

## **PRISM Quartet | Steven Mackey biography**

Steven Mackey was born in 1956 to American parents stationed in Frankfurt Germany. His first musical passion was playing the electric guitar in rock bands based in northern California. He later discovered concert music and has composed for orchestras, chamber ensembles, dance and opera. He regularly performs his own work, including two electric guitar concertos as well as numerous solo and chamber works and is also active as an improvising musician.

As a composer, Mackey has been honored by numerous awards including a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, two awards from the Kennedy Center for the performing arts, the Stoeger Prize for Chamber Music by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and in 2000 the Miami performing arts center acknowledged his contributions to orchestral music with a special career achievement award. His *Indigenous Instruments* was selected to represent the U.S. at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris in 1990. Mackey has been the composer in residence at numerous music festivals including Tanglewood and Aspen and he was featured at the 2000 American Mavericks Festival and the 2003 Holland festival in Amsterdam.

Among his commissions are works for the Chicago and San Francisco Symphonies, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Kronos Quartet, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation in the Library of Congress, the Fromm Foundation, the Brentano String Quartet, the Borromeo String Quartet, Fred Sherry, Dawn Upshaw, and The Dutch Radio Symphony, Prism Saxophone Quartet, the BBC Scottish Chamber Orchestra and many others.

His monodrama - *Ravenshead* - for Tenor/actor (Rinde Eckert) and electro-acoustic band/ensemble (The Paul Dresher Ensemble), has been performed nearly one hundred times and is available on a min/max CD. In a year-end wrap up of cultural events, USA today crowned the work the "Best New Opera of 1998".

Available discs of Mackey's work include "*Lost and Found*": Mackey performing his own solo electric guitar music, released by Bridge records in 1996; "*Tuck and Roll*": Michael Tilson Thomas conducts orchestral music of Steven Mackey, released in 2001 by BMG/RCA Red Seal; "*String Theory*": string Quartets and string quartets plus with the Brentano String Quartet released in 2003 on Albany Records; "*Heavy Light*": Mosaic plays mixed chamber ensemble music, released in 2004 by New World Records. "*Tuck and Roll*" and "*Lost and Found*" made several year-end top ten lists including the New York Times. Individual pieces are included on numerous collections on Nonesuch, BMG/Catalyst, CRI, Newport Classics, and many other labels.

As a guitarist he has performed his own music with the Kronos Quartet, the Arditti Quartet, New World Symphony, the Dutch Radio Symphony, The London Sinfonietta, Nexttime Ensemble (Parma), Psappha (Manchester), Joey Baron. Mackey is currently Professor of Music at Princeton University where he has been a member of the faculty since 1985. He teaches composition, theory, twentieth century music, improvisation and a variety of special topics. As co-director of the Composers Ensemble at Princeton he coaches and conducts new work by student composers as well as twentieth century classics. In 1991, he was awarded the first-ever Distinguished Teaching Award from Princeton University.

Mackey's web address is [www.stevenmackey.com](http://www.stevenmackey.com). His music is published by Boosey & Hawkes.

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