith in you.  
“Sola Fide,” “Sola Fide . . .”

### 3. Die With Me

The longer you live,  
the older you get,  
the older you get,  
the less you live,  
the less you move,  
the less you speak,  
the less you feel,  
by the window sill,  
on the vacant bench,  
a table for one,  
in line for meds,  
an empty crosstown bus takes you home,  
a stranger calls  
whom you keep on the phone,  
and the TV watches you sleep.

This is dying alone, kids.  
All your meals are frozen.  
None of your days are fresh.  
And that persistent rotting odor  
is rising from your flesh.

And so I got the neighbor's son  
to set up a profile on this site.  
I'm offering that lucky lady,  
in search of a mature gentleman,  
one final dance!

Won't you die with me?  
Croak with me?  
Accept this rose,  
and decompose  
beneath an oak with me?

We can cuddle and kiss away the hours.  
Then our remains may fertilize the flowers.

Expire with me.  
Be toast with me.  
Kick the bucket,  
just say, aw fuck it!  
Give up the ghost with me.

I'll light a scented candle for romance,  
Then we can snuff it out and do the boney dance.

Won't you die with me?  
Perish tenderly?  
See unquenchable passion in my eyes,  
as we synchronize our dual demise,  
ending like heroes who died only for love!

### 4. Still Vamping

The irony is, my last boyfriend and I:  
We both adored pussy.  
I mean cats.  
Get your minds out of the gutter!  
But he was bad with money,  
didn't get Kenneth Anger  
and never heard of Proust.  
Classic twink, to use le mot juste.  
Why are we discussing ancient Mesopotamian history?  
I'm vamping.

I've been ground through the gears of Grindr.  
Got an irritating rash from Scruff.  
Called 911 on Bear411,  
and basically, boys, men, and other, had enough.

Now I'm here.  
See how low I've fallen?  
A site for...relationships.  
Isn't that just the sexiest word?  
Relationships.  
What could be sexier?  
"Spreadsheet" is sexier.  
"Compost" is sexier.  
"Tupperware" is sexier.  
I know; I'm vamping.

Isn't everybody gay now?  
I was told that everyone, by now, would be gay.  
That's the Agenda, right?  
It's 2020, people!  
Twenty. Twenty. A same-sex year.  
Still vamping.

That's me: Romantic Vamp.  
The same two chords to fill time,  
to pretend I'm fine, don't ask if I'm  
fine, of course I'm fine. I'm alone.  
Just me and the cat and the cat's not sure  
this relationship is going anywhere.  
That pussy has ceased to care.  
The cat's vamping.

He's called Beardsley, by the way.  
After the late Victorian illustrator who died tragically young? No?  
BUH-bye.

By the way, for all you straight-acting conservative Daddies  
who think I'm too-too...

I'm a paramedic and who works the graveyard shift.

So before you respond, remember:

I responded first.

Suck on that.

Still, still, still, still, still vamping.

What comes after the vamping?

When does the song begin?

The repetition is cute, then it bores.

Its circular motion resembles an ocean,  
but then you can't swim any more.

You wait for your rescue ship

and wonder: Has that ship sailed or no?

## 5. Nice-Plus

When I say I'm a nice guy, I get:

*"Nice is easy, nice is cheap, nice is next to boring and boring people say 'nice.'"*

So, instead:

I'm organized, highly focused, always on time.

Slow to start, but once I do...!

You can't stop me connecting to you.

I like to go fast when fast is safe,  
sometimes slow is safe, it depends  
on the surface, the incline, the curves.

When I'm near the end, I like to go slow.

You can depend on me.

Set your clock by me.

Six figure job, never married, no kids.

Mortgage. Spare room. Two actually.

One is my hobby room.

You see...

One thing about me you could call "nice-plus."

Obsessive, I guess you would say.

My hobby. My passion. My pride.

I hope you don't think that it's weird.

It's not a kink. Or a secret. Just nice-plus.

I like...trains.

Really, really like trains.

In England they call us trainspotters.

In America it's railfan. I'm a railfan.

We photograph trains from the platform,  
build models, photograph the models, share online,  
memorize engines, signals, schedules, interiors of vintage cars...

Why trains?

Trains are organized, highly focused, always on time.

They are slow to start, but when they do...!

Nothing stops them where they're zooming to.

They go fast when fast is safe,

sometimes slow is safe, it depends

on the surface, the incline, the curves.

You can depend on trains.

Set your clock by trains.

Would you like to travel together by rail?

It's like falling backward in time.

I know the coziest cars,

where the champagne flows

as the landscape goes flying by.

I don't always like moving so fast,

but it can be very nice, the view,

in an antique restored red mahogany velvet lined sleeping compartment,  
for two.

Me and you!

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## Libretto

### *Extraordinary*

*A park before dusk. Brian, in mask, enters. He looks around, checks phone. After a moment, Angela, also in a mask, appears. They see each other. Wave. They remove their masks for recognition.*

BRIAN  
Are you JaneAustenSpace22?

ANGELA  
KimchiWolff with two effs?

BRIAN  
Right.

ANGELA  
Sooo....

BRIAN  
Is this a date?

ANGELA  
I don't know.

BRIAN  
So. JaneAustenSpace22.

ANGELA  
Yes?

BRIAN  
Ever meet JaneAustenSpace21?

ANGELA  
A total bitch.

BRIAN  
That's what I heard.

ANGELA  
So, Kimchi—

BRIAN  
Brian.

ANGELA  
Angela.

BRIAN  
Hi, Angela. Sit?

*(They sit on a bench, judging the distance subtly—six feet apart—adjusting slightly. They remove their masks entirely. Awkward pause.)*

ANGELA & BRIAN *(to themselves)*  
This is the best date I've had in months.  
This is the first date I've had in months.

Do we hug?  
Can we kiss?  
Is it safe?  
Will I catch something I can't handle?  
Will I feel something I can't handle?

BRIAN  
It's nice to see you I-R-L.

ANGELA  
Huh? Oh, "In Real Life." Yes.

BRIAN  
You're really funny online.

ANGELA  
Thanks.

*(Pause. He looks eagerly at her, expecting "funny." She's at a loss, so all she can blurt out is:)*

ANGELA  
That's. A. Suit.

BRIAN  
This? Yes. It's a suit.

ANGELA *(to herself)*  
You're bombing.  
You're super bombing.  
Like carpet bombing the date.  
This date is a war crime.  
And now you're in the Hague.

BRIAN *(to himself)*  
You're boring.  
You're super boring.  
She's practically asleep.  
You're human Ambien.  
You're even boring me.

*(to Angela)*

I haven't read Jane Austen's books,  
but I was hoping you could tell me about them?

ANGELA

I don't know what you've heard,  
but I don't do English Lit on the first date.

BRIAN

See, that's funny!

ANGELA

What do you do?

BRIAN

Malware protection.

ANGELA

Not funny.

BRIAN

Unless you make a virus joke.

ANGELA

Pass!

BRIAN

Can I ask why you said yes? To this?

ANGELA

I liked your smile.

BRIAN

I liked your jokes.

ANGELA

I liked your dog.

BRIAN

I liked your bookshelf.

ANGELA

I liked your eyes.  
Present tense! Like. I like your eyes.

BRIAN

I like present tense your eyes too.  
I've been alone a while.

ANGELA

Me too.

BRIAN

I'm not sure I remember.

ANGELA

I'll draw you a diagram.

BRIAN

PowerPoint?

ANGELA

Paper.

BRIAN

How quaint.

ANGELA

Ain't it, though?  
Fancy paper. Real handwriting.

BRIAN

Real hands.  
I wish we could hold hands for a moment.

ANGELA

I wish we could hold hands for a moment.

ANGELA & BRIAN

But it's not safe, not safe.  
If this were a date on an ordinary day,  
a boring, dumb, humdrum day,  
anything could happen.  
Anything, anything, anything!  
But today...  
Touching hands would be extraordinary.  
Sitting close would be extraordinary.  
A goodbye kiss would be extraordinary.  
But it's not safe, not safe.  
Must be careful, must protect.  
Wear a mask to deflect  
the sudden fleck,  
which infects,  
and don't even think of having se—

ANGELA

Want to walk a bit?

BRIAN

Yes, let's stroll in the gloaming.

ANGELA

Look at you: "the gloaming."

BRIAN

Thought you'd like that.

ANGELA

Jane Austen would approve.

ANGELA & BRIAN

If only this were a date on an ordinary day...

*(They walk away, as dusk falls.)*

*[The End]*

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## Biographies



Described by the press as “a modern day master” (*AXS.com*) and the “highlight of the program” (*The New York Times*), **Robert Paterson** has won 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. 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 States.

Paterson’s music has been performed by hundreds of outstanding ensembles, including Nashville Opera, Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Delaware Symphony, Austin Symphony, Louisville Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic, Oratorio Society of New York, Musica Sacra, Chamber Choir of Europe, Atlanta Master Chorale, New York New Music Ensemble, Pittsburgh

New Music Ensemble, American Modern Ensemble, BargeMusic, Imani Winds, Euclid Quartet, Indianapolis Quartet, and Paris-based Ensemble Aleph.

Recent commissions include *Ghost Theater*, for the Albany Symphony, *Shine* for the American Brass Quintet, *Moon Trio* for the Claremont Trio and new works commissioned by the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Gulf Coast Symphony, and numerous choirs, including the Ember Choral Ensemble and The Esoterics. Paterson’s debut choral album, *Eternal Reflections*, was released by Musica Sacra and Maestro Kent Tritle in 2015.

Paterson has received awards for his works in virtually every classical genre, including a three-year *Music Alive* grant from the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA, the American Composers Forum Jerome Composers Commissioning Program, the Utah Arts Festival Commission Competition, Cincinnati Camerata Composition Competition, and fellowships to Yaddo, the MacDowell Colony, Aspen Music Festival, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, and the Copland House.

2018, Paterson founded the Mostly Modern Festival (MMF), an annual, three-week summer music festival that highlights contemporary music, which takes place at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY. In 2005, Paterson founded the New York City-based American Modern Ensemble (AME), which spotlights contemporary music via lively thematic programming. He serves as artistic director for both MMF and AME as well as house composer, frequently contributing new pieces for the festival and ensemble. In 2005, he also founded American Modern Recordings (AMR), an affiliated record label that is distributed by NAXOS. Paterson’s recordings are also featured on the Capstone, Centaur, Summit, and Riaux labels.

Born in 1970, Paterson was raised in Buffalo, New York, the son of a sculptor and a painter. Although his first love was percussion, he soon discovered a passion for composition, writing his first piece at age thirteen. In the late 1980s, Paterson pioneered the development of a six-mallet marimba technique, and he has written numerous pieces utilizing this technique. He released the first-ever album of six-mallet music, *Six Mallet Marimba* in 2012 (AMR) to a sold-out crowd at the Rubin Museum in Chelsea, NYC.

Paterson holds degrees from the Eastman School of Music (BM), Indiana University (MM), and Cornell University (DMA). Paterson gives master classes at numerous colleges and universities, most recently at the Curtis Institute of Music, Aspen Music School & Festival, the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana, New York University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. He resides in New York City and Saratoga Springs, New York with his wife, Victoria, and son, Dylan.

For more information, visit [robertpaterson.com](http://robertpaterson.com).



Playwright, librettist and theater critic **David Cote's** operas include *Blind Injustice* with Scott Davenport Richards (Cincinnati Opera), *Three Way* with Robert Paterson (Nashville Opera and BAM), *The Scarlet Ibis* with Stefan Weisman (Prototype and Chicago Opera Theater), and *We've Got Our Eye on You* with Nkeiru Okoye (SUNY New Paltz). His plays include *Otherland*, the solo drama *Saint Joe*, and a collection of satirical shorts called *Fear of Art*.

The live recording of *Blind Injustice* was recently released by Naxos. Cote also wrote the text for Okoye's Black Lives Matter piece for baritone and orchestra, *Invitation to a Die-In*. Choral works with Paterson, *Did You Hear?* and *Snow Day*, were sung by Musica Sacra and conducted by Kent Tritle on *Eternal Reflections* (American Modern Recordings). AMR also recorded and released the cast album of *Three Way*.

Cote was the longest serving theater editor and chief drama critic of *Time Out New York*. His reporting and reviews appear in *4 Columns*, *Observer*, and *American Theatre*. He's the author of popular books about the hit Broadway musicals *Wicked*, *Jersey Boys* and *Spring Awakening*.

As an actor and director, Cote worked with avant-garde legend Richard Foreman, exiled Iranian auteur Assurbanipal Babilla, and Richard Maxwell. He directed Robert Honeywell in Matthew Freeman's *The Sea The Mountains The Forest The City The Plain* at the Brick in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Alumnus of Bard College. Cote was born and adopted in New Hampshire.

For more information, visit [davidcote.com](http://davidcote.com).



**Steven Osgood** has conducted the world premieres of over two dozen operas, including *Sumeida's Song*, *The Scarlett Ibis* and *Thumbprint* for the PROTOTYPE Festival. Other notable premieres include *As One*, *The Long Walk* (Beck/Fleischman), *Breaking the Waves* (Mazzoli/Vavrek), and *JFK* (Little/Vavrek). He has been the Conductor Mentor for Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative, leading the premieres of six of their commissioned works. His conducting credits include L'Opera de Montreal, New York City Opera, Los Angeles Opera, Atlanta Opera, Opera Memphis, Opera Columbus, Manhattan School of Music, and the Juilliard School. He has been on the music staff of the Metropolitan Opera since 2006. As Artistic Director of American Opera Projects from 2001 to 2008 he created the company's prestigious Composers & the Voice fellowship program which has fostered the careers of over 50 composers and librettists. Osgood has been

General and Artistic Director of the Chautauqua Opera Company since 2016, during which time he has led productions ranging from *La Traviata* and *Don Pasquale* to contemporary masterpieces such as *Song From the Uproar*, *Hydrogen Jukebox* and *The Ghosts of Versailles*. In January, 2020 Mr. Osgood conducted the world premiere of *Blood Moon* by Garrett Fisher and Ellen McLaughlin for the PROTOTYPE Festival. At the time of the COVID-19 shutdown he was conducting preview performances of *Intimate Apparel* by Ricky Ian Gordon and Lynn Nottage. That production, directed by Bartlett Sher, is expected to return for its world premiere and extended run at the Lincoln Center Theater in January, 2022.



American soprano **Marnie Breckenridge** has won acclaim internationally in a vast repertoire spanning from the Baroque to the Modern. She is continuously praised for her grounded storytelling and known for her deeply expressive score interpretations, layered characterizations, and her beautiful pure soprano. A favorite among some of the most gifted composers of our time, her excellent musicianship and technique have established her as a go-to performer of critically acclaimed new works with her “lovely soprano” voice (*The New York Times*), “lyrical poignancy and dramatic power” (*The Chicago Tribune*) and singing as “resplendent as always” (*The San Francisco Chronicle*).

Marnie’s passionate interpretations of contemporary works include: Jacqueline Du Pré in *Jacqueline* created for her and Matt Haimovitz by Luna Pearl Woolf & Royce Vavrek (Marnie won the 2020 DORA award for

“Outstanding Individual Performance in an Opera”) with Tapestry Opera, Mother in *Dog Days* by David T. Little with Los Angeles Opera, The Prototype Festival in NYC and at Ft. Worth Opera with its premiere at Montclair Peak Performances (voted Best Opera 2012 by Time Out New York), Sierva Maria in Peter Eötvös’s *Love And Other Demons* at Glyndebourne Festival Opera, La Princesse in Philip Glass’ *Orphée*, the title role in Milhaud’s *Médée*, Margarita Xirgu in Golijov’s *Ainadamar*, and Beck Strand in Kaminsky’s *Today It Rains* with Opera Parallèle, a Washington National Chorus debut as Ruth Madoff in Luna Pearl Woolf’s *The Pillar*, her Berkeley Symphony debut in Chin’s *Cantanrix Sopranica* with Kent Nagano, her Ravinia Festival debut in Jake Heggie’s *To Hell And Back* with Philharmonia Baroque, co-starring Patti LuPone and Cunegonde in Robert Carson’s *Candide* with English National Opera, Prague State Opera and on tour in Japan deemed “simply terrific” (*Opera Magazine UK*) and “note perfect” (*Prague Post*).

Recent favorite concert work includes Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer of 1915* and roles in *L’enfant Et Les Sortilèges* with the San Francisco Symphony, *In Real Life* and *Summer Songs* by Robert Paterson at Weil Hall/Carnegie Hall with American Modern Ensemble, *Teach Your Children* by David Lang, *Ein Deutsches Requiem* and *Carmina Burana* with the SF Choral Society at Davies Symphony Hall, Canteloube’s *Chants D’auvergne* with Brooklyn Art Song Society, Barber’s *Knoxville: Summer Of 1915* and Mahler’s *4th Symphony* with Napa Symphony and Pacific Symphony as well as the *Bachianas Brasileiras* and *Chicago Songs* (written for her by Kurt Erickson) with the Sacramento Philharmonic. Breckenridge is a featured soloist on the 2012 New World Records’ album of Victor Herbert songs, and can be heard on Dimitri Hvorostovsky’s *Heroes and Villains*, countless other recordings by American composers, and more recently her 2020 album debut of Holiday tunes; *Happy Golden Days* on all streaming platforms.

For more information, visit [marniebreckenridge.com](http://marniebreckenridge.com).



**Jorell Williams** is an American operatic baritone with a wide variety of experience from standard repertoire to premiere pieces, performing in collaboration with the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center Theater, Seattle Opera, New York City Opera, Atlanta Opera, On-Site Opera, Urban Arias, Opera Columbus, Caramoor International Music Festival, Fort Worth Opera, and Finger Lakes Opera. Jorell is widely recognized for his concert work, having performed as soloist with Carnegie Hall, Omaha Symphony, South Dakota Symphony, Orchestra of St. Lukes, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Philharmonic of Southern New Jersey, Juneau Symphony, Eugene Symphony, Geneseo Symphony, The Knickerbocker Chamber Orchestra, Caelis Academy Ensemble, Essential Voices USA, The Little Orchestra Society, Hudson Chorale, National Chorale, and the Harlem Chamber Players.

His career has brought him on tour with the Mark Morris Dance Company, Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Chorale Le Chateau, and the Brooklyn Art Song Society. He has also worked alongside some of today’s most versatile artists, including Wynton Marsalis, Lauryn Hill, Erykah Badu, Damien Sneed, Jon Batiste, David Lang, and most recently, Jennifer Higdon, for the world premiere of her 2017 Grammy nominated opera *Cold Mountain* with Santa Fe Opera. Winner of the 2018 Rochester Classical Idol XII Prize and Audience Choice award, Jorell garners top awards from some of the most prestigious competitions in the world, including the American Traditions Competition, Gerda Lissner International Competition, Schuyler Foundation for Career Bridges, Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation, The American Prize, Serge Koussevitzky Foundation, David Adams Art Song Competition, Civic Morning Musicals Foundation, Harlem Opera Competition, National Association of Negro Musicians, and the Liberace Foundation.

He is an Alumnus of the Composers and the Voice Program at The American Opera Project, Caramoor International Music Festival’s Bel Canto Program, Ravinia Steans Music Institute, and Songfest at Colburn in Los Angeles. He also trained at Santa Fe Opera, Chautauqua Opera, Des Moines Metro Opera, and holds degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music. He is an advocate for artist rights and is a newly appointed artistic council advisor for On-Site Opera and the new music board for the Brooklyn Art Song Society, using his experience to consult with arts organizations on their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives.

For more information, visit [jorellwilliams.com](http://jorellwilliams.com).



**American Modern Ensemble (AME)** spotlights contemporary music via lively thematic programming. AME performs a wide repertoire, using a varied combination of instrumentalists, vocalists, and conductors, and the ensemble often highlights AME's house composer and founder, Robert Paterson. Since its inception in 2005, AME has performed hundreds of works by living composers, and has received critical success in *The New York Times*, *Time Out New York*, the *New Yorker*, among others. Sold out crowds at BAM, Merkin Hall, Lincoln Center, the Rubin Museum, Dixon Place, and National Sawdust are a winning testament to AME's fifteen-year track record as to what is 'right' about classical music today.

AME includes on-stage chats with composers and the creative team, allowing audience members to learn even more about the creative process. AME provides a welcoming environment for audience, creators and performers. Over 95% of the composers we program participate and attend our shows, including luminaries such as John Luther Adams, John Corigliano, David Del Tredici, Aaron Jay Kernis, Libby Larsen, Steven Mackey, Paul Moravec, Christopher Rouse, Steven Stucky, Joan Tower, Chen Yi, and countless others. AME also enthusiastically performs works by America's most talented, emerging and mid-career composers.

AME produces stellar recordings via its house label, American Modern Recordings (AMR), which has received fantastic reviews in *Gramophone*, the *LA Music Examiner*, *The New York Times*, *Sequenza21*, and *New Music Box*, and our albums have made it to the Grammy® Ballot in past seasons.

AME's summer home is now at the Mostly Modern Festival (MMF), located in Saratoga Springs, New York. This festival celebrates the music of our time. It is educational, with robust outreach initiatives. Other residencies include Princeton University, James Madison University, Keene State College, the CUNY Graduate Center, Adelphi, Rutgers, and many more. AME is deeply invested in collaboration. Some examples are On Site Opera, Cutting Edge New Music Festival, Prototype Opera Festival, American Opera Projects, and the Dance Theater of Harlem.

For more information, visit [americanmodernensemble.org](http://americanmodernensemble.org) and [mostlymodernprojects.org](http://mostlymodernprojects.org).

## Album Credits

### Recording

Produced, Engineered, Mixed, and Mastered by Adam Abeshouse  
Performed by the American Modern Ensemble  
Executive Producer: Robert Paterson  
Associate Recording Engineer: Jeremy Kinney  
Recorded at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music,  
Mary Flagler Cary Hall, New York, NY, October 27, 2020  
Cover Art: Paul Gaschler  
Package Layout and Design: Pat Burke

### American Modern Ensemble

Steven Osgood, conductor  
Marnie Breckenridge, soprano  
Jorell Williams, baritone  
John Romeri, flute  
Keve Wilson, oboe  
Nuno Antunes, clarinet  
Matthew Ward, percussion  
Blair McMillen, piano  
Robin Braun, violin  
Peter Sachon, cello

### Images

Robert Paterson: Lisa-Marie Mazzucco  
David Cote: Jody Christopherson  
Marnie Breckenridge: Ricardo Birnbaum  
Jorell Williams: Fay Fox

## Special Thanks

Special Thanks to everyone involved, including all of the fantastic AME instrumentalists, Marnie and Jorell for their amazing singing and acting, Steven Osgood for his wonderful conducting, Adam Abeshouse for making all of the musicians sound their best, the Austin Chamber Ensemble and Artistic Director Marti Mortensen Ahern for commissioning *In Real Life I* (formerly *In Real Life*) in honor of ACE's 35<sup>th</sup> season, the American Modern Ensemble and the Gerson Family Foundation for funding the commission of *In Real Life II*, The DiMenna Center for Classical Music, Bill Holab for his engraving and publishing expertise, and last but not least, our families for their continued love and support.

– Robert Paterson and David Cote

# IN REAL LIFE

Music by **ROBERT PATERSON** • Lyrics & Libretto by **DAVID COTE**

AMERICAN MODERN ENSEMBLE

Steven Osgood, Conductor

## *In Real Life I*

Marnie Breckenridge, Soprano

- 1 1. A Regular Woman 4'24"
- 2 2. Late Bloomer 5'21"
- 3 3. Anastasia 4'44"
- 4 4. Collateral 7'16"
- 5 5. Rewind 4'45"

## *In Real Life II*

Jorell Williams, Baritone

- 6 1. Ain't No Frog 4'11"
- 7 2. Sola Fide 5'59"
- 8 3. Die With Me 4'09"
- 9 4. Still Vamping 5'07"
- 10 5. Nice-Plus 5'35"

- 11 *Extraordinary* 8'52'

Marnie Breckenridge, Soprano; Jorell Williams, Baritone

TOTAL TIME: 60'30"

**Produced by Adam Abeshouse**

