

*The Orchestral Music of*  
**MEYER KUPFERMAN**  
VOL. 11



**WINTER SYMPHONY** [1997]  
**CONCERTO BREVIS** *for flute and orchestra* [1998]  
**ORCHESTRE PHILHARMONIQUE DE MONTE-CARLO**  
**MEYER KUPFERMAN, CONDUCTOR**  
**LAUREL ANN MAURER, FLUTE**

*Soundspells*  
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## **"WINTER SYMPHONY" (1998) *By Meyer Kupferman***

When I pulled the tail of this sleeping dragon, I found myself ensnared in a battle to the death. I was confronted with a work of such massive proportions, it required more than five years and two major revisions to complete. Although *WINTER SYMPHONY* was conceived as a philosophical reflection of the artist in his later years, the true poetics of the work evolved slowly and very unevenly, raising difficult aesthetic issues with each new phrase of music. My credo, my life, my dreams and my deepest emotions all became entangled with the writing of this symphony.

At the outset (in the winter of '93) I decided to divide the symphony into three enormous movements, each holding strictly to its own unique design. The first would be slow and fiercely dramatic - clearly the product of an uncertain, cold, dissonant world. I imagined the second as wildly rhythmic, punchy and relentless. The finale would be totally expressive: romantic, contrapuntal and unbelievably powerful - saying something important from my heart.

The opening movement of *WINTER SYMPHONY* centers around two very different themes, one long and the other, little more than a motif.

After the dragon and I made peace (but not a real peace because I continued to make revisions up the last day of the recording) I had to face the challenge of conducting the symphony with the Monte Carlo orchestra. So the dragon and I were soon at it again!

The main theme, which is also the principal theme of the entire symphony, is first introduced as a duo between bassoon and contra-bassoon. It is gradually transformed into a solo cadenza. This, following an orchestral introduction - quite dark and filled with short explosive eruptions in the winds, brass and percussion. I remember now, more than six years ago, my earliest vision for this score was to construct an extended *arch form* that would bring back the opening theme in high climax at the end of the symphony.

The second tune was based on a little motivic phrase of rising intervals in the strings. As it moved around from instrument to instrument, a unique chromatic blend of atonal and tonal harmonies pushed its way deeper into the symphony. Apparently, as I worked with it, this little tune became more and more important to me because it triggered the gentle coda episode at the end of the movement. There is, however, a very dramatic cello cadenza just before the coda begins. Clearly, I have a weakness for solo cadenzas in big symphonic forms - and there are many of them in this composition. They enable me to push forward particularly sensitive elements in my bigger music while establishing a more intimate connection between player and listener. The cadenza may be compared to what happens in the flow of a score when a jazz artist reached his zenith in an inspired improvisation.

The second movement begins with a rapid fire syncopated staccato figure in the woodwinds. This is immediately echoed in the brass, passed on to the strings and finally thrown against the full arsenal of the orchestra. Jazzy, fast driving rhythms continue throughout the entire movement climaxing in a wildly frenetic outburst of trumpets, heavy brass and percussion. There are three short lyrical cadenzas (clarinet, cello and horn) in this movement plus a very quiet slow string episode which offers more expressive moments of linear contrast. These more subdued poetic passages, emerging within the orbit of such rhythmically explosive figurations, offer something of their own special "*Yin Yang reality*".



An unaccompanied clarinet cadenza opens the finale of the symphony. Its melody immediately establishes the lead phrase of the main theme. Later, a second theme emerges, used in a neo-romantic *double-counterpoint* against the first. Little by little, as an expressive *adagio* texture unravels in the orchestra voicing, it becomes evident that a continued double-counterpoint instrumental approach will govern the entire movement. With the return of *WINTER SYMPHONY's* opening theme (and starting again in the bassoon), my *arch form* is finally achieved.

At this moment the universal B.A.C.H. motive is introduced (also as a double counterpoint to the strings). Slowly, a powerful orchestral pyramid ascends to a scaring climax of overwhelming force. In order to resist the weight of the symphony's dramatic finale and its ubiquitous slow tempo, I derailed the movement abruptly into a fast 5/4 *Baccanale*, an idea inspired by Schoenberg's opera, *MOSES AND ARON*, which I had seen in New York a few years ago.

Clearly, my favorite episode of the entire symphony is the closing phrase of *WINTER SYMPHONY*. Slow moving and surrounded by silence, it is a deeply contemplative cadenza, for unaccompanied tuba... lonely, dark and gently tragic... like the dragon in tears...

### ***"CONCERTO BREVIS" (1997)*** ***for Flute and Orchestra by Meyer Kupferman***

CONCERTO BREVIS was commissioned by the National Flute Association in 1997. The work was premiered the following year in Phoenix, Arizona during the National Flute Association's annual convention. Laurel Ann Maurer, flute soloist for the concerto, also performed three other of my major flute compositions in Phoenix during the same week: *STRATA*, for solo flute, written in memory of Samuel Baron, *O NORTH STAR*, for flute, clarinet and piano, and *CHACONNE SONATA* for flute and piano.

The new concerto is in one movement and its duration extends to almost seventeen minutes. Very likely, because I conceived the piece in a style generally lyrical and harmonically effusive, I decided on a big orchestra. This, so that lots of color would be available to back up my musical ideas.

The sheer power of the orchestra, however, was another matter. Clearly, I had no wish to compromise anywhere in the score, nor on any level in the musical scaffolding, just to make things easier for mere balance!

One would have to find a fresh way to allow my emerging conception... the truly central role of the flute ... sometimes gentle, very quiet and expressive, sometimes florid and virtuosic... to cut through the animated overlays of winds, brass and percussion. As I was getting deeper into the piece I found an insidious contrapuntal orchestral texture building up. I loved it but it was dangerous! So, to solve the problem, the idea of an unusually intimate solo flute cadenza, preceding the coda, suddenly popped into my head. Functioning now, as a sustained and completely melodic instrument, the lonely flute could sing its heart out in the cadenza and move freely against the natural echos of its surrounding silence.

Also, when the orchestra became indifferent to all restraints, one could counter by shifting the flute into its highest range. It is truly amazing how much cutting power the flute has in its uppermost tessitura.

The poetic image of my *CONCERTO BREVIS* is essentially encapsulated in its one principal theme. I found no need for a second theme nor of any motivic phrases of importance. My one principal theme does it all by

disguising itself in a series of chameleon like variations throughout the work. The design, by some magic, always comes out the same: warmly lyrical, light hearted and subtly syncopated. A bouncy, jazzy episode soon injects "... compelling, happy rhythms..." into the image, according to John Solum who came to my studio to try some passages for me. These jazzy patterns keep building in orchestral energy, both before and particularly after the big cadenza. It is here, following this floating solo flute meditation, that the orchestra gallops forward in a wild frenzy and seems to take over completely; but not before the brilliantly penetrating counterfoil of the flute's highest, virtuosic passage-work brings us to climax in the final bar.

### *Notes by Meyer Kupferman*



**LAUREL ANN MAURER**

even in the most treacherous passages, and she plays with great rhythmic drive and impeccable phrasing." American Record Guide says that "...Maurer has a strong, colorful, full sound and a sure technique..."

Mr. Maurer began her musical studies in Seattle, Washington where she was a member of the Seattle Youth Symphony and a recipient of awards from the Seattle Young Artists Festival. She continued her musical education in New York City studying with Julius Baker, Jeanne Baxtresser and Samuel Baron. Her principal teacher, Mr. Baker, has stated that she is "one of our outstanding and gifted flutist".

As an award winner from such organizations as the National Association of Composers-

Flutist Laurel Ann Maurer has been lauded by the New York Times as "... a secure technician and an assured, communicative interpreter." Fanfare Magazine states that "... she is technically superb in every way. Her tone is consistently attractive

USA, The National Flute Association, the National Orchestra of New York, The Chautauqua Institute and the Utah Arts Council, Ms. Maurer has appeared as flute soloist throughout the United States and Europe. She has appeared as concerto soloist with the Monte Carlo Philharmonic Orchestra, the National Flute Association's American Flutist Concerto Orchestra, the Salt Lake Symphony and the Long Island Chamber Orchestra.

At the forefront of Ms. Maurer's career is her dedication to contemporary music. She has commissioned numerous works for the flute compelling many fine composers to comment, among them- Otto Luening, who wrote, "She projects composer's ideas with authority and elegance." Joan Tower has written, "Thanks so much for doing such an outstanding job... this performance (was) one of the best I've received." Augusta Read Thomas said, "Bravo... we composers need you." And Meyer Kupferman has called her playing "Truly remarkable and deeply moving."

Laurel Ann Maurer has recorded for Albany Records, CRI, Soundspells and 4-Tay Records. Ms. Maurer performs exclusively on Miyazawa flutes and is a Miyazawa artist.

## MEYER KUPFERMAN

Meyer Kupferman's father, Elias Staff-Cooperman, was born in Romania in 1900. A runaway youth, he fled from his stepfather and traveled throughout Europe as a gypsy folk singer, street musician who played the accordion, wrestler, cook and baker. He was conscripted into the Austrian-Hungarian army and wounded in World War I. Elias settled in the United States with his sister, Clara in the early 20's. He joined the baker's union while living in New York City and changed his name to Elias Kupferman, thus severing all connection with hated stepfather. He married a young Russian emigré, Fanny Hoffman, whose family had been decimated by Cossack raids and pogroms in Nemirov, a little Jewish village moving on the "Pale" between Kiev, Odessa and Eastern Poland. Fanny's flight to America first brought her to the mid-west where she worked in the mills and factories of Kansas. Later she joined her aging aunt in New York where she found work as a seamstress. Fanny and Elias were introduced by some friends at a wedding where Elias was hired as singer and entertainer. They fell madly in love and were soon married.

Meyer Kupferman was born on July 3rd, 1926 in New York City. The little family soon moved to Brooklyn because there were more and better jobs available for bakers. Also landlords had lowered their rents on all apartments; they were, in fact, giving away three months rent-free concession on all new leases. Though the Depression and nearly the next ten years Kupferman's family moved to a new apartment each year. Thus as a child he had to attend a different school each year and make new friends as well as abandon old ones very often.

At age five, he was given the violin, a study that was so premature and uncomfortable he has little memory of it. At age ten, almost as a joke or a dare while fooling around with his friends already in the school band, Meyer Kupferman began taking clarinet lessons. Music soon became an important part of his life and he became good at it. The idea of writing music grew more and more fascinating for him. Eventually he began teaching himself the piano, which provided a basis for his curiosity about composing and arranging music for his friends. As he grew older he worked as a young jazz musician in clubs and bars in the Coney Island area of Brooklyn. He lived through the "Big Band Era" which provided a source of rich stimulation for him as well as all budding musicians interested in composing or arranging jazz.

Although Meyer Kupferman was entirely self-taught in music composition, he received his education in theory, chamber ensemble and orchestral music at the High School of Music and Art. He also studied at Queens College. Kupferman's father encouraged his son in music and taught him many East European, gypsy and Hebrew melodies. The flavor of these tunes not only stayed with Meyer Kupferman for the rest of his life but influenced his compositional style from time to time.

As a young composer still in his twenties, Kupferman became Professor of Composition and Chamber of Music at Sarah Lawrence College in 1951. He continued as a member of the faculty until his retirement forty three years later in 1994. During his tenure at Sarah Lawrence College he was chairman of the music department for five terms, conducted the orchestra, chorus and chamber improvisation ensemble, taught theory and music for film and wrote many experimental theatre and dance works for performing arts students at Sarah Lawrence.

Mr Kupferman has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Aaron Copland Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment of the Arts, the Library of Congress, the US State Department and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. He is a virtuoso clarinetist who has premiered over sixty solo and chamber works composed especially for him and his 'Music By My Friends' ensemble.

Kupferman is an unusually prolific composer and has an impressive output of work in all forms; 7 operas, 12 symphonies, 9 ballets, 7 string quartets, 10 concertos and hundreds of chamber works. His strong interest in jazz has been abundantly shown 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, and Moonflowers Baby, a solo clarinet jazz work which has received international acclaim as a result of Charles Neidich's spectacular performances throughout the Soviet Union, Europe, Japan, and the USA, all these works an integral part of his "Cycle of Infinities" - a series of concert and jazz works 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 U.S. Constitution, and the Nassau Symphony for his Double Clarinet Concerto. His cantata, "Comicus Americanus," was commissioned by the Kansas City Philharmonic in 1970. The American Composers Orchestra premiered his Challenger in 1984 and the Pro Arte Orchestra of Boston recorded his Clarinet Concerto for CRI.

A forty year retrospective of his keyboard music was performed during a nine concert tour by pianist Christopher Vassiliades. Some of his experimental works in tape-gestalt form include such pieces as Celestial City, Angel footprints, Superflute and illusions. Among his many film scores are such pictures as Black Like Me, Halleluja The Hills, Blast of Silence and Truman Capote's film Trilogy, which includes the famous, A Christmas Memory.

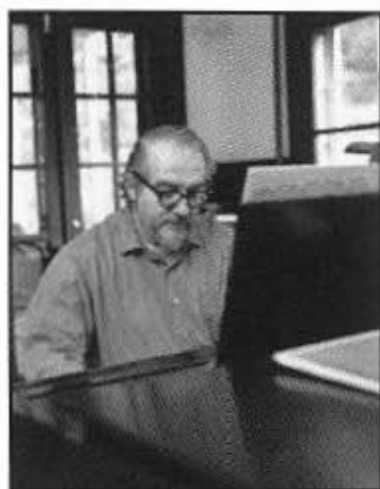
In the summer of 1990, the Lithuanian National Symphony recorded his "Jazz Symphony" and "Challenger" (Soundspells Productions CD 104). Mr. Kupferman made the heroic trip to Lithuania for that purpose during the time of the Russian blockade. In the 1991-2 season he celebrated his 65th year with the premiere of his seventh opera, "The Proscenium" and several piano retrospectives with pianists Morton Estrin, Kazuko Hayami, Svetlana Gorokhovich and Christopher Vassiliades. Kupferman's book, Atonal Jazz, a two volume, in-depth study of new chromatic techniques in contemporary jazz was released in 1992 by Dorn Publications. His "Concerto for 4 Guitars and Orchestra" was released by Soundspells in 1999.

Recent commissions are his new "Chaconne Sonata" for flute and piano, written for Laurel Ann Maurer, "Pipe Dream Sonata" for solo guitar commissioned by Robert Phillips, "Ice Cream Concerto" and "Flavors of the Stars" both for the virtuoso ATRIL<sup>5</sup> Contemporary Ensemble of Mexico, "Hot Hors D'oeuvres" for the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and "Hexagon Skies" for guitar and orchestra commissioned by the Orquesta de Baja California and guitarist Roberto Limón. In 1976 Itzhak Perlman gave the New York premiere Kupferman's "Fantasy Sonata" and Martha Graham created a new ballet based on this same violin score called "O Thou Desire", which her company took on a European tour the following year. During this period cellist Laszlo Vargo premiered Kupferman's "Concerto for Cello Tape and Orchestra" which he later recorded on a Vox CD (VoxBox CDX5158). Other recent commissions are his "A Faust concerto" for French horn and chamber orchestra, "Moonfinger's Demon" for orchestra and "Acrobats of Apollo" for marimba, guitar and chamber orchestra, all three works composed for the Orquesta de Baja California, with Eduardo Garcia Barrios, conductor. Flutist Laurel Ann Maurer commissioned a work for the Utah Contemporary Chamber players for flute, clarinet, and piano called "O North Star." Mr. Kupferman has also written a solo piece for the Mexican guitarist, Roberto Limón, called "O Luna O Sol." The composer's latest project, "Percussion Symphony", was premiered by the Ithaca Percussion Ensemble in 1998, conducted by Gordon Stout.

*Kupferman Notes by Valentine Fabian*



# The Orchestral Music of MEYER KUPFERMAN VOL. 11



MEYER KUPFERMAN,  
photo by Howard Dratch

## 1 WINTER SYMPHONY

[1997]

LENTO NON TROPPO [14:25]

## 2 ALLEGRO AGITATO [14:47]

## 3 LENTO ESPRESSIVO [14:55]

Meyer Kupferman, conductor

## 4 CONCERTO BREVIS

FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA [17:34]

[1998]

Meyer Kupferman, conductor  
Laurel Ann Maurer, flute



LAUREL ANN MAURER,  
photo by Christine Steiner

## ORCHESTRE PHILHARMONIQUE DE MONTE-CARLO

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## CONCERTO BREVIS FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA

was commissioned by the National Flute Association  
and premiered by the NFA Orchestra with Laurel Ann  
Maurer as soloist in the summer of 1998, in Phoenix,  
Arizona during the NFA annual convention.

COVER ART: "WINTER ZEPPELIN III" OIL PAINTING BY MEYER KUPFERMAN. (1976)

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