

PAUL PINTO

COMPOSER VOCALIST PERFORMER

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thingNY.com

varispeedcollective.com

BIOGRAPHY



KARJAKA

Composer **Paul Pinto** creates, performs and produces experimental music and theatrical works, primarily focused innovative and engaging new form of opera-theater that fuse the musicality of American speech, poetry, classical music, extended vocal techniques and electronic sound art. He is a founding member of the acclaimed collectives Varispeed and thingNY, and his music has been performed across the U.S. and internationally with and by ensembles, performers and presenters around the world, including Joan La Barbara, Pauline Oliveros, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Ne(x)tworks, the Cuarteto Latinoamericano, loadbang, wildUP!, The Industry in LA, The Royal Scottish Academy Chamber Chorus, the Carnegie Mellon Concert Chorus, New Thread Saxophone Quartet, Iktus Percussion, BRIC Arts, The Whitney Biennial, The Kitchen, Roulette, Experiments in Opera, the Panoply Performance Laboratory and Performa.

His recent work as a composer, collaborator, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist has been praised in the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Los Angeles Times*, *NewMusicBox* and *Time Out New York*. His opera *Thomas Paine in Violence* was hailed as “expressive, impressive and engaging” by the *Times*, and “thrilling and rare, and must be experienced” by *Schmopera*. With his performance collective, Varispeed, Paul created a new site-specific arrangement of Robert Ashley's seminal opera for television, *Perfect Lives*, which made *TONY's* "Best of 2011" List and was praised by the *Times* as one of the "standout operas of recent decades".

For years, Paul has been an advocate of underrepresented experimentalists in the classical music concert halls, particularly Julius Eastman and Robert Ashley, and has worked to diversify modern opera and experimental music theatre both in casting, and in form and style. Paul has chosen to work equally with traditional instruments and vocalists, lo-fi electronics, unconventional sound-makers and amateur musicians, creating one-minute opera, concert length chamber music, and durational performance art. At the helm of thingNY, Paul has premiered hundreds of works from emerging and established composers including Pauline Oliveros, Vinko Globokar, Art Jarvinen, Gelsey Bell, John King, Kyle Gann, Rick Burkhardt, and Gerard Grisey. With thingNY, he co-created and performed the operas *ADDDDDDDDD* (2010), *TIME: A Complete Explanation in Three Parts* (2011), *Jeff Young and Paul Pinto, Patriots, Run for Public Office on a Platform of Swift and Righteous Immigration Reform, Lots of Jobs, and a Healthy Environment* (2013) and *This Takes Place Close By* (2015). Of their latest work, the new music journal *I Care If You Listen* writes “rarely, if ever, [have I] seen an encyclopedic array of experimental effects so intimately linked with their expressive potential.”

As a vocalist, Paul has performed in the U.S. and Asia in untraditional chamber music works and experimental and improvisatory creations, including the 5-octave lead role in Peter Maxwell Davies' *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, in John Sanborn and Dorian Wallace's video opera, *Temptation of St. Anthony*, and originating the Broadway role of Balaga in Dave Malloy and Rachel Chavkin's hit musical, *Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812*.

Scenes from his ballet, *Miseke* are available on DVD and CD through the educational UK label, Learning and Teaching Scotland. In addition to thingNY's comic book opera release *ADDDDDDDDD* and their latest album *minis/Trajectories*, Paul has self-released four albums: *The Gentlemen* (2009), a suite for vocals and electronics, *Every Note on the Piano* (2010), *NUDES: live at the Mary Benson Gallery* (2010), and *For Stefanos Tsigrimanis* (2011) an elegy for turntables, voice, guitar and electronics. His scores have been published by Deep Listening Publications.

Paul is a recipient of several awards and grants from the New York Department of Cultural Affairs, New Music USA, Chamber Music America, The Puffin Foundation, and a three-year residency at the HERE Arts Center, where he developed *Thomas Paine in Violence*. He was born and raised in Queens, a child of immigrants, studied music composition, conducting and history at Carnegie Mellon with Nancy Galbraith, Leonardo Balada and with Robert Page, and then at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama (now Royal Conservatoire of Scotland) with John Maxwell Geddes, before moving back to New York. He now lives in Jersey City with his wife, Amanda, and his dog, Lady.

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SELECTED WORKS

The Blurring Test (2020)

a song cycle by Varispeed, libretto by Peggy Weil
Jun 2020 – Roulette, Brooklyn

Why are you talking to a machine? (2020)

multiple electric guitars, voices, live processing, electronics and video
Jan 2020 – Smush JC, Exponential Festival

Music for **Antigone** (2020)

for double chorus and percussion, text by Sophokles (trans. Ann Carson)
Mar 2020 – Colgate University, dir. April Sweeney

Music for **Mad Forest** (2020)

for 11 performers, portable tape players, and fixed media, text by Caryl Churchill
Mar 2020 – Bard College, dir. Ashley Tata

Ready to Die Etudes (2019)

for vocalist with electronic samples and percussion
Jan 2020 – Cameron Leach, Columbus Performing Arts Center

*** I wonder if she can tell I'm hard right now. * Hmm.** (2019)

for vocalist and electronics
2019 – JACK, Brooklyn
2020 – Smush, Jersey City

minis_001-014 (2008-2019)

a series of compositions for various chamber ensembles of speaking/singing instrumentalists
Dec 2019 – thingNY, Tibet House, New York; Arete, Brooklyn
Sep 2019 – Nouveau Classical Project, Arete, Brooklyn

15 Photos (2018)

physical song cycle for movement, vocalist, electronics, optional instruments and lights
Jan 2018 – ComPeung, Chiang Mai
Sep 2018 – Mt. Tremper Arts, Roulette, Shedd Arts Center, Carnegie Mellon
Feb 2019 – Bucarelli 69, Mexico City
Nov 2019 – Mana Contemporary, Jersey City

Three Songs near Omaha, Nebraska (2018)

music video for three vocalists and electronics
Jun 2020 – LoveLoveLove, Omaha Under the Radar
Sep 2019 – LoveLoveLove, Smush, Jersey City

Thomas Paine in Violence (2017)

psychedelic opera for 9 vocalists, vn, vc, hp, pno, electronics, directed by Rick Burkhardt
Nov 2017 – Joan LaBarbara, thingNY, HERE, New York
2017-2020 – Excerpts performed internationally by thingNY, wildUp!, Popebama, and Ne(x)tworks

This takes place close by (2015)

an opera by thingNY, directed by Ashley Tata
Sep 2015 – thingNY, Knockdown Center, New York

Molly (2015)

for three female singers and electronics, video by Matthew Bernard
Jun 2015 – Bloomsday Celebration, Knockdown Center, New York

Agnus Dei (Sheep to the Slaughter) (2013)
3 sopranos + any number of accompanying singers

Music for **Empty Words** (2012)
a work by John Cage, interpreted and arranged by Varispeed

Music for **The Good Person of Szechwan** (2012)
play by Brecht (translated by Kushner), for singers, percussion and cello

Jeff Young and Paul Pinto, Patriots, Run for Public Office on a Platform of Swift and Righteous Immigration Reform, Lots of Jobs, and a Healthy Environment: an opera by Paul Pinto and Jeffrey Young (2012)
2012-2018 – four tours in the U.S. And Mexico

Cataract (2012)
for multiple drumsets

Perfect Lives (2011-)
an opera by Robert Ashley, arranged by Varispeed
Sep 2015 - *Perfect Lives Jersey City*
May 2014 – *Perfect Lives Pittsburgh* – Pittsburgh Festival of New Music
Aug 2013 – *Perfect Lives Catskills* – Mount Tremper Arts
Sep 2011 – *Perfect Lives Manhattan* – Performa

TIME: A Complete Explanation in Three Parts (2011)
by thingNY and Panoply Performance Laboratory

Music for Your Living Room (2011)
for solo Bb clarinet + installation (large scroll score, bamboo, twine, buckets and stone)

anyone's story (2010)
for amateur SATB chorus with in-ear monitors

For Stefanos Tsigrimanis (2010)
for solo performer, two portable turntables, vocalist, guitar and electronics

sax concerto (2009)
saxophone soloist and six non-sax players playing saxophones

My Super Special Recital (2008)
multi-instrumentalist + 3 accompanists (any instruments or non-musicians)

g3db.Dido (goodbye, Dido) (2008/2013)
baritone, bass clarinet, trumpet, trombone

Music to accompany the slow painful death of (2006)
singers, unspecified instruments, drum kit

Miseke (2005)
ballet for chamber orchestra

1984: Images for Orchestra (2004)
3-2-3-3; 4-3-3-1; timp, 4 perc, pno; str

RECORDINGS

Robert Ashley – **Improvement**

Lovely Music 5002 [CD]

John Cage – **Empty Words** (live at Roulette - arranged and performed by Varispeed)

Gold Bolus 035 [digital download]

thingNY - **Jeff Young and Paul Pinto, Patriots, Run for Public Office on a Platform of Swift and Righteous Immigration Reform, Lots of Jobs, and a Healthy Environment: an opera by Paul Pinto and Jeffrey Young**

Gold Bolus 033 [digital download]

Dave Malloy - **Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812** [original Broadway cast recording]

Reprise Records [digital download, CD]

Robert Ashley - **Crash**

Lovely Music CD 5001 [CD]

thingNY - **minis/Trajectories** (the music of Paul Pinto and Erin Rogers)

Gold Bolus 024 [digital download, CD, LP]

Paul Pinto - **For Stefanos Tsigrimanis**

self-release [digital download]

Paul Pinto - **The Gentlemen**

self-release [digital download]

thingNY - **ADDDDDDDDD**

self-release [CD + comic book]

animal nudity - **NUDES** (Stefanos Tsigrimanis + Paul Pinto)

self-release [digital download]

thingNY - **Thing Tank: : : : (live at)**

self-release [digital download]

Dave Malloy - **Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812** [original cast recording]

Sh-K-Boom [digital download, CD]

loadbang - **Monodramas** - *g3db.Dido (goodbye, Dido)*

Analog Arts [digital download, CD]

Robert Ashley - **Perfect Lives Catskills** Arranged by Varispeed, video by Matthew Bernard

Mount Tremper Arts [digital video]

Panoply Performance Laboratory - **The Transformational Grammar of the Institutional Glorybowl Part III: Institute_Institut**

Gold Bolus 010 [digital download, CD]

Paul Pinto - Scenes from **Miseke**

Learning and Teaching Scotland [CD, DVD]

SELECTED PERFORMANCES

15 Photos by Paul Pinto

2018-20 – vocalist, director, dancer – Chiang Mai, Brooklyn, Mt. Tremper, Columbus, Mexico City, Jersey City

Improvement (*Don Leaves Linda*) by Robert Ashley

Feb 2019 – Junior Jr – The Kitchen, New York

Crash by Robert Ashley

2014-2018 – Paul - Whitney Biennial, Roulette, Wesleyan University

Eight Songs for a Mad King by Peter Maxwell Davies

2016-2018 – King George – with Tenth Intervention, New York, Boston, Pittsburgh, Columbus, Denton

Passover by Rick Burkhardt

May 2018 – percussionist/vocalist – thingNY, Roulette, Philadelphia Folksong Society, Rhizome, Fort Point Theatre

Jeff Young and Paul Pinto, Patriots, Run for Public Office on a Platform of Swift and Righteous Immigration Reform, Lots of Jobs, and a Healthy Environment: an opera by Paul Pinto and Jeffrey Young (2012)

Jul 2018 – 25-day tour of Texas and the Midwest

Jan 2016 – 14-day tour of the Southwest and Mexico

Thomas Paine in Violence by Paul Pinto

Nov 2017 – Music director/Manchorus – HERE, New York

Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812 by Dave Malloy (Dir. Rachel Chavkin)

2016-2017 – Balaga/Opera Singer/Servant – Original Broadway Cast, Imperial Theatre, New York

Winter 2015 – Balaga/Opera Singer/Servant – American Repertory Theatre, Cambridge

Spring 2013 – Balaga/Opera Singer/Servant – Kazino, New York

Fall 2012 – Associate music director/Balaga/Opera Singer/Servant – Ars Nova, New York

Temptation of St. Anthony by John Sanborn and Dorian Wallace

Winter 2016 – Tony - Palais Jacques Coeur à Bourges, France

Ecstatic Music Festival (works by Pinto, Rogers, and Helado Negro)

Feb 2015 – vocalist/percussionist/pianist – Merkin Hall, New York

Mother Earth by Erin Rogers

Jun 2014 – electronics and sound design - Carnegie Hall, New York

Inuksuit by John Luther Adams

May 2014 – percussionist - Pittsburgh Festival of New Music, Pittsburgh

School of the Arts presents: The Music of Paul Pinto (works by Pinto, Robert Ashley and Dennis Bathory-Kitsz)

Mar 2014 – vocalist/electronics – School of the Arts, Singapore

Moby Dick, Part III: The Ballade of Pip by Dave Malloy

Mar 2014 – Pip – Joe's Pub, New York

Immediacies Series: Music for Pianos, Pianist and Anti-Pianists (works by Pinto and Bathory-Kitsz)

Sep 2013 – vocalist/electronics/pianist – Firehouse Space, Brooklyn

Yes Nix by Tori Wrånes

Nov 2013 – vocalist/casting assistant – Performa '13, New York

Our Defensive Measurements by Gelsey Bell

Feb 2013 – vocalist/percussionist – Roulette, Brooklyn

SPAM v. 3.0 (works by over 60 composers performed in one evening)

Dec 2012 – vocalist/percussionist/pianist/electronics/actor/music director – Flushing Town Hall, Queens

Cage @ 100 (works by John Cage - curated by Miguel Frasconi)

Sep 2012 – vocalist/pianist/electronics – The Stone, New York

WOW by Joe Diebes

Summer 2012 – countertenor – Figment Festival, New York

To Scale by Cough Button (Lynn Levy, Dave Ruder and Aliza Simons)

May 2012 – The Architect – Experiments in Opera, Roulette, Brooklyn

Un Jour Comme Un Autre by Vinko Globokar

Apr 2012 – percussionist/vocalist/sound designer/music director – Chashama Long Island City, Queens

That Morning Thing by Robert Ashley

Nov 2011 – vocalist – The Kitchen, New York

CURATORSHIPS

The Immediacies Series (with thingNY)

Presenting over 60 artists at 12 events with a focus on promoting out-of-town artists.

2014 – Firehouse Space, Brooklyn, NY

2012-2013 – Vaudeville Park, Brooklyn, NY

New Music Showdown (with Steven Leffue)

Yearly marathon of multiple New York new music ensembles.

Feb 2014 – Part of the Composers Now! Festival, JACK Space, Brooklyn, NY

Jun 2013 – JACK Space, Brooklyn, NY

The Comformer Perposers Series

Presented 24 artists across 12 salons for composers performing solo works-in-progress

2009-2010 – University of the Streets, New York, NY

AWARDS & RESIDENCIES

2019

Some Serious Business Residency (*A Boxing Opera*)

2018

New Music USA Project award (*15 Photos*)

Puffin Foundation (*15 Photos*)

Mount Tremper Arts Residency (*15 Photos*)

2017

ComPeung Residency (Chiang Mai, Thailand)

AEA Extraordinary Excellence in Diversity on Broadway Award (*Great Comet of 1812*)

AEA Outstanding Ensemble on Broadway Award (*Great Comet of 1812*)

New Music USA Impact Fund (thingNY)

HERE Artists Residency Program (*Thomas Paine in Violence*)

2016

Mount Tremper Arts Residency (*Thomas Paine in Violence*)

Puffin Foundation (*Thomas Paine in Violence*)

Copland Fund (thingNY)

Amphion Foundation (thingNY)

New Music USA Impact Fund (thingNY)

2015

Copland Fund (thingNY)

Grant from New York City **Department of Cultural Affairs** (thingNY)

Re-grant from the **Queens Council on the Arts** (thingNY)

2014

Visiting Teaching Artist in Composition (**School of the Arts**, Singapore)

Grant from New York City **Department of Cultural Affairs** (thingNY)

Re-grant from the **Queens Council on the Arts** (thingNY)

Standard Toykraft Residency (*This takes place close by*)

2013

Wildacres Retreat Fellowship (North Carolina)

Mount Tremper Arts Residency (Varispeed, Catskills)

Regrant from the **Queens Council on the Arts** (thingNY)

Net/Ten ensemble grant (Varispeed)

New Dischord Festival featured artist (Chattanooga, TN)

MADE HERE: Season Three featured artist

Older

2012 Space grant from **Chashama** (Queens, NY)

2012 Regrant from the **Queens Council on the Arts** (thingNY)

2011 **LaGuardia Performing Arts Center** Residency (thingNY)

2011 Regrant from the **Queens Council on the Arts** (thingNY)

PRESS & ACCOLADES

“Paul Pinto is one of the most exceptional composers in new music, with a sensibility that can handle deadly seriousness and wicked humour via means that seem bizarre on the surface but are thought through and controlled. He’s Ernie Kovacs crossed with Leonard Bernstein. Pinto has been eviscerating capitalism, without didacticism, for years, and in a society run by artists, he would be president.”

-George Grella, *The Wire*

“A composer and performer of astounding talent. He is one of those musicians who apparently can do anything”

-Robert Ashley, composer

“singing with a cult-leader-magnetism”

-*Operavore, WQXR*

“Comes on stage, and all hell breaks loose.... larger than life... a wildly festive spirit penetrates every inch of stage, theater, and sound space.”

-*Huffington Post*

“A silvery, shapely falsetto”

-*New York Classical Review*

15 Photos

“darkly moving”

“seemed to mine the depths of every vocalism Pinto was capable of producing. From plainly spoken chant-like text to low grunts and guttural growls, a belty pop-tinged melody, and high-pitched screeches, *15 Photos* utilizes every aspect of vocal production.”

-*I Care If You Listen*

“Pinto’s *15 Photos* pushes the extreme vocalism of *Eight Songs for a Mad King* even further, with timely texts that resonate with contemporary audiences.”

-Jennifer Hambrick, *WOSU*

“drones, dramatically lit passages of shadowboxing, growling vocalizations that alternated with more angelic writing, and some furiously compressed renditions of medieval epics”

-*New York Times*

Thomas Paine in Violence

“Must be witnessed. The art that Pinto has created with, Joan La Barbara, the Manchorus, the brilliant instrumentalists and creative team is thrilling and rare and must be experienced live for a full sense of its depth of ingenuity.”

-*Schmopera*

“Hyper-high notes: The Week’s Best Classical Music Moments: Impressive... expressive... affecting”

-*New York Times*

“One of those experiences that I tell other people about when they ask, ‘what was one of the most affecting performances you’ve seen in the last few years?’ ”

-*I Care If You Listen*

“cutting-edge... there are so many rich resonances and tangents”

-Steve Smith, *The National Sawdust Log*

“an enormous amount of fun... with the subtlest of verbal dexterity, the text is morphed into something entirely new and made all the more immediate and profound. What starts out seeming like an amusing vocal exercise slowly becomes a heartbreaking and arresting modern translation of Paine’s revolutionary words.”

-Nick Anderson, *Culturebot*

“Saw it... Loved it! A 75-minute theatrical fever dream that kinda feels like *Hamilton* on acid... Energizing, funny, and a truly tremendous work of art that you’ll be thinking about it for a long time afterwards.”

-*YesBroadway*

Jeff Young and Paul Pinto, Patriots

“Haunting and humorous. *Patriots* begs to be witnessed live, with its inherently dramatic delivery, humorous moments, and text-driven narrative.”

-*I Care If You Listen*

thingNY

“Face it! This is why you live in New York.”

“One of New York’s most daring young opera companies.”

-*Time Out New York*

“...as avant-garde as anything I’ve seen recently – by which term I inexactly mean that it was more focused on how we live at this exact moment than on the traditional conventions of concert-giving.”

-Kyle Gann, *PostClassical*

This Takes Place Close By

“I have rarely, if ever, seen an encyclopedic array of experimental effects so intimately linked with their expressive potential.”

-*I Care If You Listen*

“...provocative, often hilarious...”

“gripping and often reaches a white-knuckle intensity”

-*Lucid Culture*

Perfect Lives Manhattan

“Staged by performance-art cabal **Varispeed** in public and private spaces throughout the Village and Soho, this live version of Robert Ashley’s seminal multimedia opera was punky and profound, showing that innovation has less to do with bottomless budgets than with vision and spirit.”

-*Time Out New York* [“Best of 2011”]

“The Varispeed production, presented as part of the Performa 11 festival, was less an act of rescuing a work from oblivion than one of repurposing its materials to unleash latent potential, while remaining faithful to its textural integrity and structural rigor. That Varispeed’s members could express themselves so readily through Mr. Ashley’s work while remaining faithful to it was impressive.”

-*The New York Times*

ADDDDDDDDD: an opera by thingNY

“*ADDDDDDDDD* takes rapid-fire, largely spoken-word lyrical content and plays it out across a pulseraising background constructed of sonic accents like dingling bells and remote control channel changing—multiple streams of content flashing by at warp speed. Even in its audio-only CD release format, it’s somehow all consuming. I bet no one feels the urge to check their email during a live performance. *ADDDDDDDDD* is packaged with a fun, quirky, comic book libretto. A lovely item that takes the album a step beyond the usual CD release, it makes the physical object in the digital age an interesting piece of art in and of itself, worthy of shelf space and providing plenty of additional visual stimulation.”

-*NewMusicBox*

For Stefanos Tsigrimanis

“Excellent. I loved the honesty about it.... Definitely get your hands on the recorded version.”

-Douglas Laustsen, *WRSU*