

Rick Robinson - Biography

During 22 years playing double bass in the Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO), **Rick Robinson** began attempting the difficult task of resetting the context of classical music in broader communities. Robinson began, however, in a fifth-generation musical family of Highland Park (MI). Then he began to lead as a bass student at Interlochen Arts Academy, Cleveland Institute of Music, New England Conservatory and summer festivals at Aspen and Spoleto. He held principal positions with both Akron and Canton symphony orchestras 1982-85, the Portland (ME) orchestra, as well as the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra directed then by composer John Williams.

Robinson won a small concerto competition (Haddonfield, NJ) in 1986, played solo recitals annually and informally studied conducting. As a substitute bassist for both the Boston and Detroit symphony orchestras, Robinson was offered and accepted DSO membership in 1989 to resolve a political demand by two Michigan state legislators for more African-American members. Intending to share hit symphonic music in new ways, in 1994 Robinson launched **CutTime Players**, a premiere eight-piece ensemble of DSO musicians performing his transcriptions for concert, educational, outreach and corporate events.

After Robinson started to publish these in 1997, he suddenly began composing (in fact, a work CSO is scheduled to perform in November 2021) and by the year 2010 launched a string sextet with optional drummer called **CutTime Simfonica**. By creating works that often blend urban dance grooves with conventional modes of classical expression, he has been realizing dialogues between the past and the present that are fun to perform and invite some audience participation. He won a Kresge Artist Fellowship for composition that same year and also began organizing the Detroit chapter of the worldwide **Classical Revolution** movement after first visiting the Cleveland chapter.

By 2012 Robinson (now aka **Mr. CutTime**) left the DSO sanctuary to develop and spread the gospel of *New Classical* nationally with young musicians, orchestras, music schools with other artistic partners, such as the street poets of the **Urban Requiem Project**. His development of **CutTime®** ensembles, new romantic-style music, practical methods and *user design* observations remain a golden opportunity to make classical music truly drive-able to the eyes of a wider public.

Starting late as a composer Robinson has so far produced several albums of works that are normally performed broken up and introduced by the composer. Skirting all calls for avante garde, Robinson prefers to revisit conventional sonata forms often using elements of urban pop and folk musical genres for inspiration, contrast, development and audience handshake. Robinson came out as a composer in 2006 when his orchestra, the DSO chose to premiere his “accidental” compositions *Essay After Sibelius*. The next year came the string sextet *Mighty Love*. Two years later the *Gitcha Groove On!* album launched CutTime Simfonica. Other major works include *Art As a Weapon* (2015), *First Grief* (2011), *Phantom Detroit* (2019) and *Essay No. 2 Never Forget* (2020). Eight orchestrations are currently available.

More information is available at cuttime.com.