

The background of the entire poster is an abstract painting. The top section is a solid dark blue. Below this, the central part of the poster features a large, textured abstract painting with a palette of blue, green, yellow, and brown, suggesting a landscape or a complex composition. The bottom section is a solid dark blue, matching the top.

# WALTER ROSS

# TRIUMVIRATE

CONCERTOS FOR CLARINET, PIANO, AND DOUBLE BASS

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra | Vladimir Lande, conductor  
Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra | Robert Black, conductor  
Warsaw National Philharmonic | George Manahan, conductor



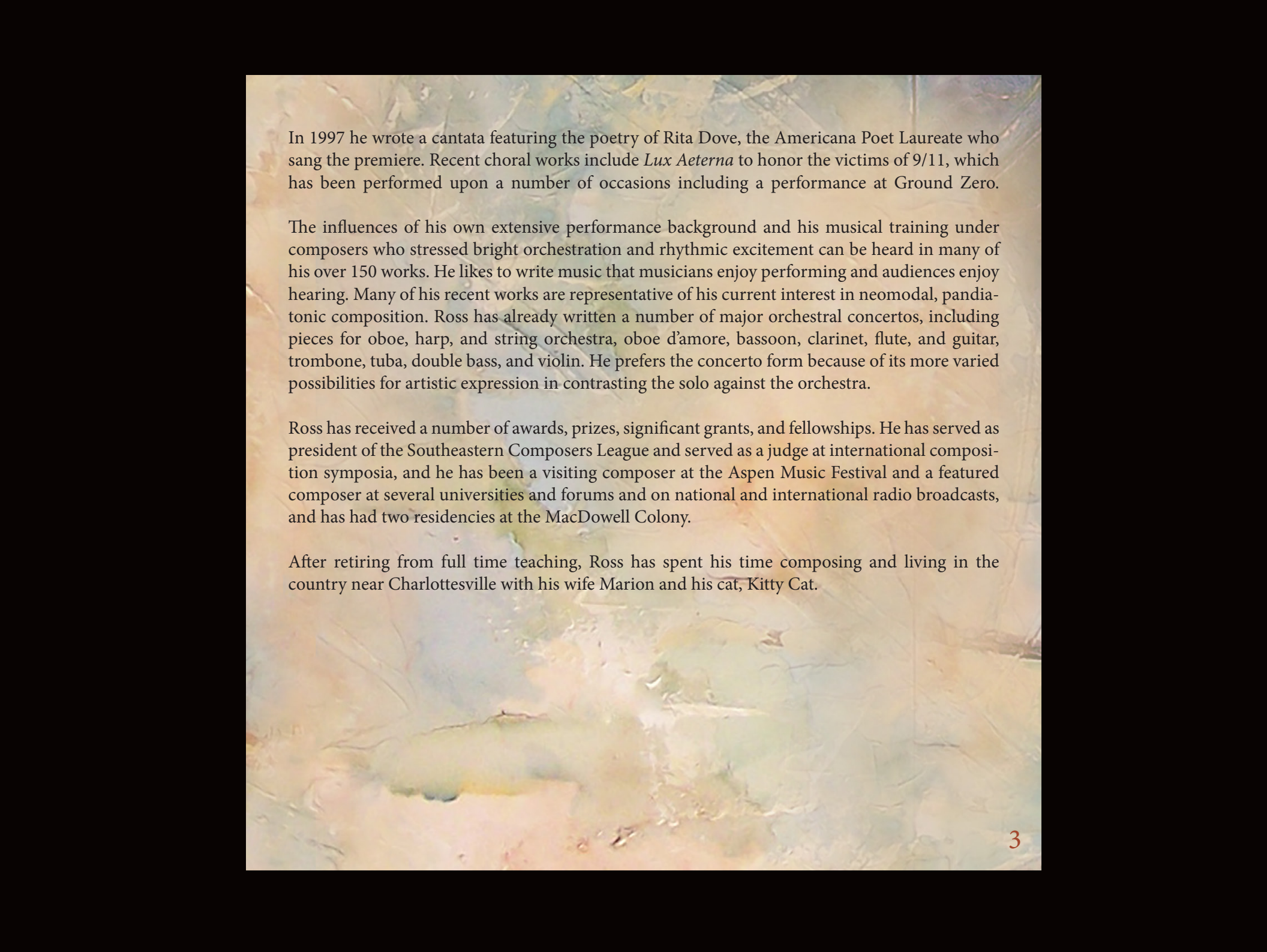
*Walter Ross* (b. 1936), whose works have been performed in over 40 countries, is perhaps best known for his compositions featuring brass and woodwinds. Raised in Nebraska, he became a professional orchestral French horn player by the age of 17 and went on to gain more performance experience in college as member of the University of Nebraska symphonic band, as a string bass player in a polka band, and as a flute player with a baroque ensemble. Currently he plays bass in the Blue Ridge Chamber Orchestra in Charlottesville VA.

After participating in the undergraduate program at the University of Nebraska, Ross received much of his early compositional training under Robert Beadell. One of his composition professors told him never to write in a void, but always to write for a specific group or soloist; this would give limits and guidelines to his writing. All of his many compositions have been written as commissions or requests.

After receiving his Master's Degree in music, he went on to Cornell University where he studied under Robert Palmer and Karel Husa. In 1965 he received an Organization of American States fellowship to study composition privately under the famous Argentine composer Alberto Ginastera.

Ross began teaching composition and theory in the music department at the University of Virginia in 1967. He established the Charlottesville University and Community Orchestra, which he conducted for two years. During his tenure at the University, he served as Chairman of the Department of Music and was awarded a University Outstanding Teaching Award.





In 1997 he wrote a cantata featuring the poetry of Rita Dove, the Americana Poet Laureate who sang the premiere. Recent choral works include *Lux Aeterna* to honor the victims of 9/11, which has been performed upon a number of occasions including a performance at Ground Zero.

The influences of his own extensive performance background and his musical training under composers who stressed bright orchestration and rhythmic excitement can be heard in many of his over 150 works. He likes to write music that musicians enjoy performing and audiences enjoy hearing. Many of his recent works are representative of his current interest in neomodal, pandiatonic composition. Ross has already written a number of major orchestral concertos, including pieces for oboe, harp, and string orchestra, oboe d'amore, bassoon, clarinet, flute, and guitar, trombone, tuba, double bass, and violin. He prefers the concerto form because of its more varied possibilities for artistic expression in contrasting the solo against the orchestra.

Ross has received a number of awards, prizes, significant grants, and fellowships. He has served as president of the Southeastern Composers League and served as a judge at international composition symposia, and he has been a visiting composer at the Aspen Music Festival and a featured composer at several universities and forums and on national and international radio broadcasts, and has had two residencies at the MacDowell Colony.

After retiring from full time teaching, Ross has spent his time composing and living in the country near Charlottesville with his wife Marion and his cat, Kitty Cat.

## CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA

I. Drammatico

II. Grazioso

III. Allegro energico

My Bass Concerto was written at the request of the acclaimed double bassist Mark Bernat, who performed the premier with the Richmond Virginia Orchestra.

The work is in traditional three-movement design.

The opening of the first movement, marked “Drammatico,” ends with a cadenza for the solo instrument. This leads to an “allegro fantistico,” which ends with a short cadenza leading to a slower and more lyrical section. The energy of the first section returns, and the movement ends.

The second movement opens with a lyrical, waltz-like “Grazioso.” The middle section is an “adagio amoroso” in duple meter. The themes of the opening section then return in an elaborated manner, and the movement comes to a close.

The third movement, “Allegro energico,” is also in a three-part design and ends with a grand flourish for the soloist and the orchestra—Hurrah!

I started as a professional musician when I was in high school playing French horn with the Lincoln Nebraska Symphony and double bass with a polka band. I ended my bass-playing days with the Blue Ridge Chamber Players in Charlottesville VA.

It is a great joy for me to hear this performance by such a world-class virtuoso.

–Walter Ross



## PIANO CONCERTO, “MOSAICS”

I. Festivo

II. Largo malincolico

III. Allegro misterioso

You can find the key to the structure of Ross’ Piano Concerto in the subtitle. He explains:

“The subtitle Mosaics refers to the structure of the first movement. After I state the two basic themes (fanfare at the beginning and the piano motive immediately after, an arpeggiated figure) the movement continues in a series of episodes (mosaics) based on the fanfare or piano theme. Toward the end of the exposition the horn presents a legato melody, soon imitated by the cellos. This new mosaic slows the pace to prepare for the middle section. A new, slower theme is introduced here which is stated four times in different orchestrations. The last statement by the piano turns into a short cadenza which leads back to the opening fanfare and further episodes on the two basic themes. Eventually the tempo picks up (first violins alone) and the coda begins. Thus, the movement is a series of sections fitted together as in a mosaic.”

This “mosaic” could also apply to the festive tone color, which uses much musical legerdemain. For example, at 2:07, the piano begins a syncopated rhythm with the percussion for a few bars, then shares the stage with the orchestra, which plays a lyrical melody. At 3:00 the orchestra seizes the melody from the jazzy piano and drops the tempo to a soft interlude. The piano runs sound improvisatory and at 5:20 the piano champs at the bit, breaks loose, and races off. This is foot tapping music. The theme continues for more than a minute, before the coda really heats up and the orchestra runs along with the piano. Suddenly the steeple chase of music slows to a quiet close.

In the “Largo malincolico,” the piano sets the mood, which it develops with the woodwinds. The orchestra enters and supports the melancholic theme for a few bars. Soon two haunted high-pitched interchanges occur between piano and percussion and then the peripatetic piano leads the listener down enchanted paths. At 4:00, the tempo increases and the mood changes from melancholy to celebratory. The rhythm is dance-like. After a brief interlude, the mood turns winsome, with nostalgic strains voiced on the strings. The piano is tempted by the seductive strings in a lovely solo sequence and then surrenders completely. The music gently trails off.

The final movement is “Allegro misterioso,” a devil’s dance fantasy based on the medieval *Dies Irae* chant. The opening percussion bars (particularly the claves and xylophone), coupled with the orchestral rumblings and staccato eighth notes on piano, create this mysterious aura. There is so much suspense in this opening sequence that the listener may need to play it again to absorb it. At 1:50, it assumes a playful tone. Soon Ross introduces a different kind of mystery on the woodwinds, one that evokes a near eastern climate. It prepares the way for a percussive piano sequence so intense that perhaps the work should have been titled “Concerto for Piano and Percussion,” in the manner of Bela Bartók. The focus shifts from piano to percussion so radically that the effect is vertiginous. This coda, unlike those in the previous movements, builds to a frantic level and ends with a flourish.

–Peter Bates

## CLARINET CONCERTO


### I. Fantasia

### II. Romanza

### III. Capriccio

The Clarinet Concerto reveals its whimsical mood after six bars of a vivid orchestral theme in 4/4 time. Percussion instruments like claves, a cow bell, a guiro, and a wood block prepare the stage for the clarinet’s entrance with their lively antics. This first movement is called “Fantasia,” “an imaginative composition often characterized by distortion, exaggeration, and elusiveness resulting from its departure from stylistic norms” (*Flarvard Dictionary of Music*). The clarinet enters assertively; suddenly the orchestra slows down the tempo, but only for a moment. Soon the piano picks it up, joined by Ross’ highly variegated percussion. After a rollicking tune, a slower *espressivo* sequence takes over led by a moody piano and strings. Gradually the tempo builds up again, but more subtly. A variation of the jazzy rhythm in a higher key takes over at 3:35. The con-templative theme expands, its keening scalar ascents contrasted by soothing strings. There are frequent bursts of short rhythms, such as what occurs at 5:15. With the climactic coda the clarinet urgently plays in high register, *accelerando*, punctuated by furious kettledrums.





Suitably marked “Romanza,” the second movement has an intimate arioso feel. The piano sets a dreamy mood, marked *Lento con amore*. Debussy would have liked such languidness. The piano and clarinet dominate, with the orchestra frequently echoing the clarinet theme, its lyricism perhaps evoking a lazy Sunday afternoon by a river. At 6:40 the melody becomes quite soulful.

The final movement, “Capriccio,” also fits the canonical definition. It is a “humorous, fanciful, or bizarre composition.” It opens suspensefully, *allegro scherzando*, with the clarinet playing an impish melody in dialog with percussion. At 2:00 the tempo drops and a dreamy interlude ensues, with more elaborate figuration than in the previous movement. Soon the percussion recapitulates the opening melody, but with more of an edge, accompanied by rapid piano figurations. In fact, most of the times when the percussion enters, it signals a new melodic sequence (such as in 5:28). Rapid fire chords on the strings begin the energetic coda. The clarinet trills madly, orchestral chords grow more insistent, and the percussion snaps up the last word.

—Peter Bates





Tracks 1-3 recorded June 22, 2013 at Studio 1,  
House of Radio in St. Petersburg, Russia  
Session Producer & Engineer **Dirk Fischer**

Tracks 4-6 recorded at Slovak Radio and Television  
Studios, in Slovak National Republic  
Session Producers **Peter Zagar, Emil Niznansky**  
Session Engineer **Hubert Geschwandtner**  
Recording Technician **Ludmila Cermanová**

Tracks 7-9 recorded at the Warsaw Philharmonic  
Concert Hall in Warsaw, Poland  
Recorded by **Andrzej Sasin, Andrzej Lupa**  
Session Producers **Andrzej Sasin, Andrzej Lupa**  
Edited by **Aneta Michalczyk-Falana**  
Recording Technician Zbigniew Fijalkowski  
Painting by **Lena Karpinsky**  
“Conceptual Nature,” oil and acrylic on canvas

Executive Producer **Bob Lord**  
Product Manager **Jeff LeRoy**  
Editing, Mixing, & Mastering **Shaun Michaud**  
Art Director **Brett Picknell**  
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WALTER ROSS, composer

## CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA

St. Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra | Vladimir Lande, conductor

Artem Chirkov, double bass

- |   |                             |      |
|---|-----------------------------|------|
| 1 | I. Drammatico .....         | 7:40 |
| 2 | II. Grazioso .....          | 8:00 |
| 3 | III. Allegro energico ..... | 5:55 |

## PIANO CONCERTO, "MOSAICS"

Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra | Robert Black, conductor

Marjorie Mitchell, piano

- |   |                               |      |
|---|-------------------------------|------|
| 4 | I. Festivo .....              | 8:30 |
| 5 | II. Largo malincolico .....   | 8:30 |
| 6 | III. Allegro misterioso ..... | 6:02 |

## CLARINET CONCERTO

Warsaw National Philharmonic | George Manahan, conductor

Richard Stoltzman, clarinet

- |   |                      |      |
|---|----------------------|------|
| 7 | I. Fantasia .....    | 6:24 |
| 8 | II. Romanza .....    | 7:17 |
| 9 | III. Capriccio ..... | 7:07 |

