



Orchestral Music
Vol. XIII

**Meyer
KUPFERMAN**

**Czech National
Symphony
Orchestra**
Paul Freeman, Conductor

**FLIGHT
ALONE**

**SPECULUM
SYMPHONY**

Soundspells

DDD

CD131

FLIGHT ALONE (1995)

My childhood memories of the Holocaust and its tragic effect on my parents led me to thoughts about a work that would reflect images of flight, fear and the crossing of borders. I felt I could bring deeper meaning to the stories recounted by my family by creating an essay for string orchestra that would feature certain instrumental soloists who would become the chief protagonists. I even toyed with the idea of having these soloists narrate in several languages within the body of the string orchestra. I wrestled with the musical design of *Flight Alone* for nearly twenty years, changing my initial approach over and over again. There were two, possibly three, versions of the score, none of which quite satisfied the mysterious image that guided me. Several string orchestra ensembles actually performed the older versions, and even though these seemed to make a strong impression on the audiences, I felt something was missing. Ultimately, during 1994 and 1995, I decided to throw out all of the theatrical multi-lingual stuff, and create a pure work for strings that was truly "abstract expressionist," in a deeper sense of the term.

The final version of *Flight Alone*, completed in 1995, does favor soloistic string passages for

each of the section leaders, the most dramatic of which is the cello solo at the opening. An intense, evolving mass of angry repeated figurations reaches out wildly... "burning and screaming like a 'Golem' of terrifying strings!" Here, the ostinato structure surrounding the cello is fraught with great rhythmic agitation and sharp dissonant harmonies. In contrast later on, quiet sustained chords and attenuated melodic phrases clothed in quasi-classical harmonies, continue to stretch the musical design to the very end. As we approach the closing moments of *Flight Alone*, an ostinato of clearly tonal figurations provides the support for a heroic violin cantabile. The ostinato continues as the tune climbs to its highest registration, ending the work in an explosive passionate cry.

SPECULUM SYMPHONY (1999)

My *Speculum Symphony* was conceived as a work for large orchestra, divided into four contrasting movements. My principle throughout the entire symphony was the mix and reflection of instrumental color. Here I leaned heavily on the richness of the harmonies and the motivic designs of the melodic information. As I was writing the work, I felt like a magician conjuring up spells that would eventually influence the mood and direction of my compositional choices. The clarinet emerged as a central instrument to the entire symphony and, as a result, there are substantial solos for the warm gypsy timbre of the clarinet in each movement. Ultimately, I discovered that the phrases articulated in these clarinet solos were mirrored in a variety of colorful orchestral variations, both before and after each tiny essay.

If I were to create a condensed map of the symphonic structure, it might read something like this: Opening ... a quiet incantation; Second ... a somewhat humorous waking up ritual; Third ... the antagonists at war; and lastly ... a tranquil resolution. Special sound reflections are the focus – perhaps the real magic – inherent in the particular scale-forms used in my symphony. Clearly, I have composed with these scales all

my life. No longer sequestered in tone-rows or motivic themes, these eight-tone magic notes reveal their own expressive identities. To me, the entire symphony is like a giant mirror, reflecting my personality, my musical thoughts of the past fifty years and a merry-go-round of dancing images and symphonic conceptions.

Music Notes by Meyer Kupferman

PAUL FREEMAN, Conductor

Paul Freeman has distinguished himself as one of the world's pre-eminent conductors. Much in demand, he has conducted over 100 orchestras in 28 different countries including the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, and major orchestras in London, St. Petersburg, Moscow and Berlin. Maestro Freeman has served as the Music Director of Canada's Victoria Symphony, Principal Guest Conductor of the Helsinki Philharmonic and Associate Conductor of the Detroit and Dallas Symphony Orchestras. He is currently Music Director of the renowned Chicago Sinfonietta and simultaneously serves as Music

Director and Chief Conductor of the Czech National Symphony Orchestra in Prague. With over 200 recordings to his credit, he has won numerous awards for his unique interpretations of the classical, romantic, and modern repertoire.

Dr. Freeman, who studied on a U.S. Fulbright Grant at the Hochschule in Berlin, holds a Ph.D. degree from the Eastman School of Music and L.H.D. degrees from Dominican University and Loyola University.



Paul Freeman

CZECH NATIONAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Since the Czech Republic's bloodless "Velvet Revolution" of 1989, the country has been riding a rapid wave of democratization, which has affected the music industry as well. Orchestras in order to survive must concern themselves with the procurement of foreign funds through recording contracts and overseas performances. These developments have necessitated the need for higher performance standards.

Out of this chaotic scene Jan Hasenöhr, an outstanding solo trumpet player, sensed the acute

need to reshape the Czech orchestral scene and, in 1993, invited the top musicians from Prague's major orchestras to form a new orchestra, the Czech National Symphony Orchestra. The Orchestra gave its first concert, conducted by Vladimír Valek, in November 1993 in Prague's Rudolfinum Dvorak Hall. In 1994 the Czech music world's national treasure, Zdeněk Kosler, was named chief conductor. The first recording was made at the beginning of April 1994. Maestro Kosler died in August 1995.

In January 1996 the brilliant American Conductor and Music Director of the Chicago Sinfonietta, Paul Freeman, was appointed Music Director and Chief Conductor. Under Maestro Freeman's leadership, the Czech National Symphony Orchestra has shown stunning development. Already he has made over 30 compact discs with the orchestra and has toured Italy and Great Britain. So successful was the November 1997 United Kingdom tour of 19 concerts under Paul Freeman and Libor Pesek that IMG Concert Management has recently signed a 5-year contract to tour the Czech National Symphony Orchestra in Europe, Asia, and America. Through its many recordings, concerts and television productions it is fast becoming one of the most important ensembles in the Czech Republic.

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'. He joined the baker's union while living in New York City and changed his name to Elias Kupferman, thus severing all connection with his hated stepfather. He married a young Russian émigré, 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 month rent-free concessions on all new leases. Through the Depression 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 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 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.

Mr. Kupferman, an unusually prolific composer 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 on 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, Hallelujah the Hills, Blast of Silence and Truman Capote's film classic, "Trilogy," which includes the famous "A Christmas Memory."

In the summer of 1990 the Lithuanian National Symphony recorded his "Jazz Symphony" and "Challenger" (Soundspell Productions CD 104). Mr. Kupferman made the heroic trip to Lithuania for that purpose during the time of the Russian blockade. In the 1991-92 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 Guitar and Orchestra" was commissioned by the Orquesta de Baja California and premiered in Mexico in 1994 with Roberto Limón as guitar soloist and Eduardo Garcia Barrios, conductor. Kupferman's brand new "Concerto for 4 Guitars and Orchestra" (1988) commissioned by David Starobin, Rose Augustine and the Manhattan School of Music - has already been released by Soundspells (CD 124).

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 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 of Kupferman's "Fantasy Sonata" and Martha Graham created a new ballet based on the same violin score called "O Thou Desire," which her company took on a European tour the following year. During this period cellist Laszlo Varga 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 guitar 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.

Meyer Kupferman's most recent recordings are his Winter Symphony (1997) and his Concerto Brevis (1998) for flute and orchestra, both of which were recorded for Soundspells on CD125, by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Monte-Carlo with the composer conducting.

Kupferman Notes by Valentine Fabian

The Orchestral Music of **MEYER KUPFERMAN**, Vol. XIII

- 1. FLIGHT ALONE (1995) [26:48]**
in memory of the Holocaust
for large string orchestra
in one movement

SPECULUM SYMPHONY (1999) [24:07]

- 1. I. Lento appassionato (03:52)**
2. II. Allegretto (02:29)
3. III. Allego molto (07:26)
4. IV. Ostinati: Rubato tranquillo (10:20)

Complete CD Duration: 51:20

Czech National Symphony Orchestra

Paul Freeman, conductor



Meyer Kupferman



Paul Freeman

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