



KUPFERMAN

**JAZZ SYMPHONY  
and CHALLENGER**

**The Lithuanian National Philharmonic**

**Juozas Domarkas - Conductor**  
**Loretta Holkmann - Mezzo Soprano**  
**Ron Fink - Saxophone**

**CD104**

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## **JAZZ SYMPHONY (1988)**

### **by Meyer Kupferman**

***Notes by the composer:***

#### ***SOME OF THE HISTORY***

It has been forty years since I developed the idea of mixing jazz with contemporary music. At that time the mixture was heavily weighted toward the classical side, with the jazz materials asserting themselves in rhythmic thrusts, sizzling brass accents, giant orchestral parallelisms and relentless ostinati. Although these features were inundated by unconventional harmonic and contrapuntal atonal designs, it was clear that some of my music was a product of the Big Band Area. Its influence was to remain a strong one.

In the late 50's I composed *Sonata of Jazz Elements* for solo piano, which treated the jazz-classical ratio in more democratic balance: fifty-fifty. During the 60's there were interesting opportunities to compose jazz film scores like *Black Like Me*, *Blast of Silence*, *Cool Wind*, *Fearless Frank* and *Halleluja the Hills*. These were stimulating because they provided a chance to work closely with outstanding jazz musicians. Also, they made possible experimentation with large orchestral jazz ensembles, often of symphonic size. It was during this decade that such works as *Jazz String Quartet*, *Jazz Infinities Three*, for sax, bass and drums, *Infinities Twelve*, for chamber orchestra and *Concerto for Cello and Jazz Band* surfaced.

Toward the end of the 60's I started playing the clarinet again and wrote a jazz concerto called *Tunnels of Love*. This decade saw a greater involvement with 12-tone jazz and the concept of creating large-scale jazz designs in classical structures. These jazz-classical activities continued to nourish my arcane dream about writing a gigantic jazz symphony.

It was twenty years later when Imre Pallo asked me to compose a jazz symphony. The work was completed in the spring of 1988. It was commissioned by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic to celebrate the bicentennial of the U.S. constitution and the tricentennial of the founding of the city of Poughkeepsie. The freedom with which I approached this symphonic setting was clearly intended as a salute to the pioneer spirit of America. The work was premiered on October 14th, 1988 in Middletown, N.Y. under the baton of Imre Pallo with Loretta Holkmann and Ron Finck as soloists.

## **ABOUT THE MUSICAL PLANNING**

There is a philosophical aspect to *Jazz Symphony* which should be alluded to at this point. Very few pieces I write are totally abstract. There are always ideas or images behind each new work that spur my thinking and helping me achieve a creative design which breathes life into the music. My symphony is about love and freedom. It is also about death. There is a hidden theme, which eventually emerges near the end, in the guise of a song called *Blow Your Doomsday Trombone*; this tune refracts unfettered images of science through the prism of destruction, pollution and the ultimate demise of the earth. But this is more apparent in the music rather than the words. *Lonely Moonchild*, for example, is very personal and has tragic overtones. Throughout the symphony we find disturbing patterns and harmonies suddenly surfacing mysteriously. In fact, even from the opening chords the harmonic tensions suggest a strange foreboding.

After much experimentation, the decision to structure the symphony around a loose scaffolding of five jazz songs and a reprise seemed the clearest path. There would be contrasting jazz and symphonic passages like dramatic introductions, interludes and developmental sequences to connect the songs. The tunes would range from love ballads, torch-song blues, protest songs and quasi gospel-style songs. The orchestra commission called for two soloists, a mezzo soprano for the tunes and a sax player who could improvise with 12-tone materials and cut a symphonic part integrated with the wind section.

As the massive work took shape in my mind, the piece seemed to be dividing itself into two major sections, each to be almost a half-hour duration. A short intermission would be taken between them. Although I kept to my original big two-part plan, I later divided the piece into four smaller internal movements, with these separated by only a few seconds of silence.

'Glissandi', 'bends', 'fall-offs', 'rips', and 'growls', along with 'Wa wa mutes', Harmon, Cup, Straight and Plunger brass mutes - were all to become part of my jazz arsenal. One of the major problems was how to handle the rhythm section with such an enormous orchestra. The solution was to use a jazz drummer with the percussion group and alternate the bass section between areas where all eight basses played together and where only one player played with amplification.

A revision for the end of Part One was made in Lithuania. I wrote a new set of lyrics for the Gospel tune, *Freedom's Marching Drum*, as a tribute to the people of Lithuania, who, at the time of the recording (June 1990), were victims of the Russian blockade. It was one of the most exciting moments of my life when at the European



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premiere in Vilnius, in the great courtyard of the ancient university, four thousand people rose to their feet in cheers as the song broke through its final climax.

## **ABOUT THE MUSICAL FORM**

### **PART I**

In approaching the basic style of the symphony, it felt right to keep several separate but parallel directions going, each moving forward at its own pace and in its own style. An extended classical episode, for example, opens the work, exploring sustained dramatic chords which shift restlessly between winds, brass, strings and percussion. A few jazz lines are introduced into the texture by the sax, but these are disguised by the surrounding rich counterplay. The first song, *Phantom Lover*, is heard only about six minutes later, derailing the classical style entirely and offering a brief love song, much brighter in feeling, in its place. The tune gives way to a fast, atonal jazz exposition, perhaps the truly central style of the piece, which eventually leads into the first sax improvisation. This is followed by a blues song, *Lonely Moonchild*, which closes the first movement on an introspective note in D minor.

The second movement starts up with a driving 12-tone jazz theme. It is tossed to the sax a few bars later for a set of wild improvisations (this instrumental tune is later used as a slow English horn solo in Part Two). The rhythm continues to push ahead, gaining ferocity from trenchant figures in the brass and percussion. I remember designing this symphonic area to serve as the major developmental episode of Part One. At the climax, the sax breaks into a solo cadenza, with searing virtuoso passages flying off in all directions. The orchestra picks up the pieces and leads us directly into the final song of Part One: *Freedom's Marching Drum*, a Gospel tune, moving from C minor to an overwhelming coda in D minor. (short intermission).

### **PART II**

A free-floating chromatic episode opens Part Two, featuring a solo violin. The laid back tempo of this opening, which quietly insinuates jazz nuances in the violin, is juxtaposed by an orchestral outburst of driving 12-tone motivic phrases, each passing quickly from choir to choir. The storm recedes, soon permitting the English horn to play a lyrical solo based on a theme from Part One. The instrumental back-up for this English horn tune resembles a tango, with the meter ticking away between a three-four bar and a three-eight bar. This steers us into the first vocal of Part Two, *Is It Just To Make A Song?*, a very romantic torch ballad. The fade away ending of the song marks the end of the third movement.

We start the final movement with an introductory 'Tranquillo' in the winds which immediately projects us into an up-tempo complex symphonic jazz exposition. Fast rhythmic games and angular 12-tone designs abound, propelling the music towards its next station: *Blow Your Doomsday Trombone*, a contemporary protest song. It is a warning, for behind the poetry stands a vision of ultimate destruction "... and we are doing to ourselves! If we do not stop our roller coaster to death our world will go down the tubes!" Now that is what the symphony is about, for those were the thoughts which haunted me during the many months of composition.

*Blow Your Doomsday Trombone* opens with the bass playing the tune: a fast, double-time, walking-bass line. The strings pick it up for a slick 'Hollywood' moment, and then the clarinet saunters in, playing a big 'stand-up-solo' (a written-out variation). Next the tune is sung, delivering the words as a quasi-speech-sermon in 'machine gun' tempo. The finale of *Doomsday* features the soprano sax in an impassioned ad lib solo. This explodes into a terrifying orchestral moment, symbolizing the earth's destruction. There is a short piano solo, written to sound like a mechanical player-piano which may suggest "... nothing human may be left anymore."

A meditative alto flute passage is followed by a languid oboe melody. These prepare us for the final episode which is a reprise of the tragic *Lonely Moonchild*. The closing bars of the symphony encapsule the underlying feeling of the entire work: the final return to D minor... the philosophy of the 'aftermath' and the ultimate, sometimes tragic spirit we call love.

**Jazz Symphony Songs:**  
**(Lyrics by Meyer Kupferman)**

**PART I**

**SONG 1**  
**PHANTOM LOVER**

*Phantom lover  
kiss me once again,  
happiness rainbow,  
happiness tear,  
I have no fear,  
That's for sure.*

*When I was through with work  
I came here all alone  
to keep myself from calling you.  
I wanted to tell you  
I'm a candidate for anything you want  
me to be,  
Just say the word!*

*Phantom moonlight  
making one eclipse  
spinning the legends*

*history knows,  
and so it goes.*

*Night is just a phantom for two!  
How I love you!  
Don't care who knows.*

### **SONG 2**

#### **LONELY MOONCHILD**

*Moonchild remember how it was,  
I long for you  
That's how it is.  
You're the only moonchild.*

*When it rains in the night  
my heart is full of loneliness without  
you.  
You belong to the night.  
I long to see your shining face before  
me.*

*Moonchild remember I love you,  
I love you.*

### **SONG 3**

#### **FREEDOM'S MARCHING DRUM**

*We can hear freedom's marching drum!  
Have no fear, we shall overcome!  
Never look back, never say "Mama"  
My brothers we are marching home!*

*Lift your head high up to the moon  
The man said "Freedom's coming  
soon!"*

*Never return, never cry "Mama",  
Sing out, the world has turned around!*

*We lived in pain, didn't belong  
We had nowhere to go*

*They burned us out, till we grew strong  
Lord, I just want you to know . . .*

*We can hear freedom's marching drum!  
Have no fear, we shall overcome!  
Show us the way dear Jesus  
The way to find salvation  
The walls of sin are tumbling down!*

*Let's rejoice in the promised land  
Let your voice be my first command  
Give me your smile hallelujah!  
O Lord I'm coming home to stay.*

*Open wide swing those pearly gates  
See them glide, angels on their skates  
Lend me your wings to fly over your  
kingdom  
O Lord you know that I believe.*

*We were cast out, pushed to the  
ground,  
Hunted, lonely and cold,  
Brothers unite! Break all the chains  
We've got the power to hold!*

*Can't you hear freedom's marching  
drum?  
Never fear, we shall overcome!  
Show us the way, dear Jesus,  
The way to find salvation  
I need your blessing on my soul!*

## **PART II**

### **SONG 4**

#### **JUST TO MAKE A SONG**

*Is it just to make a song that you kiss  
me?  
Play those sweet games with my heart?*

*Fly me to another space beyond the  
sky,  
beyond the sun to hear your dreamy  
words of madness,  
Take me with you, for I love you,  
Even though I know that it can not last  
for long.*

*Is it just to make a tune that you touch  
me?*

*Whisper sweet words I can feel?  
Take my heart for one more spin up to  
the moon,  
before the music of your songs of love  
touch my soul with their magic,  
while shadows dance over the moon.*

*Let's run away to an island  
seek out a place no one can find,  
Let's turn the clock back forever  
then dance away the hours  
till the morning lights the sky  
for one more secret surrender,  
who will remember it now?*

*Is it only for the melody you still need  
me?*

*Steal every tune from my heart?  
Listen as words go round and round  
again and round and round and round,  
just like your love songs repeating  
forever*

*Take me  
Love me!*

*The melody is all we have.  
The melody is all we have.*

## **SONG 5 BLOW YOUR DOOMSDAY TROMBONE!**

*Believe in God and the lights make love  
Computers hiss  
Tracking new worlds in collision,  
Turn on the juice and explode  
existentially  
Illuminating the space beyond.*

*Believe in God and the bomb make do  
The angels play  
with their bodies up against it,  
A game of chance,  
Open up to the message,  
God has his ear to the ground for you.  
Electric images.  
Naked and tender,  
Parading planets  
Blow their Doomsday Trombone -*

*Not tomorrow  
But today  
Big brother's saying something  
Loud on the phone!*

## **LONELY MOONCHILD (reprise)**

*When it rains in the night  
my heart is full of loneliness without  
you.  
You belong to the night.  
I long to see your shining face before  
me.*

*Moonchild remember I love you,  
I love you.*



## CHALLENGER (1983) by Meyer Kupferman

### ***More notes by the composer:***

Although *Challenger* was composed in 1983, three years before the tragic accident, the work now bears the dedication: "... in memory of our brave astronauts who gave their lives to the exploration of space". The idea of *Challenger* began with the image of a rocket ship, turned into counterpoint on a grand symphonic scale. I envisioned the complex inner machinations of that kind of rocket ship rising far into the sky. I have always had a 'thing' for aerial machines like Zeppelins, planes and rockets - but there was more to it than that. The piece itself represented a challenge to me, a challenge of converting an incredible orchestral contrapuntal momentum into a meaningful form that would rise musically to some unimagined destination. I hoped to create a form that would be totally free, not earthbound but upward bound.

This one movement piece, scored for very large orchestra, begins with low, mysterious rumbles in the timpani, contra bassoon and basses, surrounded by fragmented bits and pieces in the woodwinds. These lumbering phrases - which repeat in variation, gaining a little more energy each time - are like pistons of a giant engine starting up. Soon the music becomes somewhat broader, briefly reaching for a moment of suspended animation. But this is short lived because suddenly, and without any musical warning, we are thrust into the middle of a bouncy 'Vivace'. This new stage of our 'engine' hits a ringing climax with a few powerful orchestral chords.

A quiet 'Allegretto' follows, with the oboe and strings initiating a lyrical episode. Slow moving contrapuntal transformations in all the choirs begin to alter the texture. Now, in fact, one may begin to suspect the true densities of the orchestral designs that lie ahead. This time there is a very gradual build up which finally bursts into an 'Allegro barbaro'. Based on a three note, eighth note motive - C, A, F - the music turns more tonal and more playful "... representing all the busy inner and outer preparations getting the space ship ready for launching". The piece builds once again, this time for the final countdown. We can actually hear the timpani, bass trombone and tuba sound the last eight 'counts' against a powerful crescendo in the orchestra. Immediately we are plunged into an incredibly fast fugue!

The fugue begins with the subject played in cluster formation by three clarinets and three bassoons. Our ship has taken off! We are in 'Presto' tempo with break-neck counterpoint emerging all around us. The trumpets answer the winds, the flutes and



oboes answer the trumpets and finally the horns answer the high winds. A second subject is introduced by the trombones which is answered by the upper strings and a few bars later by the lower strings.

The trumpets ring out majestically as all the brass and percussion take over the orchestral action. When the strings reassert themselves, we know we are in the penultimate episode. Everything grows louder and all the phrases seem to be directed upwards. Six horns suddenly blast out on a high fortissimo unison 'D', heralding the end. A few more explosive bars remain, bringing *Challenger* to its conclusion in a screaming flurry of xylophone and bells.

### **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**

**MAESTRO JUOZAS DOMARKAS** was born in 1936. He studied music at the Vilnius Conservatory and conducting with Yla Musin and Igor Markevich. Early in 1964, Maestro Domarkas was invited to lead the Lithuanian National Philharmonic as its chief conductor, one year before his graduation from the Conservatory. He has retained that post for nearly thirty years. It is largely because of him that symphonic music has won such wide popularity in Lithuania.

Maestro Domarkas has conducted orchestras in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Romania, Turkey, Mexico, Finland, Norway, Germany and France. His frequent appearances in the Soviet Union have been with the major orchestras of Moscow and Leningrad.

His volcanic energy and creativity have won him wide acclaim in the international press. Maestro Juozas Domarkas's "...musical depth, emotional manner of execution, precision, taste and sympathetic feeling for the works he performs have made him one of the truly important conductors of our time".



Born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1942, **RON FINCK** began clarinet studies at the age of 10, later adding saxophone and flute. He studied saxophone with Sal Libro of the Les Brown Band and flute with Harold Bennett of the Metropolitan Opera. After moving to New York in 1962, Mr. Finck began working with many jazz and entertainment artists, including Hugh Masekela, Sammy Davis Jr., Tony Bennett, Phil Woods and Ben Vereen as well as the talk show Big Bands, including the Tonight Show Band, David Frost and Merv Griffin. Among his former students are Ed Summerlin and Anthony Braxton. Mr. Finck performs frequently with the Hudson Valley Philharmonic.



A native of New York City, Mezzo-Soprano **LORETTA HOLKMANN** attended the Manhattan School of Music and earned an M.A. in ethnomusicology from Hunter College. Ms. Holkmann has performed in a number of roles with some of the world's leading opera companies, including the Metropolitan Opera, the Houston Grand Opera and the Zurich Opera. In addition to a solo appearance with the Buffalo Philharmonic under the direction of Michael Tilson Thomas, Ms. Holkmann has sung with the Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and the Jubilee Spiritual Singers.



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**THE LITHUANIAN NATIONAL PHILHARMONIC** was founded in 1940 when Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union. The musicians of the orchestra were drawn from several existing Lithuanian orchestras. Its first musical director was Balys Dvarionas, a distinguished Lithuanian composer, pianist and conductor.

Since 1964, the orchestra has been working under the direction of Juozas Domarkas, its chief conductor, whose imagination and energy breathed new vitality into its development. The Lithuanian National Philharmonic has done outstanding work with the traditional classical literature and has added an impressive range of contemporary works to its repertory, composed by Lithuanian and foreign composers. The orchestra has welcomed leading soloists from all parts of the world.

Most members of the orchestra have been drawn from the Lithuanian conservatory in Vilnius. Many of these players took leave to study with outstanding soloists and instrumental teachers in Europe before they joined the ranks of the orchestra. The Lithuanian National Philharmonic has toured France, Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Finland and the Soviet Republics. It has participated in many international festivals, among them the recent international festival of contemporary music in Leningrad. The major part of the Lithuanian National Philharmonic's orchestral and concerto repertoire has been recorded.

### ***ABOUT THE COMPOSER***

**MEYER KUPFERMAN** was born in Manhattan in 1926. He received his education at the High School of Music and Art and Queens College. He is entirely self-taught in music composition. He has been professor of chamber music and composition at Sarah Lawrence College since 1951, where he also served as chairman of the music department for four terms. Mr. Kupferman has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the American Academy and Institute of Arts of Letters. He is a virtuoso clarinetist who has premiered over sixty works composed especially for him. Kupferman is an unusually prolific composer who has an impressive output of work in all forms: 6 operas, 12 symphonies, 9 ballets, 7 string quartets, 10 concerti and hundreds of chamber works. His strong interest in jazz has been abundantly demonstrated by such 'classical-jazz' compositions as *Concerto for Cello and Jazz Band*, *Sonata on Jazz Elements*, *Tunnels of Love*,

*Adjustable Tears, Jazz Infinities Three, Jazz String Quartet, Moonflowers, Baby* and others - all an integral part of his "Cycle of Infinities", a series of concert works all evolved from the same 12-tone row begun in 1962. He has received commissions from the Hudson Valley Philharmonic for his *Jazz Symphony* in 1988 and *Symphony No. 10, FDR* in 1982, the Chappaqua Symphony for *Wings of the Highest Tower*, commemorating the Centennial of the American Constitution, the Nassau Symphony for a *Double Clarinet Concerto* and The Louisville Orchestra, which commissioned and recorded his *Fourth Symphony* in 1956. The American Composers Orchestra premiered his *Challenger* in 1984 and the Pro Arte Orchestra of Boston recorded his *Clarinet Concerto*. A forty year retrospective of his keyboard music was performed on a nine-concert tour by pianist Christopher Vassiliades. Some of his experimental works in tape-gestalt forms include such pieces as *Celestial City, Angel Footprints, Superflute* and *Illusions*. Among his film scores are such pictures as *Black Like Me, Halleluja the Hills*, and the Truman Capote film *Trilogy*, which includes the famous, *A Christmas Memory*.

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Rhinebeck, N.Y. 12572





## The Music of MEYER KUPFERMAN

### 1. JAZZ SYMPHONY (50:50)

- 1 Part One / First Movement (4:27)
- 2 Phantom Lover (6:41)
- 3 Lonely Moonchild (4:09)
- 4 Second Movement (3:51)
- 5 Freedom's Marching Drum (4:24)
- 6 Part Two / Third Movement (7:55)

- 7 Just To Make A Song (4:21)

- 8 Fourth Movement (4:55)
- 9 Blow Your Doomsday Trombone (5:16)
- 10 Lonely Moonchild (Reprise) (4:31)

### 2. CHALLENGER (17:32)

- 11 In One Movement

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