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Detroit announces bassist and composer Patrick Prouty as city's new composer laureate

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September 6, 2024 -- Detroit has its first composer laureate, months after ushering in the city's first poet laureate.

The composer laureate will be responsible for advocating and representing Detroit's diverse musical heritage, community and spirit, according to the city. The Ford Foundation is funding the position, along with that of [poet laureate](#) Jessica Care Moore and the city's first official historian, Jamon Jordan. Among 12 candidates, a panel of Detroit art and music professionals selected Patrick Prouty, a bassist, composer, conductor and educator from Detroit.

"Detroit has produced some of the world's greatest music and composers, and we have a whole new generation of young artists that our new composer laureate will be able to help develop and inspire," Mayor Mike Duggan said in a statement.



Prouty is expected to teach Detroit's musical legacy and inspire younger individuals to consider careers in music, especially in Detroit rather than bigger cities like New York. Prouty is also expected to honor and challenge local composers to elevate Detroit's musical genius, and "create original music that defines our lives," according to the city.

The laureate will have two major responsibilities, which include creating an original composition to be performed in celebration of Detroit's musical community and commitment to music. The other includes collaborating with residents, organizations and schools on programming and projects.

“We are so proud to be one of the cities in America with an official historian, a poet laureate and now a composer laureate, which all speaks to Detroit as a leader in history, music and letters,” said Rochelle Riley, director of Detroit's office of arts, culture and entrepreneurship.

As a bassist, Prouty has toured North America, Europe and Asia with Grammy nominee Bettye Lavette and blues great Johnnie Bassett, according to the city. He maintains an active performance schedule as a sideman and lead of "[The Detroit Office of Civil Defense](#)."

Prouty's skillset crosses various genres, including jazz, salsa, orchestral and avant-garde. His music was featured in many TV shows and feature films, including: "Brooklyn 99," "Overboard," "The Today Show," "Suits," "The Good Place," "Parenthood," "Nurse Jackie," "Masterpiece Theater" and "Breaking Bad," according to the city.

Prouty won multiple awards for his music, including the Block M Records Award in 2006, Detroit Music Award for "best jazz recording" in 2008 and 2012, and "best classical composer" in 2020. Prouty received a lifetime achievement award from the Michigan Music Hall of Fame in 2023, and serves as the director of orchestra and choirs at the University of Detroit Jesuit High School and Academy.

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