



Walter
SAUL

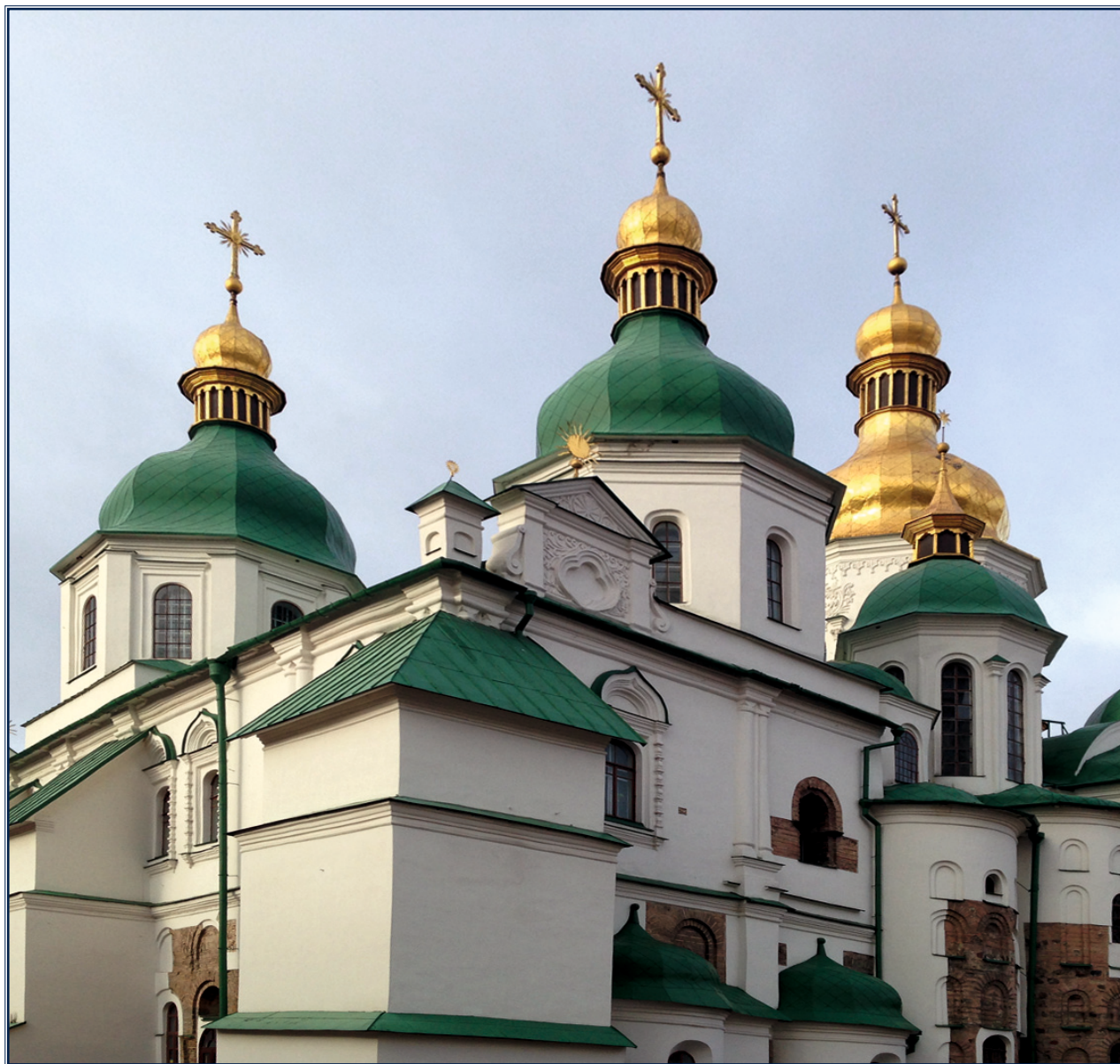
Kiev 2014

**Violin Concerto
Overture for the Jubilee
A Christmas Symphony
Metamorphosis**

**Rong-Huey Liu, Oboe
James Buswell, Violin
Walter Saul, Piano**

**National Symphony
Orchestra of Ukraine**

Theodore Kuchar



**Walter Saul (b. 1954): Kiev 2014 • Violin Concerto • Overture for the Jubilee
From Life to Greater Life • A Christmas Symphony • Metamorphosis**

The golden domes and spires of the nearly thousand-year-old Saint Sophia Cathedral lift our spirits up from the earth toward heaven, and its many icons point us to spiritual realities. May the works presented here, recorded by Theodore Kuchar and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine in Kiev so close to this landmark, elevate us in a similar manner. For my mission as a composer is to create musical icons, windows of sonic light, that usher listeners into the presence of Jesus Christ and reveal a little of God's heavenly glory to us. These six pieces, composed over a 40-year span, realize this mission in contrasting ways.

Kiev 2014: Rhapsody for Oboe and Orchestra (2014) reflects on the history, challenges and hope for Ukraine in the 21st century. The orchestra opens aggressively with dark music inspired by the recent attacks on Eastern Ukraine and Kiev's tumultuous history of occupation by foreign powers. Reminiscent of ancient chants, a quiet oboe solo is a still, small voice, suggesting the hope of Christ for this land, just as He has been the hope of Kiev since 988, when its rulers first embraced the Christian message. At first, the oboe attracts but a small following: only another oboe, English horn, and harp, even as the brass and percussion rise in warfare against the little band. The strings and woodwinds survey the carnage and endure yet another round of conflict. At last, as the orchestra triumphantly recalls the quiet solo, its melody becomes a paean of hope and victory.

The *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* (1980) is in two movements, connected by a cadenza for the solo violin. The slow first movement is in three main sections, each of which divides in three subsections, reflecting on our Lord as the Holy Trinity. The second movement is a rousing passacaglia based on a twelve-tone row, a reflection of the people of the Lord, represented by the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve disciples of Christ. The passacaglia spins itself out in a sonata form, with an opening jubilant theme that progresses through a disturbing transition to a tranquil chorale. The development takes on the form of a

fugue which, as it splits into dozens of voices, paints the innumerable multitude of heaven gathered up in triumph.

I composed the *Overture for the Jubilee* in 1997 on commission by the Quincy Symphony Orchestra of Quincy, Illinois, for their 50th anniversary. This work explores the theme of Jubilee as outlined in Leviticus 25 and the history of Quincy and its namesake, John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States of America, who was the most ardent abolitionist in pre-Civil War US history. As the Overture reflects on Quincy's role, notably as an important station in the Underground Railroad, in ending slavery, so God's Jubilee, fully realized by Jesus Christ, ends our slavery and indebtedness to sin.

From Life To Greater Life (1978) celebrates the transformation of life through death into the eternal life promised by Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, through the path of a single chord, seemingly stuck in the deep earth, undergoing change, reshaping, and revoicing, to ascend into heaven for eternity. The whispered opening string tremolos sound one tone, G, in the extreme registers, then add two more tones, suggesting the signature of the Godhead in three Persons on this newly-created chord with a gaping chasm in the center that must be filled. After the chord expands, these three tones fill the void and form the opening motives of the two contrasting themes in this overture, cast in a modified sonata form.

The Mt. Hood Pops Orchestra in Portland, Oregon, commissioned *A Christmas Symphony* (1992) for the celebration of its 10th anniversary. Its four movements *Gabriel*, *Star*, *Simeon* and *Gloria* paint four significant scenes of Christmas: the Annunciation of Jesus Christ's birth to Mary, the divinely-led journey of the Magi, the recognition of Simeon the priest of the promised Messiah, and the angels' glorious song of celebration of His birth. The slow third movement, *Simeon*, is also an elegy for my wife's mother, Agnes Lois Ward Johnson. The oboe solo after the opening string feature spells out the musical letters of her name: A-G-E-S-S-A-D-H-S. The S is German for Eb and the H is German for B natural.

Metamorphosis (1974) is a single movement fantasia quasi sonata for piano obbligato and orchestra. This work reflects on my own metamorphosis as a follower of Jesus Christ. A fantasia quasi sonata in the manner of Franz Liszt's *Après une lecture du Dante*, the metamorphosis progresses from a tentative opening in the woodwinds to

increasingly emboldened piano solos and orchestral responses. The work culminates in a profound peace, a peace that, in the midst of external and internal warfare, continues to manifest itself in me and in our world today.

Walter Saul

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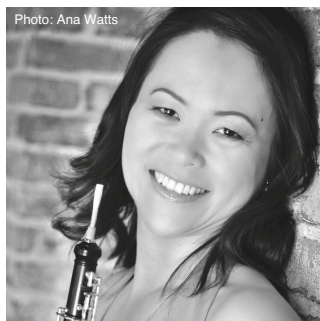


Distinguished composer and pianist Dr. Walter B. Saul II holds degrees from Duke University and the Eastman School of Music. His many composition honors include 24 ASCAP awards from 1990-2013, as well as "Composer of the Year" commissions from North Carolina Music Teachers Association (1986) and Oregon Music Teachers Association (1990). He was also awarded the Burlington Northern Faculty Achievement Awards in Scholarship at Warner Pacific College in 1989 and 1992. In 1998 and 2002, he won Warner Pacific College's Kendall Award for Scholarship. In 1996 and 1999, Saul was one of ten composers selected to participate in the Ernest Bloch Composers Symposium in Newport, Oregon. Saul has also received numerous Meet the Composer grants. Performances of his works have occurred in 24 states and five nations. Saul's 230 works include six works for orchestra, nine for wind ensemble, five piano sonatas, 40 other works for piano, 47 works for chamber ensembles, 38 choral works, four works for handbell choirs, and 31 vocal works. As a pianist Saul has performed and presented clinics extensively. He has been heard on radio in four states and has served as clinician and adjudicator throughout the Carolinas and in Oregon and California. He has performed both books of Bach's *Well-tempered Clavier* from memory; Book I in 1975 and Book II in 1997, thereby separating these performances by the same amount of time that separated their composition. In a further tribute to Bach, he recently completed *From Alpha to Omega*, his own volume of 24 preludes and fugues in all major and minor keys, progressing from A major (Alpha) through G# minor (Omega). Three preludes and fugues from this work have been performed in Carnegie Hall in 2004 and 2009.

He has released four CDs of his works on the Tarsus Music and Enharmonic Records labels: *Out of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light* (Tarsus, 1998), *From Alpha to Omega* (Tarsus, 2002), *Songs of Requited Love* (Tarsus, 2007), and *Walter Saul: Sonatas and Meditations for Piano* (Enharmonic, 2013). His music appears also on a fifth CD, *Les flûtes enchantées* (Music Performance Foundation, Inc., 2010), and on the *Ring of Fire 2001* DVD (Bitwise Multimedia, 2001). Saul has taught at Eastern Illinois University, Pfeiffer College in Misenheimer, North Carolina, and Warner Pacific College in Portland, Oregon. He presently is Professor of Music at Fresno Pacific University, where he teaches piano, theory, composition, music history, and music appreciation.

www.waltersaul.com

Rong-Huey Liu



Rong-Huey Liu is one of Southern California's most active oboists, serving principal positions in the Long Beach Symphony, Riverside County Philharmonic, Fresno Philharmonic and Reno Chamber Orchestra. A versatile musician, she has been invited to perform as chamber soloist at Sundays' Live, Grand Performance, Ojai Summer Music Festival, Bruman Chamber Music Summer Festival, Cactus Pear Music Festival, Nevada Chamber Music Festival summer concerts, and Chamber Music Unbound. She has performed oboe concertos by Bach, Handel, Kalliwoda, Marcello, Mozart and Corigliano, and is the featured soloist in both the world premiere of Walter Saul's *Rhapsody for Oboe and Orchestra* and the United States premiere of Ferrer Ferran's *El Bosque Mágico*. She is oboe professor at California State University Fullerton, La Sierra University and Riverside City College.

James Buswell



While still attending Harvard University the American violinist James Buswell became well known as a chamber musician and recitalist. He performed at the opening of the Alice Tully Hall in New York with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, which he later joined as a regular artist-member. He has given world premières and made recordings of works by many contemporary composers including Ned Rorem, Yehudi Wyner, Gunther Schuller, John Harbison, Gian Carlo Menotti and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. As a soloist he has performed more than one hundred concerts with orchestras on five continents. He was a GRAMMY® nominee for his recording of the Barber *Violin Concerto* with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra [Naxos 8.559044]. He has collaborated with distinguished conductors and has himself conducted

opera, ballet, and symphonic repertoire on five continents. As a teacher he has served on the faculties of both Indiana University and the New England Conservatory.

National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine



Formed by the Council of Ministers of Ukraine in November 1918, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine is considered one of the finest symphony orchestras in Eastern Europe. Its first conductor was Oleksander Horilyj, and Natan Rachlin was Artistic Director from 1937 until 1962. Stefan Turchak, Volodymyr Kozhuchar, Fedir Hlushchenko, Igor Blazhkov and Theodore Kuchar have served as Principal Conductors, while guest conductors have included Leopold Stokowski, Igor Markevitch, Kurt Sanderling, Evgeny Mravinsky, Kiril Kondrashin, Evgeny Svetlanov and Gennady Rozhdestvensky. Soloists who performed with the NSOU include Arthur Rubinstein, Yehudi Menuhin, Isaac Stern, David Oistrakh, Sviatoslav Richter, Mstislav Rostropovich, Emil Gilels, Leonid Kogan, Gidon Kremer, Oleh Krysa, Monserrat Caballé, José Carreras and Juan Diego Flores. The NSOU has appeared in concerts throughout the world and was entrusted with first performances of works by Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Khatchaturian, Lyatoshynsky, Silvestrov, Skoryk and Stankovych. Between 1994 and 2004 the orchestra made over 80 recordings for the Naxos and Marco Polo labels, including the complete symphonies of Kalinnikov, Lyatoshynsky, Martinů and Prokofiev, as well as major works of Dvořák, Glazunov, Mozart, Shchedrin, Shostakovich and Tchaikovsky. They also recorded the symphonies and orchestral works of Ukraine's leading contemporary symphonist, Yevhen Stankovych. The recording of Lyatoshynsky's *Symphonies Nos. 2 and 3* [Naxos 8.555579] was awarded ABC's "Best International Recording of the Year" in 1994. Their recording of the complete works for violin and orchestra by Walter Piston for the Naxos label [8.559003] was hailed by *Gramophone* (January, 2000) as a "Record of the Year" in 1999. The complete symphonies of Prokofiev, on the Naxos label, are regarded by many critics as the most accomplished cycle available on compact disc. Volodymyr Sirenko has been Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the orchestra since April 1999. Alexander Hornostai has been Managing Director and Producer since June 2006.

Theodore Kuchar



Photo: Khaled Alkotob

Theodore Kuchar, one of the most prolifically recorded conductors of the past decade, appears on over a hundred recordings for the Naxos, Brilliant Classics, Ondine and Marco Polo labels. He has served as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of two of Europe's leading orchestras, the Janáček Philharmonic Orchestra (formerly the Czech Radio Orchestra) and the National Symphony Orchestra of Ukraine (1994-2004). In the 2011-12 season he commenced his tenure as the Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica de Venezuela. He presently also serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Fresno Philharmonic Orchestra and the Reno Chamber Orchestra in the United States. An avid chamber musician, he served as the Artistic Director of the Australian Festival of Chamber Music (1990-2006), and has been the Artistic Director of the Nevada Chamber Music Festival since 2005. Theodore Kuchar's numerous accolades include *BBC Music Magazine* Record of the Year, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation Record of the Year, Chamber Music America Record of the Year, *Gramophone* magazine's Editor's Choice, the WQXR Record of the Year and a nomination for a Latin GRAMMY® Award (in the category of Best Instrumental Album of 2013).



Theodore Kuchar, James Buswell, Walter Saul and Rong-Huey Liu at a cafeteria in Kiev.

Photo: Daphne Saul

Walter
SAUL
(b. 1954)

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| 1 | Kiev 2014: Rhapsody for Oboe and Orchestra (2014) | 7:51 |
| | Violin Concerto (1980) | 20:52 |
| 2 | I. Lento | 8:18 |
| 3 | II. Recitative – Presto | 12:34 |
| 4 | Overture for the Jubilee (1997) | 7:48 |
| 5 | From Life to Greater Life (1978) | 9:14 |
| | A Christmas Symphony (1992) | 17:47 |
| 6 | I. Gabriel | 3:35 |
| 7 | II. Star | 3:17 |
| 8 | III. Simeon | 5:47 |
| 9 | IV. Gloria | 5:08 |
| 10 | Metamorphosis (1974) | 16:18 |

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS

Rong-Huey Liu, Oboe 1

James Buswell, Violin 2-3

Walter Saul, Piano 10

**National Symphony
Orchestra of Ukraine**

Theodore Kuchar

Recorded at the Great Concert Hall, National Radio Corporation of Ukraine, Kiev, Ukraine, on 18th, 20th and 21st December, 2014 • Producer: Alexander Hornostai
Engineer and editor: Andrij Mokrytsky
Publisher: Tarsus Music • Booklet notes: Walter Saul
Cover photograph: Daphne Saul



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Composer and pianist Walter Saul is the recipient of 24 ASCAP awards and numerous other honors. His mission as a composer is ‘to create musical icons, windows of sonic light’ which point towards Christian spirituality. *Kiev 2014* reflects on Ukraine’s challenges, from the darkness of occupation towards hope and victory. The *Violin Concerto* is packed with numeric symbolism, while *A Christmas Symphony* paints four significant scenes from the Nativity. Saul’s *Overture for the Jubilee* explores the history of John Quincy Adams and the abolition of slavery. *From Life to Greater Life* celebrates the transformation to heavenly immortality, and the profound peace which concludes *Metamorphosis* stands witness to the inner peace granted to the composer through his faith.

www.naxos.com

Playing
Time:
79:50