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CLASSICS

AARON JAY KERNIS
DREAMSONGS
THREE CONCERTOS

Paul Neubauer *viola*
Joshua Roman *cello*
Royal Northern Sinfonia
Rebecca Miller *conductor*

AARON JAY KERNIS

DREAMSONGS

THREE CONCERTOS

Dreamsongs (2013)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|---------|
| 1 | I. Floating Dreamsongs | [13.01] |
| 2 | II. Kora Song | [13.04] |

Joshua Roman *cello*

Viola Concerto (2013-14)

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------|
| 3 | I. Braid | [5.47] |
| 4 | II. Romance | [7.04] |
| 5 | III. A Song My Mother Taught Me | [19.47] |

Paul Neubauer *viola*

Concerto with Echoes (2009)

- | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|--------|
| 6 | I. Lontano; Tocatta: Molto allegro | [3.39] |
| 7 | II. Slowly | [7.57] |
| 8 | III. Aria – dolente, grazioso | [4.48] |

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 9 | Tumbalalaika | [0.56] |
| | <i>Traditional Yiddish, arr. Aaron Jay Kernis</i> | |
| | Paul Neubauer <i>viola</i> , Aaron Jay Kernis <i>piano</i> | |

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--------|
| 10 | Fughetta, Op. 32 No. 4 | [1.49] |
| | Aaron Jay Kernis <i>piano</i> | |
| | Robert Schumann | |

Total timings: [77.53]

ROYAL NORTHERN SINFONIA
PAUL NEUBAUER VIOLA
JOSHUA ROMAN CELLO
AARON JAY KERNIS PIANO
REBECCA MILLER CONDUCTOR

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AARON JAY KERNIS

THREE CONCERTOS

Dreamsongs (2013)

1. Floating Dreamsongs
2. Kora Song

While *Dreamsongs* is a concerto for cello and chamber orchestra, it doesn't take on the forms of older concerti. Rather than the almost ubiquitous three movement layout— Fast-Slow-Fast - it has only two movements, both of which mix slow and fast with dramatic and lyrical sections. The first, **Floating Dreamsongs** is mostly slow and airy, and is built as a group of continuously developing variations on the intimate music from its opening and 1st variation with strings, harp and vibraphone. The consonant harmonies become spooked and furtive, building into tremulous marimba and vibraphone rolls with large orchestra chords, and only much later returns to a mostly peaceful character.

Much of the 2nd movement, *Kora Song*, is inspired by music of the African kora, a plucked gourd almost similar in sound to the harp and pizzicato cello combination that opens the

movement and is often featured in it. I don't know of many cello pieces that concentrate on pizzicato playing as much as this movement, and the playing style was developed in close collaboration with the soloist. The music frequently changes direction and features a number of cello cadenzas of smaller and larger size, sometimes with the West African djembe drum. Overall it has a gentle exuberance and is lighter in tone and more energetic than in the opening movement.

Dreamsongs is written for the generous and virtuosic playing of cellist Joshua Roman, who I've known for a number of years, and has been my neighbor in New York City until recently. It is dedicated to him. It was co-commissioned for him by the San Francisco Chamber Orchestra, the ProMusica Chamber Orchestra of Columbus, Ohio, and the Bellingham Festival in Washington State.

Viola Concerto (2013-2014)

- I. Braid
- II. Romance
- III. A Song My Mother Taught Me

This new concerto for Viola is inspired essentially by its extraordinary soloist whose playing I've known over many years. Paul Neubauer and I first worked together in 1993 when American Public Radio commissioned my *Still Movement with Hymn* for piano quartet which he premiered on air and toured with 3 other remarkable musicians. In some ways this new concerto follows up on the tone of that piece. More recently I was extremely moved by Paul's recording (with pianist Anne-Marie McDermott) of viola music of Robert Schumann, and this lead me to re-explore the music of Robert and Clara Schumann in depth once again. I have always been drawn to the soulful character of the viola, and have been excited to write this work from the moment Paul requested it.

This concerto shows many contradictory elements in tone, and the use of a very wide terrain of musical language and moods. The profiles of the melodies that suffuse it are highly varied, as are the wide contrasts of lyricism and

harshness. Yet throughout there are linked musical ideas in each movement which give the entire work continuity.

The opening movement, *Braid*, is a series of elaborations and embellishments of a sequence of harmonies and melodies. Throughout its compact length it shifts from clear three-note chords at the opening and closing to a thickening gauze of colors that weave around the viola line and lead, at its peak, to a chaotic frenzy.

The second movement, *Romance* is a lyrical, romantic intermezzo, which grows out of breathing, fluid gestures and harmonies that link to the Brahms/early Schoenberg tradition. The title came from discovering a number of lovely piano pieces by Clara Schumann titled *Romanze*, clearly written in mind of her husband.

The final movement, *A Song My Mother Taught Me*, is the longest and darkest in the concerto, lasting about 20 minutes. Knowing of the Paul Neubauer's interest in folk music, as soon as I decided to write the work I chose to base this movement on the well-known Yiddish song, *Tumbalalaika*, which I had first learned in my childhood. I had always felt it had very penetrating words and a sad melody, and

was later surprised to hear it sung in many ways – as a romantic wedding song, wildly gyrating dance tune, and even in an ironic, comedic rendition. After hearing Paul's Schumann CD, a melody from his Op. 34 set of short piano pieces lodged in my ear and would not leave it, so its melody and distinctive rhythm became the frame of the movement, with *Tumbalalaika* as its essential musical material. Both melodies have a strong rhythmic kinship with the other. Included as bonus tracks (9,10) are recordings of the essential musical material used in the 3rd movement – my arrangement of *Tumbalalaika* for viola and piano, and the Schumann *Fughetta*, from Piano Pieces Op. 32 No. 4.

The third movement begins with plaintive, virtuosic lines in the clarinet and bass clarinet, then the Schumann melody is heard in its simplest form. It returns repeatedly at important moments throughout, and is increasingly deconstructed and harmonically decayed. The use of the Yiddish tune takes the opposite approach – while it is formed like a theme and series of variations, the ten linked variations proceed backwards toward the tune, starting at their most fragmented and least melodic. The tune has been pulverized,

made wildly improvisatory, and at times, very harsh and bitter. Only very late in the movement is the simple, original tune heard, above pulsating strummed chords. The form could be construed to be variations in search of their melody. A short, intense solo viola cadenza is followed by a dense and frenzied climax with the two clarinets leading the way. A decisively bleak battle between bass drum and viola pounds the opening Schumann-esque rhythms into silence. To close, the ghostly irony of a brief quote from Mahler, a final blanket of opposing chords that reference the Schumann one last time, and a pensive coda completes the work.

While I decided not to preface each of the variations in the score with words from *Tumbalalaika*, here are the lyrics that inspired the movement.

Viola Concerto was written in 2013- 2014 and generously commissioned for Paul Neubauer by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra with the leadership support of Linda and Stuart Nelson; Idyllwild Arts Academy; Chautauqua Institution; and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra. It is dedicated to Paul Neubauer, in great admiration and appreciation.

Transliteration of Yiddish Lyrics

Shteyt a bokher, un er trakht
Trakht un trakht a gantse nakht
Vemen tzu nemen un nisht farshemen
Vemen tzu nemen un nisht farshemen

Chorus
Tumbala, Tumbala, Tumbalalaika
Tumbala, Tumbala, Tumbalalaika
Tumbalalaika, shpil balalaika
Tumbalalaika, freylekh zol zayn

Meydl, meydl, kh'vil bay dir fregn,
Vos ken vaksn, vaksn on regn?
Vos ken brenen un nit oyfhern?
Vos ken benken, veynen on trenn?

Chorus

Narisher bokher, vos darfstu fregn?
A shteyn ken vaksn, vaksn on regn.
Libe ken brenen un nit oyfhern.
A harts ken benken, veynen on trenn.

Chorus

Vos iz hekher fun a hoyz?
Vos iz flinker fun a moyz?

Translation:

*A young lad stands, and he thinks
Thinks and thinks the whole night through
Whom to take and not to shame
Whom to take and not to shame*

*Chorus
Tumbala, Tumbala, Tumbalalaika
Tumbala, Tumbala, Tumbalalaika
Tumbalalaika, strum balalaika
Tumbalalaika, may we be happy*

*Girl, girl, I want to ask of you
What can grow, grow without rain?
What can burn and never end?
What can yearn, cry without tears?*

Chorus

*Foolish lad, why do you have to ask?
A stone can grow, grow without rain
Love can burn and never end
A heart can yearn, cry without tears*

Chorus

*What is higher than a house?
What is swifter than a mouse?*

Vos iz tifer fun a kval?
Vos iz biter, biterer vi gal?

Chorus

A koymen iz hekher fun a hoyz.
A kats iz flinker fun a moyz.
Di toyre iz tifer fun a kval.
Der toyt iz biter, biterer vi gal.

Chorus

*What is deeper than a well?
What is bitter, more bitter than gall?*

Chorus

*A chimney is higher than a house
A cat is swifter than a mouse
The Torah is deeper than a well
Death is bitter, more bitter than gall*

Chorus

Concerto with Echoes (2009)

- I. Lontano; Tocatta: Molto allegro
- II. Slowly
- III. Aria - dolente, grazioso

The essential element in the Sixth Brandenburg Concerto that inspired this work comes from its very first measure — the opening passage with two spiraling solo violas, like identical twins following each other breathlessly through a hall of mirrors — the echoing of the title. Also in mind were other works of Bach's that I think of constantly, such as the Ricercar, keyboard Toccatas, C Minor Organ Passacaglia, etc. But it also echoes other recent work of

mine and reminiscences of other composers I love who also paid homage to Bach in their music.

Each of the Brandenburgs is exceptional in its use of instruments, and this concerto mirrors the Sixth by using only violas, celli and basses, while gradually adding reeds and horns to loop back to the sound world of the First Brandenburg Concerto (and extending it with trumpet and percussion).

The first movement begins with a soft introduction which lays out important building blocks of the concerto's harmony, followed by a fiery, toccata-like virtuosic display. The lines in the movement

are constantly mirrored and layered in an often dense maze of sound.

The heart of the piece, the slow movement, is essentially a Passacaglia built on slowly moving bass lines, mirrored layers of melody and open harmonic spaces. Strongly consonant in nature, its harmonies are built in imitative spirals, while the more angular climax uses compressions of the work's opening harmonies.

Rather than closing with a faster dance movement, the brief, slow Aria suggests a courtly dance, and is expressive and pensive, ending with a sigh rather than a flourish.

Concerto with Echoes was written in the spring and summer of 2009 and was commissioned for Orpheus for the New Brandenburg project.

All notes by Aaron Jay Kernis

AARON JAY KERNIS



Winner of the 2002 Grawemeyer Award for Music Composition, 1998 Pulitzer Prize, and 2011 Nemmers Award, Aaron Jay Kernis is one of America's most performed and honored composers. His music appears prominently on concert programs worldwide, and he has been commissioned by America's preeminent performing organizations and artists, including the New York Philharmonic, Minnesota Orchestra, San Francisco, Toronto, and Melbourne (AU) Symphonies, Los Angeles and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestras, Walt Disney

Company, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Renée Fleming, Dawn Upshaw, Joshua Bell, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and Sharon Isbin. Recent and upcoming commissions include a major orchestral work for the New England Conservatory (for its 150th anniversary) and Nashville Symphony; concerti for violinist James Ehnes, cellist Joshua Roman, violist Paul Neubauer, and flutist Marina Piccinini; a horn concerto for the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic and Grant Park Music Festival; a work for the Borromeo String Quartet; a series of works for Tippet Rise Art Center; and a piece for the San Francisco Girls and Brooklyn Youth Choruses with The Knights for the New York Philharmonic Biennial.

His works have been recorded on Virgin, Dorian, Arabesque, Phoenix, Argo, Signum, Cedille and many other labels. Previously released on Signum is his *Goblin Market* and *Invisible Mosaic II* with The New Professionals and conductor Rebecca Miller, with Mary King narrator. Recent recordings include *Simple Songs*, three song cycles with soprano Talise Trevigne and Albany Symphony with conductor David Alan Miller (Albany), *Three Flavors*, featuring pianist Andrew Russo, violinist James Ehnes and the Albany Symphony (Naxos);

and a disc of his solo and chamber music, *On Distant Shores* (Phoenix).

He is the Workshop Director of the Nashville Symphony Composer Lab and, for 15 years, served as New Music Adviser to the Minnesota Orchestra, with which he co-founded and directed its Composer Institute for 11 years. Kernis teaches composition at Yale School of Music, and was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the Classical Music Hall of Fame. Leta Miller's book-length portrait of Kernis and his work was published in 2014 by University of Illinois Press as part of its American Composer series.

PAUL NEUBAUER

Paul Neubauer's exceptional musicality and effortless playing distinguish him as one of this generation's quintessential artists. Balancing a solo career with performances as an artist member of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, he was Principal Violist of New York Philharmonic for six years, joining at age 21 as the youngest principal string player in the Philharmonic's history. Featured on CBS's *Sunday Morning*, Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*, and in Strad, Strings, and



People magazines, he has premiered viola concertos by Béla Bartók (revised version of Viola Concerto), Joel Phillip Friedman, Rinehold Glière, Gordon Jacob, Aaron Jay Kernis, Henri Lazarof, Detlev Müller-Siemens, David Ott, Krzysztof Penderecki, Tobias Picker, Robert Suter, and Joan Tower. He has performed as soloist with more than 100 orchestras throughout the U.S., Europe, and Asia including the New York, Los Angeles, Helsinki, and Royal Liverpool philharmonics; Chicago, National, St. Louis, Dallas, Detroit, San Francisco, and

Bournemouth symphonies; English Chamber, St. Paul, Los Angeles Chamber, Beethovenhalle, and Santa Cecilia orchestras.

A two-time Grammy nominee, he has recorded on numerous record labels including Decca, Deutsche Grammophon, RCA Red Seal and Sony Classical. He has appeared at the Verbier, Ravinia, Stavanger, Hollywood Bowl, Lincoln Center, Mostly Mozart, and Marlboro festivals, and has collaborated with Itzhak Perlman, Joshua Bell, Pinchas Zukerman, Vladimir Spivakov, Gil Shaham, Isaac Stern, Yo-Yo Ma, Steven Isserlis, James Galway, Yefim Bronfman, Emanuel Ax, Alicia de Larrocha, Andre Watts, Evgeny Kissin, Leon Fleisher and Rudolf Firkušný. He performs in a trio with soprano Susanna Phillips and pianist Anne-Marie McDermott, with a wide range of repertoire including salon style songs.

Born in Los Angeles he studied with Alan de Veritch, Paul Doktor, and William Primrose. Mr. Neubauer is the artistic director of the Mostly Music series in New Jersey and is on the faculty of The Juilliard School and Mannes College.

JOSHUA ROMAN

Joshua Roman has earned an international reputation for his wide-ranging repertoire, a commitment to communicating the essence of music in visionary ways, artistic leadership and versatility. As well as being a celebrated performer, he is recognized as an accomplished composer and curator, and was named a TED Senior Fellow in 2015.

This season Roman will make his Detroit Symphony Orchestra debut, and perform his own Cello Concerto, *Awakening*, with the Princeton Symphony in collaboration with conductor Teddy Abrams. In Europe, Roman will perform one of his favorite 20th Century Cello Concertos, that of Polish composer Witold Lutosławski, with the Szczecin Philharmonic of Poland. Other season highlights include performances of *Tornado* with the JACK Quartet with San Francisco Performances, Town Hall Seattle, Interlochen and numerous presenters throughout the country.

Notable events from last season included the premiere of *Tornado*, a new work composed by Joshua Roman and commissioned by the Music Academy of the West and Town Hall Seattle. The lauded premiere took place with



the JACK Quartet at the Music Academy of the West in June of 2017. He also gave his debut at the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, comprised of not only performances with high caliber musicians from the St. Lawrence String Quartet and other corners of the chamber music world, but a performance of his solo piece *Riding Light*. Orchestral highlights of the season included performances of the Mason Bates Cello Concerto with the Portland, Berkeley, Spokane, and Memphis Symphonies. The concerto is dedicated to the cellist, who gave its “world-

class world premiere" (*Seattle Times*) with the Seattle Symphony in 2014, and has since performed it with orchestras around the U.S. In November of 2016, Roman's musical response to the tension around the U.S. Presidential election - "Let's Take A Breath" - brought almost one million live viewers to TED's Facebook page to hear his performance the complete Six Suites for Solo Cello by J.S. Bach.

Before embarking on a solo career, Roman spent two seasons as principal cellist of the Seattle Symphony, a position he won in 2006 at the age of 22. Since that time he has appeared as a soloist with the San Francisco Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Moscow State Symphony and Mariinsky Orchestra, among many others. An active chamber musician, Roman has collaborated with Cho-Liang Lin, Assad Brothers, Christian Zacharias, Yo-Yo Ma, the JACK Quartet, the Enso String Quartet and Talea Ensemble. His YouTube series ([youtube.com/joshuaromancello](https://www.youtube.com/joshuaromancello)), "Everyday Bach," features Roman performing Bach's cello suites from beautiful settings around the world. He was the only guest artist invited to play an unaccompanied solo during the YouTube Symphony Orchestra's 2009 debut concert at

Carnegie Hall, and has given a solo performance on the TED2015 main stage. Roman is grateful for the loan of an 1899 cello by Giulio Degani of Venice.

www.joshuaroman.com

ROYAL NORTHERN SINFONIA



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Bradley Creswick
Kyra Humphreys
Iona Brown
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Sarah Roberts
Jane Nossek

Second Violin

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Alanna Tonetti-Tieppo
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Jenny Chang
Liz Rossi
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Malcolm Critten
Tegwen Jones
James Slater

Cello

Nicholas Trygstad
Daniel Hammersley
James Craig
Gabriel Waite

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Sian Hicks

Flute/Piccolo

Eilidh Gillespie
Siobhan Grealay

Oboe

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Michael O'Donnell

Clarinet

Timothy Orpen
Jessica Lee

E Flat Clarinet

Tim Orpen

Bass Clarinet

Jessica Lee

Bassoon

Stephen Reay
Robin Kennard

Horn

Peter Francomb
Jan Harshagen

Trumpet

Richard Martin
Marion Craig

Trombone

Simon Cowen

Timpani/Percussion

Marney O'Sullivan

Percussion

Jan Bradley
Mark Norman

Harp

Sharron Griffiths

Lars Vogt *Music Director*
Julian Rachlin *Principal Guest Conductor*
Thomas Zehetmair *Conductor Laureate*

Royal Northern Sinfonia, Orchestra of Sage Gateshead, is the UK's only full-time chamber orchestra. Founded in 1958, RNS has built a world-wide reputation for the North East through the quality of its music-making and

the immediacy of the connections the musicians make with audiences. The orchestra regularly flies the flag for the region at the Edinburgh Festival and the BBC Proms, this year performing Handel's *Water Music* at The Stage @ the Dock in Hull – the first Prom performed outside of London since 1930. They appear frequently at venues and festivals in Europe, and last season toured in South America, China and South Korea.

In recent seasons RNS has worked with conductors and soloists Christian Tetzlaff, Olli Mustonen, Reinhard Goebel, Katrina Canellakis and Nicholas McGegan; a host of world class singers including Sally Matthews, Karen Cargill and Elizabeth Watts, and also collaborated with leading popular voices such as Sting, Ben Folds, John Grant and Mercury Rev.

RNS has commissioned new music, recently by Benedict Mason, David Lang, John Casken and Kathryn Tickell, and in the 2015/16 season launched a new Young Composers Competition.

RNS has always been actively involved in local communities and in education. This season the orchestra will perform across the region in Kendal, Middlesbrough, Carlisle, Berwick, Barnard Castle and Sunderland, and once again take their Baroque Christmas by Candlelight tour to regional churches. Musicians support young people learning musical instruments through Sage Gateshead's Centre for Advanced Training and through In Harmony, a long-term programme in Hawthorn Primary School in which every child in the school learns a musical instrument and plays in an orchestra.

REBECCA MILLER

California-born conductor Rebecca Miller has earned an international reputation for her compelling, insightful, and energetic presence on the podium and for her ability to communicate with audiences of all ages. She has guest-conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, London Mozart Players, BBC Concert Orchestra, BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Salomon Orchestra, Nashville Symphony, BBC Proms, and during 2017-18 the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (New York), New Haven Symphony Orchestra (Connecticut), and the Uppsala Chamber Orchestra.

Rebecca's discography includes eight CDs, including: Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment (CPE Bach/Signum/2016 - final shortlist 'Gramophone Award'); BBC Concert Orchestra (Henry Hadley/DuWon Epoch); Royal Northern Sinfonia (Haydn Symphonies/Signum, and Bristow/New World Records); BBC Scottish Symphony (piano concertos by Amy Beach, Dorothy Howell, Cecil Chaminade/Hyperion Records' Romantic Piano Concerto).

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Rebecca has guest conducted in the US with the Houston Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, Reno Philharmonic, Bakersfield Symphony, Santa Cruz Symphony, Chicago College of the Performing Arts, Bard Music Festival, Huntsville Symphony, Williamsport Symphony, and Musiq Houston, and with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra in Israel. A First-prize winner in the Eduardo Mata International Conducting Competition, Rebecca conducted throughout Mexico, including repeated engagements with the Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional and Orquesta Filarmonica del UNAM, and the state orchestras of Yucatan, Aguascalientes, and Sinaloa.

Rebecca is Associate Conductor of the Southbank Sinfonia, Principal Conductor of the Bishop's

Stortford Sinfonia, Director of Orchestras at Royal Holloway University of London, conductor at the junior department of the Royal Academy of Music, and has worked with the national youth orchestras of Wales, England, and Venezuela.

Previously, Rebecca was Resident Conductor of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and 'Conducting Fellow' of The Houston Symphony. She holds a B.Mus. in Piano from Oberlin Conservatory, an M.Mus in Conducting from Northwestern University, and for two years was the Paul Woodhouse Junior Fellow in Conducting at London's Royal College of Music.

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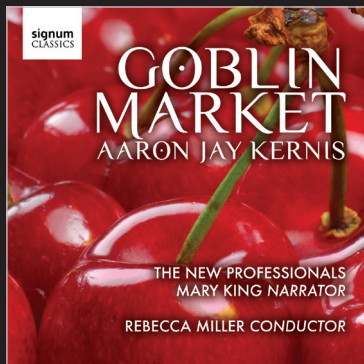
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