Patrick Burns

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Full Biography | November 2026

Patrick Burns is an award-winning theatre artist whose work as a playwright, composer, lyricist, director, and performer spans original musicals, new plays, and theatrical productions across the United States. His artistic practice is informed by a lifelong belief in the power of storytelling to entertain, challenge, and connect audiences. Beyond his creative work, Patrick has built an extensive career in arts education, theatrical production, and organizational leadership, bringing the same commitment to artistic excellence, collaboration, and community engagement to every aspect of his work.

Patrick is the creator and star of *From Foster Care to Fabulous*, an award-winning solo musical inspired by his experiences growing up in the foster care system. The production has been presented at theatres and festivals across the country, including the New York International Fringe Festival, and received the Planet Activist Award from the Planet Connections Theatre Festivity for its contribution to foster care awareness. His original works also include *Lady in the Moon*, a contemporary rock musical that premiered at the Whitefire Theatre in Los Angeles; *Life Sentence*, a musical exploring the impact of the prison industrial complex on American families; and *The Storyteller: The Life and Tales of Hans Christian Andersen*, which combines Andersen's biography and fairy tales through magical realism. His developing plays include *Swelter in Place*, an intimate exploration of grief, family, and the complicated bonds between siblings.

Patrick's music was featured in *Ready Player Three*, an original musical commissioned by Musical Theatre West that premiered in 2024 and toured Southern California. He also composed original music for both seasons of *Thursdays in Juvie*, a podcast highlighting the work of Naomi Ackerman with incarcerated youth. His additional compositions and commissions include original scores, songs, and musical works for theatrical productions and educational programs.

As a music director and conductor, Patrick has collaborated with professional theatres and educational institutions throughout the country. His recent credits include *The Drowsy Chaperone* at the University of California, Davis; *Pippin* at California State University, Sacramento; and *Shrek the Musical* at Sierra Repertory Theatre. He previously served as Associate Conductor for the national tour of *Spamalot*, produced by Phoenix Entertainment, and as Resident Music Director and Composer at Redhouse Arts Center, where he conducted and supervised musical productions and composed original music for plays. He is a two-time

recipient of the Syracuse Area Local Theatre (SALT) Award for Music Director of the Year.

Patrick's work as a theatre artist has also led to an extensive career in theatrical production and arts leadership. From 2018 to 2023, he served as Production Manager of Broadway Sacramento, California's largest nonprofit musical theatre organization, overseeing large-scale productions, budgets, schedules, and production personnel. He has also worked with organizations including Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival and currently serves as Production Manager for Saint Mary's College of California's 2026–2027 academic season. Throughout his leadership work, he has emphasized collaboration, mentorship, and the development of sustainable working environments for artists and arts professionals.

An experienced educator, Patrick is currently a Lecturer in Musical Theatre at California State University, Stanislaus, where he teaches musical theatre performance and repertoire. His previous teaching engagements include Adelphi University, Saint Mary's College of California, Syracuse University, and the Brooklyn School of Music. A former ArtsBridge Scholar at the University of California, Irvine, he has also worked as a teaching artist, curriculum consultant, and mentor with organizations including CLARA, 916 Ink, Redhouse Arts Center, and Broadway Sacramento's Conservatory. His approach to arts education emphasizes artistic rigor, creative exploration, and the development of each student's individual voice.

Patrick's commitment to theatre extends into arts advocacy, cultural policy, and community engagement. His writing has appeared in *The Atlantic*, *The Chronicle of Social Change*, and *StageAgent*, and he has served as a grant reviewer for the California Arts Council. He is a former Board President and Treasurer of the Justice Arts Coalition, a national organization supporting incarcerated and formerly incarcerated artists, and currently serves on the Board of Directors of East Bay Children's Law Offices, continuing his longstanding advocacy for young people impacted by the foster care and juvenile justice systems.

A six-time Lincoln City Fellow of the Speranza Foundation, Patrick most recently participated in the foundation's 2026 Julian Residency & Retreat. He is also a 2025–2026 Creative Growth Fellow with the City of Sacramento's Office of Arts and Culture. His additional honors include recognition as a California Governor's Arts Scholar by Governor Gray Davis.

Across his artistic work and professional leadership, Patrick remains dedicated to creating compelling theatre, nurturing emerging artists, and helping build an arts community in which creativity, collaboration, and opportunity can flourish.