

Patrick McGraw was born in the United States, where he lived before making Canada his home in 2001. A lifelong interest in the sciences led him to a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the California Institute of Technology, but the pull of his other great love, music, proved irresistible. He returned to school to study composition, with David Mott at York University and then with Gary Kulesha and Alexander Rapoport at the University of Toronto. His music, especially in his electroacoustic explorations, sometimes draws direct inspiration from his physics background but just as often the influence is subtle, reflected in a deep appreciation for the beauty of nature and a preoccupation with the complicated relationship between abstract patterns and their sensory manifestations. His chamber, operatic, electroacoustic and large-ensemble works have been performed in the U.S. and Canada by the Thin Edge New Music Collective, TorQ Percussion, the Cecilia String Quartet, Reverb Brass, the Toy Piano Composers Ensemble, the University of Toronto Wind Symphony and others, and featured at international forums such as the Mise-En Music Festival. He was awarded the Karen Kieser Prize in Canadian Music in 2014 for his string quartet “Glass.” His work has been supported by grants from the Toronto Arts Council and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Although music is now his primary focus, he remains active in the sciences as a teacher. These two areas of work increasingly overlap, revealing unexpected commonalities between different ways of sharing an experience of wonder.