

## **Pattersongs** for orchestra (2008)

**PatterSongs** is an orchestral elaboration on material from my early opera **The Overcoat**. The title is a reference to a staple of comic opera, the best-known examples written by Gilbert and Sullivan. Characterized by a moderately fast to very fast tempo, a succession of rapid tongue-twisting rhythmic patterns defines the form.

Sometimes swaggering, pompous or comic, the music cites parts of the opera's material associated with the ill-treatment of the main protagonist, the hapless clerk Akaky Akakievich Bashmachkin. One example of this is the use of various woodblock figures, particularly the constant repeated hammering towards the end of the work that suggesting the constant nagging and harassing voice of his tormentors. The sometimes-cartoonish nature of the work belies the cruelty and grotesquery not far beneath the surface, the capricious musical changes underlining Akaky's forced smile worn through the circumstances he has to endure.

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