

Short Biography

Composer Lawrence Dillon has produced an extensive body of work, from brief solo pieces to a full-length opera. Although he lost 50% of his hearing in a childhood illness, he began composing as soon as he started piano lessons at the age of seven. In 1985, he became the youngest composer to earn a doctorate at The Juilliard School, and was shortly thereafter appointed to the Juilliard faculty. Dillon is now Composer in Residence at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where he has served as Music Director of the Contemporary Ensemble, Assistant Dean of Performance, and Interim Dean of the School of Music. He was the Featured American Composer in the February 2006 issue of Chamber Music magazine.

Dillon's music, in the words of American Record Guide, is "lovely...austere...vivid and impressive." His works are recorded by Albany Records, Channel Crossings and CRS, and published by American Composers Editions. Increasingly in demand, Dillon has completed commissions in the last two years from the Emerson String Quartet, the Ravinia Festival, the Cassatt String Quartet, the Mansfield Symphony, the Boise Philharmonic, the Salt Lake City Symphony, the Daedalus String Quartet, the Kenan Institute for the Arts, the University of Utah and the Idyllwild Symphony Orchestra. Three recordings of his music were released in 2010 on the Bridge, Albany and Naxos labels.

Lawrence Dillon is represented by Jeffrey James Arts Consulting.

Full Biography

Composer in Residence at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, **LAWRENCE DILLON** (b. 1959, Summit, New Jersey) has produced an extensive body of work, characterized by a keen sensitivity to color, a mastery of form, and what the Louisville Courier-Journal has called a "compelling, innate soulfulness."

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ALBANY has just released a disk of Dillon's vocal works entitled [*Appendage and Other Stories*](#). The title track, [*Appendage*](#), is a thirty-three minute fantasy featuring soprano Lauren Flanigan and an ensemble comprised of musicians from the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, conducted by Ransom Wilson. The recording also includes [*Entrance*](#) and [*Exit*](#) for actor and ensemble, and [*Still Point*](#) for mezzo, viola and piano. *Fanfare* Magazine put *Appendage and Other Stories* on its **Best of 2010 Want List**, saying, "I think music should be fun, moving, mysterious, beautiful, funny, and frightening. I don't expect it to be all of those things on the same CD, however. Nevertheless, this CD is all of those things and more, and even though I had never heard of Lawrence Dillon until this CD came in the mail, I now must number myself among his fans."

BRIDGE Records has just released [*Insects and Paper Airplanes*](#), a recording of three of Dillon's string quartets and a piano quartet, featuring performances by the Daedalus String Quartet and pianist Benjamin Hochman.

Another recording of Dillon's music is due out in 2011: NAXOS will release Dillon's complete works for violin, featuring Sphinx Grand Prize Winner Danielle Belén.

Dillon is close to completing his long-term chamber project, the [*Invisible Cities String Quartet Cycle*](#), a cycle of six quartets focusing on Classical forms. The Emerson Quartet commissioned [*String Quartet No. 5: Through the Night*](#) and premiered it on March 9th, 2010 at the Kölner Philharmonie in Cologne, Germany, with subsequent performances in Seattle, Winston-Salem, Washington, New York and Philadelphia. Following the performance at the Smithsonian Associates, the Washington Post wrote, "Dillon has a huge repertoire of technical tools on his belt, and he uses them liberally but always sensitively and intelligently."

[*String Quartet No. 4: The Infinite Sphere*](#) was commissioned by the Daedalus Quartet and premiered at Wolf Trap in January 2010. Of the fourth quartet, the *Washington Post* wrote, "Dillon's control of time was a conspicuously imaginative element throughout. It is a fine addition to the repertoire." The first quartet in the cycle, [*Jests and Tenderness*](#), was premiered and recorded by the Mendelssohn String Quartet in 2000. The second quartet, [*Flight*](#), was premiered by the Daedalus String Quartet in 2003. The third quartet, [*Air*](#), was premiered in 2006 by an ensemble comprised of members of the Miami, Mendelssohn and Brentano String Quartets.

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[*Figments and Fragments*](#), an orchestral fantasy that imagines the wild ruminations of Robert Schumann's mind as he lay paralyzed in an asylum in Eendenich, was commissioned by a consortium of five orchestras, resulting in performances in Los Angeles, Salt Lake City and Boise from May through November 2010.

The Better Angels of Our Nature, Dillon's composition for piano trio and narrator based on texts of Abraham Lincoln, was a winner in the first composer competition sponsored by the Ravinia Festival in July 2008. It has already had over forty performances in eleven cities.

His [*Amadeus ex machina*](#) was chosen to represent the US in celebrations of Mozart's 250th birthday in Salzburg, Vienna and Graz, Austria in the spring of 2006. The piece has also been performed by the St. Petersburg Chamber Philharmonic (where Dillon was a guest of the St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory) and awarded a special commendation by the 2003 Masterprize panel in London. It was also chosen as contemporary competition piece for the 2002 Vakhtang Jordania International Conducting Competition in Kharkov, Ukraine, and has had US performances by orchestras in Minnesota, Indiana, Kentucky, Utah, North Carolina, and at the 2006 Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina. [*Amadeus ex machina*](#) was a featured work on the 2010 Conductor's Guild Conference in Copenhagen.

In February 2005, hornist David Jolley and the Carolina Chamber Symphony premiered Dillon's [*Revenant: Concerto for Horn and Orchestra*](#) with the composer conducting. The piece went on to win a prize from the International Horn Society. Also in 2005, his piano quartet [*What Happened*](#) was premiered in Paris at the Maison Danois by the Atlantic Ensemble.

Dillon's [*Wright Flight*](#), commissioned by the 2003 illuminations festival, was premiered at Roanoke Island Festival Park in July of that year. The work combines orchestra, projected images and three strands of narrative to tell the story of the Wright Brothers' first flight. [*Wright Flight*](#) was selected as a featured work in the Wright Brothers' Centennial Celebration at Kitty Hawk in December 2003.

A recording of his music, featuring flutist Ransom Wilson along with the Borromeo, Cassatt and Mendelssohn String Quartets, was released by Albany Records in the summer of 2002. American Record Guide called it "lovely...austere...vivid and impressive." CVNC cited the recording as "delightful and engaging...inventive and skillfully scored...fascinating and imaginative." In NewMusicBox, Amanda MacBlane commented on a "pure mode of expression that layers lines so gracefully they seem to play themselves with an energetic fervor. Dillon's painterly style carefully colors phrases with glissandi and subtle accents underneath an intricate tapestry of sound."

Dillon's children's piece [*Snegglish Dances*](#) was commissioned and premiered by the Louisville Orchestra, which subsequently won the 2001 Leonard Bernstein Award for Educational Programming from ASCAP and the American Symphony Orchestra League.

Partially deafened by a childhood illness, Dillon was the youngest of eight raised by a widowed mother. His earliest memories are of a house filled with the sounds of older siblings practicing the piano. At the age of seven, he began his own lessons, and quickly developed the habit of composing a new work each week.

In 1985, Dillon became the youngest composer to earn a doctorate at The Juilliard School, winning the Gretchaninoff Prize upon graduation. As a student, he also won an ASCAP Young Composers Award and first prize in the annual CRS New Music Competition. He studied privately with Vincent Persichetti, and in classes with Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, David Diamond, Leon Kirchner and Roger Sessions. Upon graduation, he was appointed to the Juilliard faculty.

In 1990, Dillon was offered the position of Assistant Dean at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, where he is now Composer in Residence. He has also served as Interim Dean of the School of Music and founding Music Director of SACE, the School of the Arts Contemporary Ensemble.

In addition to his duties at UNCSA, Dillon has held residencies with numerous summer festivals, including the Cooperstown Chamber Festival, the Appalachian Summer Festival, the Wintergreen Summer Arts Festival, the Charles Ives Center, the Saugatuck Festival, the Swannanoa Chamber Music Festival and the Killington Festival. He has been a guest composer at the Curtis Institute of Music, SUNY-Stony Brook, the University of Utah, the Colburn School of Music, Seisen International School in Tokyo, the St. Petersburg Rimsky-Korsakov Conservatory, the Hartt School of Music, Indiana University, Boise State University, the University of California at Sacramento, Eastern Michigan University, Eastern Carolina University, the Buckley School, the Museum of the American Piano in New York and the Reynolda Museum of American Art. In 1999, he was named Music Program Director for the illuminations Summer Arts Festival on Roanoke Island, a position he held for seven years.

His works have been performed and broadcast throughout the Americas, Asia and Europe. His *Violin Concerto* was commissioned and premiered by the late Naumberg-winner Elaine Richey.

Dillon has earned numerous awards for his work, including honors from the American Music Center, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust, Masterprize, the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, the Ravinia Festival, the International Horn Society and Contemporary Record Society. In 1999, he received an Artist Fellowship from North Carolina, the highest honor accorded to artists in the state.

Dillon's music is recorded by Albany Records, Bridge Records, Naxos, Channel Crossings and CRS. His works are published by American Composers Editions, a subdivision of BMI. He is represented by Jeffrey James Arts Consulting. His blog, [*an infinite number of curves*](#), is a featured composer blog on www.sequenza21.com, which won the 2005 ASCAP Deems Taylor Internet Award.