

**THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN**

**VOL.3**

***Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra***  
***Banners for Orchestra***



***Orquesta de Baja California, Series***

**ROBERTO LIMON, guitar**

**EDUARDO GARCIA BARRIOS, Conductor**

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**THE ORCHESTRAL WORK OF MEYER KUPFERMAN**  
**VOL. 3**

***Concerto For Guitar and Orcestra***  
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**Introduction By The Composer**

**CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA** was commissioned in 1993 by my dear friends Roberto Limón, guitarist and Eduardo Garcia-Barrios, conductor, for their magnificent little virtuoso chamber orchestra, the Orquesta de Baja California. These gifted young Mexican musicians premiered the work in Tijuana the following year and later performed it on tour throughout Mexico. We were all delighted that my new concerto was received with much enthusiasm and critical acclaim in Mexico. As a result many new guitar works, including solo, chamber and orchestral pieces, seemed to flow right out of my pen. Roberto Limón and Eduardo Garcia-Barrios began a major recording project centered around the guitar and the Orquesta de Baja California which encouraged my interest in the instrument still further. With a chamber orchestra of such gifted musicians, each a soloist in his own right and guitar festivals emerging all over Mexico organized by Roberto Limón, who continued to commission more works, a new, challenging road was opening for my music.

Thinking back I realize now that the guitar

was an instrument I came to late in life. But with the help and support of a few wonderful friends like David Starobin, William Anderson, Robert Phillips, Roberto Limón and other virtuoso guitarists I not only learned to compose for the guitar; I soon discovered that I loved this delicate instrument with an overwhelming musical passion! To me, even though this concerto suggested a significant step in my twenty year search for a large-scale symphonic environment for the guitar, I felt the need to explore still further new relationships and structural designs for the instrument with orchestra. A year later, therefore, I plunged into a major composition in a new concerto-like form called HEXAGON SKIES, a twelve movement work where the amplified guitar alternates with the orchestra, movement for movement and only play together at the very end.

There is something quite unique about the amplified guitar: its 'soundspace' and its ability to make 'natural' musical events of opposing 'sensualities'. For example, I often experiment with blends of tonality and atonality. These seem to work extremely well with the guitar. Also, curious timbres of unusual phrase styles make for comfortable amalgams on this instrument.

But what attracts me the most is the unusually intimate and expressive nature of those six lonely strings.

In closing let me take this opportunity to offer my thanks to Roberto Limón and Eduardo Garcia-Barrios for their unflagging artistic encouragement.

*Meyer Kupferman*

### Notes On The Music

Meyer Kupferman's **CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA**, like many works in his 'gestalt' form is a contemporary odyssey in B minor. Although much of the piece is atonal, the prevailing core of the music delves deeply into the heart and feeling of an expanding B minor tonality. This is not an everyday B minor approach, however, but a special key to (and of) his own invention. "Over the years," says the composer, "I've discovered that many composers favored one special key and in my opinion wrote their greatest works in that key. For me, B minor seems warmer, more expressive...and with the guitar, I feel even more drawn to its secrets...."

**The First Movement (Adagio Espressivo)** opens with an introspective essay whose principal voice is the saxophone, supported by a rich atonal background of quiet woodwinds and sustained strings. The guitar, which is amplified, picks up the lead, subtly reshaping the atonal design as it arrives on the scene. The climax, a strong orchestral pyramid based on the composer's "Three Decade" Infinities 12-tone row (G, F, A-flat, B, B-flat, D, F-sharp, E, C, E-flat, A, C-sharp) - thrusts the work violently into its

first extended guitar cadenza. A dramatic metamorphosis occurs without warning or harmonic clue - and we find ourselves transported to an expressive, almost tragic, neo-romantic-baroque style, firmly set in the key of B minor.

**The Second Movement (Allegro)** is fast and energetic throughout featuring short, brassy orchestral fanfares. The guitar now takes on an agitated rhythmic style honed by virtuoso strumming and rapid motivic passagework of near-dazzling intensity.

In speaking about his concerto the composer described the **Third Movement (Lento espressivo)** as "...my love letter to the world!" The movement opens in a lonely mood with a quiet almost subdued guitar cadenza, at once freely chromatic, romantic but always contemporary in flavor. Little by little the orchestra builds power into the design which culminates in an extended F minor episode. The delicate opening theme is restated at the end as the music fades into silence.

There is much humor in the **Finale (Allegro Scherzando)**. Shaped as a speedy Rondo this colorful parade of tunes and dances reveals a fresh image of Kupferman. Speaking of his lighter musical moments the composer says: "...like Shostakovich I've always enjoyed the fun and games possible with today's orchestra. Also, the modern Scherzo Rondo is a perfect form for musical jokes, especially when you discover a few new tricks on the guitar to help things along."

The turning point in the finale brings us back to the concerto's opening key: B minor. Soon



the mood changes to a darker dramatic tone eventually returning us to a variation of the expressive guitar cadenza of the first movement. The composer says of the ending "...when I reached the end I was overwhelmed with a powerful emotion. I felt like I had been composing a tragic opera rather than a guitar concerto...which probably accounts for the dramatic, explosive outburst of the last few bars...and I let it stand this way because to me it felt right!"

**BANNERS (FOR ORCHESTRA)** was composed in 1994 as a birthday present for the gifted young Mexican conductor Eduardo Garcia-Barrios. The piece is fast and rhythmic throughout maintaining the opening tempo in strict time from beginning to end with the exception of a lyrical, slower episode in the middle. The form of **BANNERS** may be described as an insistent one-tempo vehicle for the accumulation of rhythmic and instrumental power. The piece maintains a compelling ostinato energy that continues right up to the end. The composer speaks of his work:

"...I remember quite clearly...there was a Medieval picture in my mind when I began the music: castles, knights in armor on horses charging into battle, the beautiful princess, and banners waving in the wind...all emerging from my childhood fantasies."

*by J. Richard Chambers*

**Roberto Limón**  
**Guitar**

Born in Mexico City, Roberto Limón studied guitar with prestigious guitarists Manuel Lopez Ramos and Angel Romero. His musi-

cal studies were made with outstanding musical researcher Pedro Michaca.

Considered one of the most active and versatile guitarists, he has developed an intense activity throughout Mexico, The United States, Russia, Germany, Spain, Portugal, Puerto Rico and Costa Rica.

He has participated in the International Cervantino Festival, Chamber Music Festival of San Miguel Allende as well as "Mexico: a Work of Art" hosted in New York, San Antonio and Los Angeles, and "Mexico: An Open Book" which took place in Frankfurt.

As a soloist he has participated with The National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, The St. Petersburg Orchestra, Mexico's National University Philharmonic, The San Antonio and San Diego Symphony and The Baja California Orchestra.

He is the founder of the Ensemble ATRIL 5, in which he experimented in contemporary music. His interest in chamber music has taken him to participate with various groups, including the Latinamerican String Quartet. He has been an enthusiastic promoter of Mexican music of the twentieth century, music he recorded within the series "Voz Viva de Mexico" edited by the National University of Mexico. Many composers have dedicated their works to him: Meyer Kupferman, Manuel Enriquez, Ernesto Cordero, Dimitri Dudin, and Ernesto Garcia de Leon.

In 1989 he was selected by the National Institute of Fine Arts of Mexico to become a lifetime member of the exclusive group of artists of this institution. In 1991 and 1993

he was awarded by the National Fund for the Arts for his work as a soloist and in chamber music. In 1994 he was invited by the National Council for the Arts to direct a Diploma in Classical Guitar in the Cultural Center of Tijuana.

At this time, besides his work as a soloist, he is also a member of the "Angel Romero Quartet," and is Artistic Director of the "Festival Hispanoamericano de Guitarra."

**Eduardo Garcia-Barrios**  
**Conductor**

**Eduardo Garcia-Barrios'** creativity, perfectionism, freshness and versatility have gained him the respect of his colleagues. Born in Mexico City, his first music teacher was his father, a self-taught pianist. But it was at the age of 16 that he discovered his own destiny when he attended a concert by the Moscow Philharmonic conducted by Dmitri Kitajenko. Later, Eduardo Garcia Barrios enrolled in the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City. Since then this gifted artist has proven himself to be a great festival promoter and organizer. Shortly afterward he enrolled in the Tchaikovsky Conservatory in Moscow where he studied piano with Nune Khachaturian, viola with Gela Dubrova, orchestral conducting with Yuri Simonov (Principal Conductor of the Bolshoi Theater) and, by one of those fortunate coincidences, became Maestro Kitajenko's student.

One of Maestro Garcia-Barrios' most important works was the creation of the Moscow Sinfonietta, later to become the Orquesta de Baja California. When he returned to Mexico

in 1990 he was invited to lead the Chamber Music Department at the National University of Mexico and at the end of the same year arrived in Baja, California in the Northwest of Mexico to continue project started in Moscow with the Sinfonietta: a small orchestra of soloists able to perform an extensive repertoire and also run a permanent educational program. The Orquesta de Baja California (OBC) was born.

Maestro Garcia-Barrios' extensive repertoire includes chamber music, works from the Baroque through the Contemporary period and Beethoven's, Brahms', Tchaikovsky's, Rachmaninov's and Mahler's Symphonies as well as Stravinsky's works, Prokofiev's, Shostakovich's, Ives' and de Falla's, among others.

**Orquesrta de Baja California**  
**Eduardo Garcia-Barrios**  
**Music Director and Conductor**

**The Orquesrta de Baja California** is considered one of the finest chamber orchestras in Mexico as well as one of the most important cultural projects of the Northwest. Founded and conducted by Maestro Eduardo Garcia-Barrios, it is widely known for its intense activity. In four and a half years it has given more than 300 performances, has toured several times and has made several recordings. Fifty percent of its activities is dedicated to an educational program that involves more than one hundred students from all over the state of Baja California where it is based, making it the first school orchestra in Mexico. It also has a close relationship with other artistic groups: actors,

theater directors, ballet companies and visual artists. The OBC performs frequently in interdisciplinary projects, bringing to them an interesting originality and providing the community a wide perspective on the arts.

### **“My Music...”**

*by Meyer Kupferman*

The music I love to write often crosses over a broad spectrum of styles usually characterized by tonal and atonal positions. Since I have been doing this sort of thing for fifty years, the notion of mixing opposing elements which is very natural for me has included thematic and athematic materials, jazz and non-jazz ideas and a host of rhythmic and textural opposites that I would prefer to describe as dynamic or creative polarization. As for performing artists, my best players and interpreters are those who have a real feel for these aesthetic games; they must be artists who command considerable virtuosity and a deeply rooted expressivity, since my work often touches on neo-romantic performance traditions. I suppose I should admit at this point that in the early days I was very quickly hooked on the challenge of big, romantic forms. This became evident as soon as I started composing for orchestra: My first symphony, first piano concerto, first cello concerto and first opera were all completed before I was twenty-one. Although these were never listed as tone-poems, it was for my self alone that these symphonic pieces were based on folk legends, fragments of mythology or the rich passions of epic poetry.

After working in a free chromatic style during the 1940's, the twelve-tone system gradually occupied more and more of my attention. Since I was totally self-taught in music composition and wore no academic handcuffs to hold me back or keep me in line,

I plunged right in and freely adapted the whole dodecaphonic system to my own selfish needs. Thinking that I had stumbled upon a gold mine, I created a form where each new work was based on a rotating series of tone centers - clearly a contradiction of atonality! This kind of re-invention soon led to what I then regarded as my first major innovation: all forty-eight permutations of the row were employed in a symmetrical distribution of tonal centers, each seven bars long and each coordinated by and evolved from the pitch sequence of the basic row. MY CHAMBER SYMPHONY (CD112) was an early example of this tone-center rotation procedure. Since the symphony had a bit of success and was premiered on an important ISCM concert along with John Cage's LANDSCAPES FOR TWELVE RADIOS I was happy to continue in this direction...for a while.

The 1950's represented a period of many swings back and forth between this form of private atonality and my 'old reliable' chromatic tonality. Perhaps my LYRIC SYMPHONY (CD110) and FOURTH SYMPHONY (1955, Louisville) are the best examples of the latter approach. My SONATA ON JAZZ ELEMENTS (1958, Serenus), a freely twelve-tone, hard-hitting jazz sonata, clearly showed that although I might have taken leave of my senses writing such an enormously difficult keyboard work, I had not abandoned the jazz world. Dreaming about the mind-boggling operatic success of Menotti, many young American composers like myself were caught up in the operatic explosion of the 1950's. Stravinsky's THE RAKE'S PROGRESS was an important contribution and urged us on still further. Although none of us really succeeded, I did manage to compose four operas during this crazy decade: DOCTOR FAUSTUS LIGHTS THE LIGHTS, VOICES FOR A MIR-

ROR, THE CURIOUS FERN and DRAAGEN-FOOT GIRL.

The 1960's marked the beginning of my CYCLE OF INFINITIES, a series of related twelve-tone works spanning nearly four decades all based on the same tone row. I became totally committed to this direction, discovering along the way that my 'Infinities' tone row was like a magic tune that could yield anything I required in terms of melody, counterpoint, texture or harmonic organization. My CYCLE OF INFINITIES started out with four different solo instrument concerts: unaccompanied flute, viola, cello and coloratura soprano. Each concert became a spectacular tour-de-force for the artist, particularly since new echo techniques, theatrical illusions such as lighting and choreography, and an array of electronic devices which enabled these solo instrumentalists or singers to perform live against their own pre-recorded sounds, were all part of each 'Infinities' event.

Also, I composed many 'Infinities' jazz works like my JAZZ STRING QUARTET (premiered at the White House when Johnson was president), CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND JAZZ BAND (CD114), INFINITIES PROJECTIONS (for chamber orchestra - CD114), INFINITIES FOR STRINGS, JAZZ INFINITIES THREE for sax, bass and drums (premiered at the Library of Congress during the First International Jazz Festival) and MOONCHILD AND THE DOOMSDAY TROMBONE, a jazz concerto for oboe (Ronald Roseman) and a small group of versatile artists including the wonderful Jan DeGaetani who sang jazz onstage for the first time with this 'Infinities' piece. A highlight in my evolving CYCLE OF INFINITIES was an opera without orchestra, THE JUDGMENT, composed in 1968. The libretto was based on the biblical story of Lot

in Sodom. Conceived in gigantesque proportions, THE JUDGMENT, in three long acts, called for huge stage sets, nineteen soloists, five choruses and absolutely no supporting instruments. I never concerned myself about where my poor singers would get their pitch or how they would maintain the twelve-tone intonation. Each singer had to have perfect pitch or a remarkable sense of relative pitch. Since I had worked with artists of this type before I could foresee no great difficulty. Now, however, I believe that I must have been wrong since THE JUDGMENT has still not seen the light of day.

The early 1970's marked the beginning of a major turnabout for me. My music embraced a new multi-style approach which I soon wound up calling 'gestalt' form. Today I can safely say I wasted many hours hopelessly trying to explain to my academic cronies why I gave it such a name. My lecture in Aspen, for example, proved to be a bust until I played some tapes of my new 'gestalt' music. Suddenly there was a glimmer of understanding. "Why does music always have to be consistent?", I asked. "Life certainly isn't except when it chooses to be!" My new 'gestalt' idea provided me with a great *raison d'être* to explore expansive musical conceptions of changing elements or, in fact, totally contrasting styles so incongruous that they had no business being near each other, let alone in the same composition! Thus armed with the chameleon-like aesthetic of my 'gestalt' idea, I could not only combine tonality with atonality but create a believable blend of music which could include touches of aleatoric, romantic, minimalist, jazz, electronic and even folk-like materials in the same piece. Eventually I discovered that the 'gestalt' traffic flowed better in large forms. As a result an avalanche of massive 'gestalt' works followed: YIN YANG SYMPHONY, CONCERTO



FOR SIX INSTRUMENTS AND ORCHESTRA, SYMPHONY FOR TWELVE, THE CELESTIAL CITY and CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND TAPE ORCHESTRA.

The 1980's and 1990's reveal a continued expansion of my 'Infinities' cycle. I would not be exaggerating if I said my 'Infinities' row was like an old friend with whom I enjoy a visit a few times a year. My weakness for atonal jazz provides me with other aesthetic 'pals and cookies.' Speaking about 1990, it would appear I opened a Pandora's box with my new book titled ATONAL JAZZ. The book explains my ideas about twelve-tone improvisation and is published with an 'Infinities' play-along CD (Dorn Publications). I scribbled the first draft of the book on my way to Lithuania in that scary summer of 1990. Our nervous little caravan of soloists, engineers, producers and wives sneaked into Vilnius to record my JAZZ SYMPHONY (CD104) without Soviet visas! Very dangerous - so was the music! But that's another story.

I do not wish to give the impression that I abandoned my grandiose 'gestalt' fantasies, for the 'gestalt' form eventually did emerge as the central preoccupation of my music from 1980 through 1996. The compositions of this period were centered around two instruments: the piano and the amplified guitar. The major keyboard works are THE MOOR'S CONCERTO (piano and orchestra, CD110), A LITTLE IVORY CONCERTO (piano and chamber orchestra, CD100), MASADA (piano and five instruments) and four big piano sonatas: THE CANTICLES OF ULYSSES, RED SONATA, TWILIGHT SONATA and SONATA OCCULTA. The works for amplified guitar are CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA (CD113), ICE CREAM CONCERTO (for eleven players and ice cream vendor, CD109), THESE SUNS ARE DARK

and HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK, both for solo guitar, GOING HOME (for guitar quartet) and ICARUS (for guitar, viola and cello).

Just to show that I am still keeping my hand in there, I should explain that I do play my instrument, the clarinet, every day, and conduct once in a blue moon, or whenever it is less of a hassle for me to do it. My musicians are very sensitive individuals, often high-strung or just plain strung-out from too much concentrated work on my music. It is good, therefore, that I hold myself in high esteem as an excellent coach (I haven't killed anyone yet, but I have been tempted to many times!). I try to impress upon my artists that they should enjoy the challenge of 'impossible' passages, arguing, making revisions and planning important musical events.

In closing let me say that music has been my life and I am very grateful to have lived it. Although the hardships, struggles and disappointments are never forgotten, the real joy of making something out of nothing is always there in front of me.

*Meyer Kupferman February 1996*



# THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN VOL.3



**Meyer Kupferman**

*Orquesta de Baja California, Series*

## Concerto For Guitar & Orchestra

- 1 Adagio (8:48)
- 2 Allegro(6:12)
- 3 Lento Espressivo(7:49)
- 4 Final: Allegro Scherzando(13:39)

## 5 Banners For Orchestra



**Roberto Limón**  
Guitar

Engineer: Sergio Ramirez Gardenas  
Orchestral Supervision: Teresa Riqué  
Painting "The Castle" 1977: Meyer Kupferman  
Design & Layout: Christopher L. Hennelly  
Software Assistance: Userfriendly®  
Produced by: Meyer Kupferman

This is a composer supervised recording.  
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**Eduardo Garcia Barrios**  
Conductor



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