

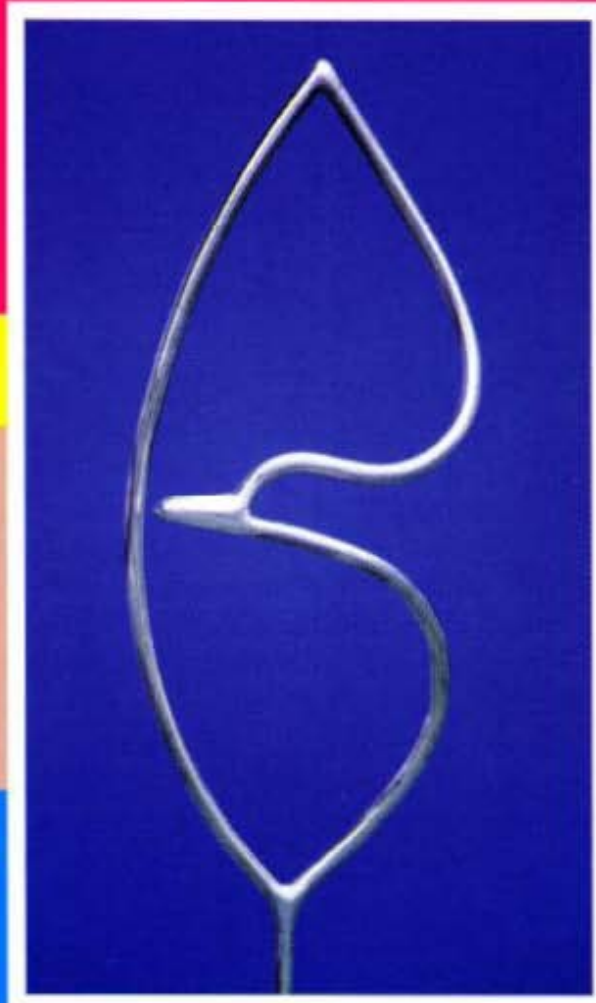
THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN

**VOL.
4**

HEXAGON SKIES

INFINITIES PROJECTIONS

ROBERTO LIMON, guitar



EDUARDO GARCIA BARRIOS, Conductor

Orquesta de Baja California, Series

**Soundspells
Productions**

DIGITAL RECORDING

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CD 114

THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN

VOL. 4

Orquesta de Baja California, Series **HEXAGON SKIES and INFINITIES PROJECTIONS**

NOTES:

HEXAGON SKIES (1994)

Shortly after the 1993 premiere of Meyer Kupferman's **CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA** (CD 113 Soundspells) the composer embarked on a second guitar concerto commissioned by those very same artists - Roberto Limon, guitarist, Eduardo Garcia Barrios, conductor and the Orquesta de Baja California - who had commissioned the earlier work. The major challenge this time was to create an overall design that would enable the new piece to stand in sharp contrast to the first concerto. This time he chose a somewhat theatrical form, setting the solo guitar on a high platform, away from the orchestra, with both orchestra and soloist immersed in a scheme of colored stage lights and projections which changed with each movement. Kupferman has always preferred to amplify the guitar because it intensified the instrument's concert intimacy, bringing its sound much closer to the audience. Also, it permitted the supporting musicians to play normally rather than hold back for fear of drowning out the guitar.

It is for another reason, however, that **HEXAGON SKIES** avoids completely the problem of balance between the guitar and those big monster 'tuttis' of the orchestra. Kupferman's plan for **HEXAGON SKIES** alternates six short orchestral

movements with six shorter *solo* guitar interludes. Each interlude continues the mood and character of the previous orchestral essay and acts as a variation. Only in the final movement is there any overlapping between the orchestra and the guitar. A curious feature of the design is that **HEXAGON SKIES** may be played in any one of three different presentations: The first in the original form with the six orchestral pieces and their six interludes; the second with only the orchestral movements; the third, as a solo guitar work with only the six solo guitar interludes.

Kupferman's feeling for sky images emerges clearly as each movement unfolds. The beginning, for example, "**Jacob's Ladder**" (or "Stairway to the Sky"), opens with a slow, rising 6-note orchestral pyramid-arpeggio (E, C, G, E flat, B, F sharp). Six permutations of this hexachord seem to control the quiet development of this movement. Also, each pyramid thrusts upwards, thus suggesting a design not unlike a musical 'ladder'. The "**First Interlude**" treats the same rising hexachordal figure in the solo guitar. But here the figure is faster, more unpredictable in its spelling and rhythmically more free. The second orchestral movement, "**Winds of the Universe**", is a very fast essay based on a 3-note stylized trill in 12/8 meter. This trill motif is heard in curious patterns of repeated eighth-note

bre virtuoso soloists (Flute, Oboe, English Horn, Clarinet, Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, Violin, Cello and Piano) the score called for artists not only skilled in contemporary style but also conversant with nuances of modern jazz. Designed as a 12-tone essay in three movements, the music emerged as a complex, dissonant and totally abstract statement - with a touch of humor in the finale!

Kupferman's unique 'Infinities' 12-tone row (G, F, A flat, B, B flat, D, F sharp, E, C, E flat, A, C sharp) provided the chromatic basis for the entire composition. INFINITIES PROJECTIONS is actually the twelfth work by the composer based on the same 12-tone row. By this time, thirty years later, Kupferman's use of his 'Infinities' tone row numbers over forty major compositions, including two operas, many chamber pieces and an impressive number of big orchestral works.

The three movements of INFINITIES PROJECTIONS are very sharply contrasted. They are performed without any significant interruption - although there is a very slight 'Luftpause' between the last two movements. The beginning essay, in slow tempo, is a 'secco' study in overlapping pointillistic textures. The lean, beginning phrases gradually take on greater density, accent and linear thrust as they approach the central climax of the movement. Things wind down soon and the textures begin to thin out once again. The second movement emerges quite unobtrusively from a tiny flute cadenza which soon turns into a duet. This sets the stage for the form of the whole movement: a *revolving cadenza* in duo style. Here we have a series of overlapping duets, some dramatic, some

quite lyrical - where the players change partners almost like in a traditional folk-theatre 'round play'.

The final movement is marked "Fast Jazz Style" or "Jazz Scherzo" and moves from head to toe with relentless vigor. Kupferman's 12-tone jazz designs feature 'big band' style sectional movement of the woodwinds, 'barking' commentaries in short, syncopated chordal accents and challenging 'fast blues' solo figurations which give the illusion of jazz improvisation. From time to time we hear a 'walking bass' in the cello which succeeds more in adding moments of humor to the piece rather than 'laying down time'. This composer's 12-tone jazz rhythms are tricky indeed, using unconventional meter signs like 3 1/4 four, 4 1/2 sixteenth, etc. And rapid syncopated passages requiring microscopic divisions in double time! As one approaches the end the music gains in sheer physical momentum and drives to an explosive set of big 'fall-off' chords.

Notes 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 musical 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,

phrases which are evident in every measure. The **"Second Interlude"** is a virtuoso guitar variation which maintains the same fast tempo throughout and features the previous 3-note trill motif in a challenging soloistic design. **"Prayer to the Lover's Sky"** is a slow and deeply passionate orchestral statement in E minor. The composer has stretched a long, intensely romantic melodic line from beginning to end, slowly passing phrases from instrument to instrument in the orchestra. A pedal ostinato begins the piece and supports the line above in agitated commentaries until the final moment. The **"Third Interlude"**, slow and also cast in E minor, offers its own romantic theme which manages to insinuate itself as a distant variation on the previous orchestral melody. The style here, however, is more rubato-almost gypsy like.

"The Sky at Night", the fourth orchestral essay, is a dark movement harmonically- very sustained and quiet. A repeated note motivic exchange evolves suddenly from this near-static musical texture. The figure, always in thirty - second note repeated rhythms, provides us with a gentle instrumental dialogue which often borders on dramatic undulation. The **"Fourth Interlude"** makes use of a similar repeated note idea. A variety of new melodic elements are added soon however, which, in retrospect seem like variations. Kupferman has marked 'Agitato stridente' at the top of the score for **"Storm"** the fifth orchestral movement. Clearly, the musical intent is powerful, highly chromatic, dissonant and surprisingly contrapuntal. Fast syncopated rhythms are everywhere in daring accents and wild figurations: truly a demanding

virtuoso tour de force for each member of the orchestra! Inspired by this show of spirit and energy the guitar launches into the **"Fifth Interlude"** which draws upon the same syncopated approach established by the orchestra. Suddenly this savage atonal voice of the guitar is diverted to the key of F sharp minor. A recitativo melody, also introduced at this point, is reminiscent of the romantic phrases of **"Prayer to the Lover's Sky"** ... like a memory or distant variation. The strummed, 5 syncopated F sharp minor chords in the guitar, however, maintain a connection with the explosive rhythms of **"Storm"**.

The sixth and final movement, **"A Distant Paradise"**, is slow, dramatic and very intense. Both tonal and atonal forces appear to be hiding in the wings, waiting for the proper moment to assert themselves. After the orchestral introduction reaches its first cadence the solo guitar plunges into the instrumental texture with a sharp, ringing 'Snap-accent'. This marks the opening of the **"Sixth Interlude"**. Within a moment the key of C minor is firmly established. A brilliant cadenza-like episode follows (based on a fragment from the **"Third Interlude"**). The guitar rejoins the orchestra only at the very end, fading away in an imploring **'Lament'**.

INFINITIES PROJECTIONS (1964)

Meyer Kupferman's INFINITIES PROJECTIONS was premiered at the Library of Congress in the early 1960's by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble conducted by Arthur Weisberg, who commissioned the work. Scored for ten high cali-

Germany, Spain, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, and Lithuania.

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.

Orquesta de Baja California

Eduardo Garcia-Barrios, Director

The Orquesta 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 myself 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 MIRROR*, *THE CURIOUS FERN* and *DRAAGENFOOT 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, coloratura soprano and alto sax in a big jazz trio. 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* (CD111), *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*, *TWILIGHT SYMPHONY*,

THE CELESTIAL CITY/ CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND TAPE ORCHESTRA and MASADA.

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 'Infinities' fantasies, but my "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 (1996)

Members of the Orquesta de Baja California

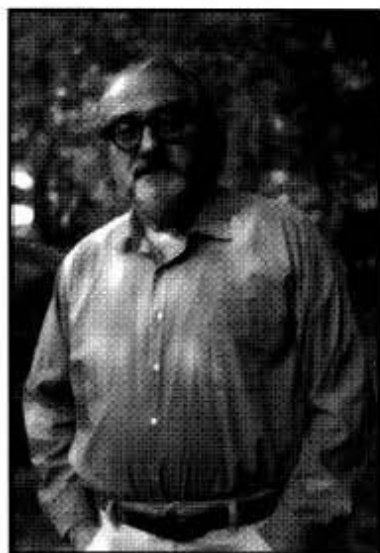
"HEXAGON SKIES": Valeri Dugorsky - Flute; Boris Glouzman - Oboe; Vladimir Goltzman - Clarinet; Alexandr Gurievich - Bass clarinet; Pavel Getman - Bassoon; Jane Zwerneman - French horn; Erick Hyland - Trumpet; Emory Emrich - Trombone; Igor Tchechko - Concertmaster; Karina Bezdrovnaia - violin; Andrea Altona - Violin; Alize Dreiling - Violin; Sarah Mullen - Viola; Cynthia Saye - Viola; Omar Firestone - Cello; Alexei Diorditsa - Double Bass; Andrei Tchernyshev - Percussion; Elena Mashkuvtseva - Harp; Irina Tchechko - Piano.

"INFINITIES PROJECTIONS": Sebastian Winston - Flute; Boris Glouzman - Oboe; Karen Victor - English horn; Vladimir Goltzman - Clarinet; Alexandr Gurievich - Bass clarinet; Pavel Getman - Bassoon; Irina Tchechko - Piano; Igor Tchechko - Violin; Omar Firestone - Cello

THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN

VOL.4

Orquesta de Baja California, Series



Meyer Kupferman

Engineer and Tape Editor:

Sergio Ramirez Cárdenaz

Orchestral Supervision: Teresa Riqué

Produced by: Meyer Kupferman

Cover Art Sculpture:

Victor Manuel Contreras

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This is a composer supervised recording.

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HEXAGON SKIES (1994)

for guitar and orchestra (40'46")

- 1 Jacob's Ladder (5'42")
- 2 1st Interlude (2'36")
- 3 Winds Of The Universe (4'05")
- 4 2nd Interlude (1'09")
- 5 Prayer To The Lover's Sky (4'40")
- 6 3rd Interlude (2'30")
- 7 The Sky At Night (2'50")
- 8 4th Interlude (1'57")
- 9 Storm (2'52")
- 10 5th Interlude (2'39")
- 11 A Distant Paradise (2'13")
- 12 6th Interlude (8'03")

INFINITIES PROJECTIONS (1964)

for chamber orchestra (15'40")

- 13 Adagio (4'39")
- 14 Cadenza Duo (3'28")
- 15 Fast Jazz Style (5'22")

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Roberto Limón
Guitar



Eduardo Garcia Barrios
Conductor



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Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(914) 876-6295

