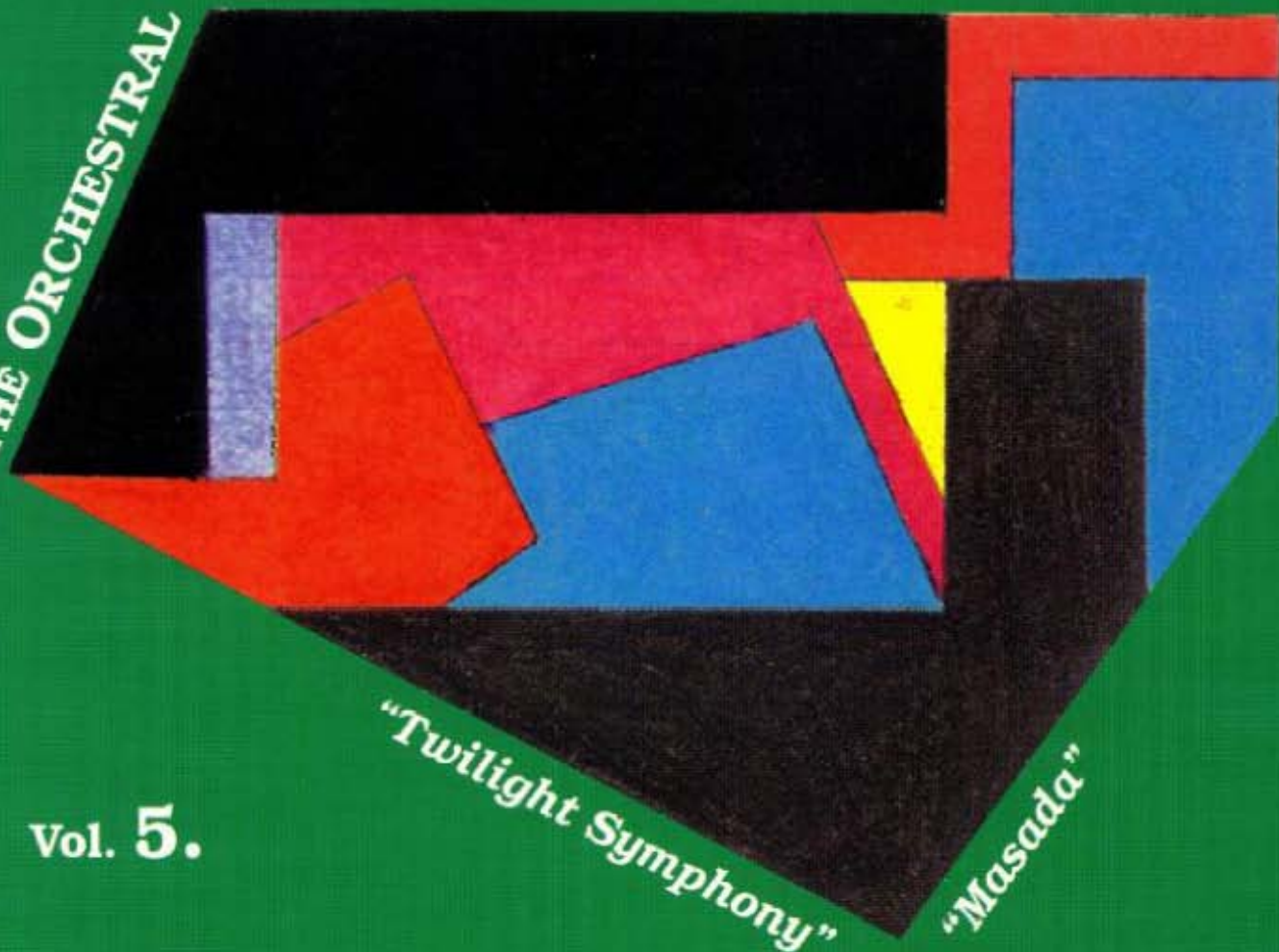


**Soundspells
Productions**

DDD
CD 117

MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN

THE ORCHESTRAL



Vol. 5.

"Twilight Symphony"

"Masada"

Orquesta de Baja California, Series
Eduardo Garcia Barrios, conductor

THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN, VOL. 5.

TWILIGHT SYMPHONY

(For My Father)

by Meyer Kupferman

Composed in 1974 on a grant from Sarah Lawrence College, *Twilight Symphony* was scored for an orchestra of thirteen soloists (flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, percussion, electric harpsichord, violin, viola, cello and contrabass with doubles on piccolo and english horn). It is dedicated to the memory of the composer's father and is a major offering in Kupferman's *gestalt* style.

Imagine a visitor in a strange town. The visitor would like to give himself a sense of the character of this town by walking down its Main Street. First he passes by the post office, then an apothecary shop. He exchanges words with old people, young people, in fact everyone he encounters. He passes by a home with a well-manicured lawn and then another which has been abandoned and is in need of repair. As the traveler proceeds from building to building his impression of the town and its people changes. If he has observed things long enough our visitor may eventually discover that the true *gestalt* of the town is determined not only through the sum of its parts but by that mysteriously private distillation created by his own feelings.

It is with this same spirit of adventure that Kupferman enjoys his *gestalt* symphonic forms, which in this case offers thirteen very different instrumental sonorities. Here the music exists very much "in the moment" of each separate episode, and indeed there are nine contrasting episodes to be reckoned with. A short note from the composer suggests a curious tidbit of information about the symphony:

"At the beginning, when I started to compose my *Twilight Symphony* I had the feeling I was inspired by remembered fragments of folk elements drawn from my father's world of gypsy music. As a child he traveled with a circus through Rumania, Poland and Russia. All the tunes in the symphony, however, were, or soon became (with a little twisting and turning) clearly my own."

Of special character early on is the freewheeling sound-play of the woodwinds, brass and electric harpsichord all rhythmically independent of one another. This sound-mobile masterfully establishes a carnival spirit followed by an imaginary ballet which eventually emerges into a symphonic development.

Toward the latter part of the symphony the cello, in a mood of tragic lamentation, changes the tone of the entire piece and offers an extended cadenza. The cello melody, the composer points out, was about the death of his father. One by one the other instruments murmur in the background like a *Kaddish* in a synagogue until the violin appears in a rising and passionate cadenza of its own.

The slow fade-away finale brings back a few of the opening melodies evoking a quiet, poetic image. The electric harpsichord intrudes with short, powerful outbursts of violence and anger. But the score returns each time to its gentle, evaporating harmonics in the strings.

Although the overall impression to this listener is a deeply personal one, a clear understanding of the composer's *gestalt* a challenging mix of chance, color, emotion, rhythm and fantastic contrast can only be perceived by having lived through one of its most superb symphonic specimens.

Twilight Symphony was premiered by the Pone Ensemble in 1978 at SUNY New Paltz. During the intermission, Meyer Kupferman addressed a few remarks about his work to the audience:

"Before the *gestalt* image can emerge you must promise not to try *too* hard to make any sense of it. Just relax and free yourselves of those overworked traditional musical continuities you hear all the time. Lean back now and be content to expect the unexpected!"

MASADA **(A Holocaust Tribute)**

Masada, composed in 1977, is scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, bass and piano with doubles on alto saxophone, bass clarinet, alto flute and piccolo.

Meyer Kupferman has always taken a strong stand in the fight against tyranny and aggression upon the human spirit. He realizes it is the place of the artist, as well as the soldier, to do battle against the enemies of freedom and many of his works are dedicated to this end: His Tiananmen Suite for solo piano (Soundspells CD115) raged against the Chinese government's outrageous murder of students in Tiananmen Square. His Sonata Guernica for violin and piano (CD118) is a chilling, palpable depiction of the mass murder of that town and is inspired by the Picasso mural. His ensemble quartet The Flames of Abracadabra (CD118) is a musical amulet to protect the Jews against their enemies.

The story of Masada has been told and retold throughout the ages in the hope that its lessons will be learned by each successive generation. Not far west of the Dead Sea lies the strong mountain fortress of Masada, used as a summer retreat for King Herod. It was at Masada that the Romans, under Silva, confronted the last Jewish resistance after the fall of Jerusalem. Jewish Zealots overtook the retreat and for two years successfully kept the Roman armies at bay. But ultimately the Romans began to penetrate the walls, for finally a breach was made with a battering ram in a wall of this erstwhile paradise. Deeper inside, the Romans confronted another bulwark which they destroyed by fire. Eleazer, the leader of the Jewish garrison on Masada, realizing that his army's success would be dashed and the Jews would soon be the slaves of the Romans, exhorted his followers to choose death rather than slavery. He persuaded them to take their own lives by throwing themselves from the ramparts. The Zealots' perseverance against the Roman siege exemplified their unwillingness to submit to tyranny. When the Romans finally entered Masada they found only two women alive. With the fall of Masada the war came to an end.

Conceived as a dramatic musical poem, this piece is not so much concerned with the particulars of the story of Masada as it is a portrait to the proud Jewish spirit which is the essential message. This is evident in the opening in which a simple violin melody, very much in the style of a Hebrew *niggun*, sets the stage for the entire piece. The body of the work then commences with a serene, luxuriant meditation representing the beauty of Herod's summer retreat. This theme, first heard on the alto saxophone in a rich harmonic setting, is developed throughout the episodes of the work to illustrate the spiritual transformation in this physical locale from one of lovely imagery to the scene of battle, death and ugliness. Of special note is the musical embellishment which details each tiny movement of the music, as if the composer were relating something of the mosaic quality of the architectural design employed in this work. When the players plunge into a rhythmic *agitato* depicting the increasing conflict of the ensuing battles, the role of the piano becomes a special one. As the piece progresses its music is increasingly virtuosic and percussive. After the first success of the Zealots a brief dance of victory is heard, with a persistent *ostinato* cello accompaniment against the exulting dance of the violin. This joyous declaration is cut short all too soon by another confrontation with the Roman forces. At the end the music literally explodes into the final battle wherein the Zealots hurl themselves to their deaths. The fragmentary character of the music here seems to depict the flying bodies, but we are not forced to watch the deadly impact, for Kupferman mercifully closes our eyes to this scene through a long diminishing of sound which fades into silence. Finally the alto flute reprises the *niggun* melody of the opening and frames the gigantic work in a setting of deep inner peace and spiritual simplicity as bell-like chords toll the piece to its sorrowful close.

Like a Talmudic chapter, here an important lesson is related: Human dignity can never be removed from this world as long as there are people ready to defend the principles of freedom with their lives.

Notes by Christopher Vassiliades

"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)

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.

Performers from the Orquesta de Baja California

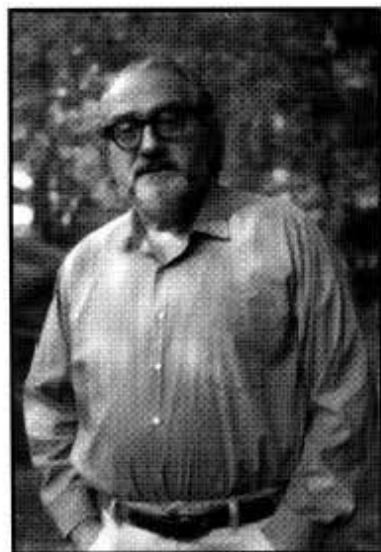
For "Twilight Symphony"

Flute - Sebastian Winston
Oboe - Boris Glouzman
Clarinet - Vladimir Goltzman
Bass Clarinet - Alexandr Gurievich
Bassoon - Pavel Getman
Trumpet - Joe Dyke
Trombone - Lauren Marsteller
Percussion - Andrei Tchernyshev
Piano and Electric Harpsichord - Irina Tchechko
Violin - Igor Tchechko
Viola - Cynthia Saye
Cello - Omar Firestone
Bass - Kiezo Mizoiri

For "Masada"

Flute - Sebastian Winston
Clarinet - Vladimir Goltzman
Bass Clarinet and Saxophone - Alexandr Gurievich
Piano - Irina Tchechko
Violin - Igor Tchechko
Cello - Omar Firestone
Bass - Kiezo Mizoiri

THE ORCHESTRAL MUSIC OF MEYER KUPFERMAN VOL.5.



Meyer Kupferman

*Orquesta de Baja California, Series
Eduardo Garcia Barrios, Conductor*

1 TWILIGHT SYMPHONY (1974)
(For My Father)
In one movement (31'54")

2 MASADA (1977)
(A Holocaust Tribute)
In one movement (24'40")



Eduardo Garcia Barrios

Engineer: Sergio Ramirez Cárdenas
Cover art: Martin Canin
This is a composer supervised recording.
The music of Meyer Kupferman is
published by Soundspells Productions.
Total Duration: 57'40"

Copyright © 1996.

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

DDD

CD 117

Soundspells
Rhinebeck, NY 12572
(914) 876-6295
Productions



7 61793 11732 9