



**Paul  
MORAVEC**

**Violin Concerto**  
**Shakuhachi Quintet**  
**Equilibrium**  
**Evermore**

**Maria Bachmann, Violin**

**James Nyoraku Schlefer, Shakuhachi**

**Stephen Gosling, Piano**

**Voxare String Quartet**

**Symphony in C**

conducted by

**Rossen Milanov**



## Paul Moravec (b. 1957)

### Violin Concerto • Shakuhachi Quintet • Equilibrium • Evermore

One of the most widely admired composers of our time, although deserving of still more recognition, Vincent Paul Moravec Jr. was born in Buffalo, New York, in 1957, to parents raised in western Pennsylvania. His father, of Czech-Croatian-Slovenian ancestry, worked in the steel industry; his mother, of English-Scots-Irish heritage, as a social worker. Upon moving to Princeton with his family, Paul became a boy treble in the men and boys' choir at Trinity Church, an activity pursued after the family's return to Buffalo; the composer would later cite the Anglican-Episcopal tradition as "probably the most formative serious cultural influence in my early life." The appearance of the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan Show in 1964 also made a lasting impression, as did the discovery of Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Wagner and Brahms at about the time he began piano lessons and started composing in 1970.

Moravec attended Harvard University, where he studied composition with Fred Lerdahl and Tison Street and became assistant conductor of the Harvard Radcliffe Collegium Musicum. Pursuing graduate studies at Columbia University, he continued to work with Lerdahl and studied as well with Mario Davidovsky, Jack Beeson, and Chou Wen-Chung, receiving his doctorate in 1987. After teaching at Dartmouth College, Columbia University, and Hunter College, in 1997 Moravec joined the faculty of Adelphi University, where he holds the distinguished title of University Professor.

A prolific composer, Moravec has written for a wide spectrum of mediums and genres, with recent years witnessing an increased involvement with opera, including the creation of *The Letter*, to a libretto by Terry Teachout after Somerset Maugham, for the Santa Fe Opera (premiered in 2009), and *The Shining*, to a libretto by Mark Campbell after the Stephen King novel of the same name, for the Minnesota Opera (to be premiered in 2016). Championed by some of today's most distinguished artists, he has been awarded the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for the *Tempest Fantasy* for clarinet, violin,

cello and piano, as well as the Rome Prize and three awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; fellowships from the National Endowment of the Arts and the Guggenheim Foundation; and long-term residencies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, Mannes College of Music, and the American Academy in Rome.

Whether written for voice or instruments, Moravec's music stands out for its melodic grace and lyrical intensity, something no doubt related to his long involvement with choral singing. Rhythm, harmony, and texture, while imaginative and vital, function primarily as support for the songful lines that unfold the composer's unconventional forms, which gain clarity through tonal cadences of an often modal or ambiguous nature. Moravec's rich harmonic language, which ranges from bracing dissonance to simple consonance, can veer toward the eclectic, but remains whole by virtue of the composer's individual style and taste. "As a composer, I try always to make beautiful things, and I use whatever techniques and materials are useful for the particular composition at hand," he told *The New York Times*. "Some of those materials are atonal or nontonal, but the overall harmonic context of my music derives from the tonal tradition, which after all is the *lingua franca* of Western music – essentially, Monteverdi to the Beatles and beyond."

Long in gestation, the *Violin Concerto* (2010, revised 2013) must rate among one of Moravec's most important accomplishments and is one of the outstanding American violin concertos of recent memory. A grandly conceived work in four movements, and as much a compositional as a virtuosic *tour de force*, it requires the soloist to soar above the orchestra in its highest *tessitura* for much of the time. Violinist Maria Bachmann debuted a preliminary version of the concerto on May 22, 2010, at Swarthmore College with the Orchestra 2001 under James Freeman in a concert honoring Samuel Barber, whose own *Violin Concerto* finds an echo in the romantic elegance of the Moravec work. Bachmann subsequently gave the first

performance of the revised *Concerto* on March 1, 2013, at Mayo Hall in Ewing, New Jersey, with Rossen Milanov leading Symphony in C.

The *Concerto* opens with a florid passage for the soloist accompanied by trills, setting the stage for the work's main theme, at first presented in a stately three by the unaccompanied soloist in the instrument's lower range, and soon after developed by the soloist with the string section. Following a transition, the theme takes on a more *scherzando*, sometimes even jazzy character, with the woodwinds joining in. The music turns more and more vigorous, leading to a climactic return of the main theme that subsides into a quiet and evocative ending.

The *Concerto's* relatively short slow movement, adapted from *Tempest Fantasy*, puts forth, largely in a gentle 6/8 meter, a lovely *cantilena* or serenade for the solo violin against a sensuous wash of sound in the orchestra. An impassioned cadenza for the violin, regarded by the composer as a separate movement although not indicated as such in the orchestral score, leads seamlessly into the finale proper, which revisits materials of the preceding movements along with the time-honored B-A-C-H motive (Bb-A-C-B in German notation), a motive highlighted in Moravec's *Equilibrium*, also featured on this recording. As in the first movement, the music grows progressively more rhythmic and energetic, but here a joyous coda carries the momentum all the way to the work's triumphant concluding D major triad.

Moravec wrote the *Shakuhachi Quintet* (2012) on commission by the Kyo-Shin-An Arts, a Brooklyn-based organization founded in 2009 and dedicated to the integration of classical Western instruments with classical Japanese ones, in particular, the bamboo flute, the *shakuhachi*; the plucked string instrument, the *shamisen*; and the zither-like *koto*. As part of its mission, Kyo-Shin-An Arts has commissioned several composers of various stripes to write works that combine Western and Japanese instruments; and to this end, Moravec chose to compose a work for shakuhachi player (and co-founder of Kyo-Shin-An Arts) James Nyoraku Schlefer and string quartet, a twist on the flute quartets and flute quintets of

the classical repertoire. Schlefer and the Colorado Quartet premiered the work on April 21, 2012, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.

In three movements, the quintet opens with a reflective and tender exposition for the strings; the shakuhachi then initiates a series of exchanges with the strings as the music traverses distant tonal areas. The second movement initially sustains the first movement's elegiac mood, but agitated elements increasingly intrude until a return to the opening calm. The finale takes as its principal material a hexachord, that is, a grouping of six notes, here derived from a passage from Shakespeare's *Love's Labor's Lost* in which the pompous pedant Holofernes, remembering a bit of a tune, utters "Ut, re, sol, la, mi, fa," or in our parlance, "C, D, G, A, E, F." This hexachord can be heard clearly at the start of the opening solo for the shakuhachi. (The composer-novelist Anthony Burgess, author of *A Clockwork Orange*, made use of this same hexachord in the last movement of his 1975 *Third Symphony*.) The quintet's finale at first promises yet another elegiac slow movement but turns midway to dancelike vigor and whimsy, unfolding a narrative similar to that of the *Violin Concerto*. Notwithstanding the use of some characteristic gestures for the shakuhachi, including the use of sliding pitches, Moravec, rather than exploit a Japanese manner, adopts the instrument to his own chromatic style, thereby presenting considerable challenges for the shakuhachi player. The composer subsequently arranged this quintet as *Shakuhachi Concerto* for shakuhachi and string orchestra (2013), also premiered by Schlefer.

Written especially for this album, *Equilibrium* for violin and piano falls into two parts of approximately equal duration. In the first half, the violin and piano develop, almost obsessively, a short nervous theme; a brief cadenza for the violin introduces the second half, in which the limping main motive broadens out into a *chaconne*, that is, music built on a repeating cycle of chords, here constructed around the B-A-C-H motive and put forth by the piano. The music thus achieves "equilibrium", although the bitonal ending makes for a bittersweet conclusion.

Moravec penned the short *Evermore* for violin and piano (2004) as a wedding gift for violinist Maria Bachmann and pianist and film director Josh Aronson on the occasion of their marriage in April 2004, and the two premiered the piece that June at the Telluride MusicFest in Telluride, Colorado. Marked "Tenderly", the music, like those delicious Fritz Kreisler encore pieces that the music evokes, contrasts sections in minor with those in major, the whole coming to rest on an untroubled major triad.

A virtuoso performer can bring out the best in a composer's imagination. For me it is a joy and a privilege to compose for artists of the highest caliber. The *Violin Concerto* is the culmination of a twenty-five year creative association with the violinist Maria Bachmann. *Shakuhachi Quintet* is the fruit of my more recent friendship with shakuhachi-master James Schlefer, featuring this most expressive and poignant of traditional Japanese instruments.

Howard Pollack

Paul Moravec, New York City, 2015

## Paul Moravec



Photo: Joanna Eldredge Morrissey

Paul Moravec, recipient of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize in Music, has composed numerous orchestral, chamber, lyric, and operatic works. Frequently commissioned by notable ensembles and major music institutions, his current project is *The Shining*, based on the Stephen King novel, which will be premiered at Minnesota Opera in 2016. A graduate of Harvard and Columbia universities, he is University Professor at Adelphi University, and recently served as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton as well as Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome. Other honors include the Rome Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and three awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Recent releases include four albums on Naxos (8.559267, 8.559323, 8.559393 and 8.559698), an album of orchestral music on BMOP Sound titled *Northern Lights Electric*, and the *Piano Quintet*, with Jeremy Denk and the Lark Quartet on Bridge. His website is [www.paulmoravec.com](http://www.paulmoravec.com) and his works are published by [www.subitomusic.com](http://www.subitomusic.com).

## Maria Bachmann



Photo: Lisa Marie Mazzocco

Maria Bachmann has forged a unique profile as a soloist and violinist of Trio Solisti. Her recordings encompassing works from Beethoven to new music can be found on Sony Masterworks, Bridge, Naxos American Classics, Bridge, and her world premiere recording of Philip Glass' *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (2008), written for her, is on the OMM label. A graduate of the Curtis Institute, she performs on a 1782 violin by Nicolò Gagliano.

[www.mariabachmann.com](http://www.mariabachmann.com); [www.triosolisti.com](http://www.triosolisti.com).

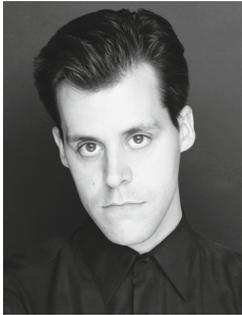
## James Nyoraku Schlefer



Photo: Nicole Goodhue Boyd

James Nyoraku Schlefer is an American Grand Master of the shakuhachi. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Tanglewood, and BAM, throughout the United States, and in Japan, Indonesia, Brazil and Europe. He composes extensively for both Japanese and Western Instruments and is Artistic Director of Kyo-Shin-An Arts. He teaches at Columbia University and New York City Technical College (CUNY), and performs and lectures at colleges and universities throughout the United States.

## Stephen Gosling



Stephen Gosling earned his Bachelor's, Masters and Doctoral degrees at The Juilliard School, where he was awarded the Mennin Prize and Sony Elevated Standards Fellowship. He is a member of the New York New Music Ensemble, Talea Ensemble, Orchestra of the League of Composers, Ensemble Ipse, Perspectives Ensemble and Ne(x)tworks. He has also featured as guest artist with the New York Philharmonic, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

## Voxare String Quartet



"The gifted Voxare String Quartet" (*The New York Times*) was formed in 2008 and has since received critical praise for its inventive programming, technical prowess, attention to detail, and passionate performances. Voxare has performed at Avery Fisher Hall as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, has been quartet-in-residence at New York's Bargemusic, and has received Chamber Music America's ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming. Read more about Voxare at [www.voxarequartet.com](http://www.voxarequartet.com).

## Symphony in C



Symphony in C is one of three professional training orchestras in the United States preparing musicians and conductors who are on the cusp of world-class careers through concert, educational outreach and professional development programs.

## Rossen Milanov



Respected and admired by audiences and musicians alike, Rossen Milanov was recently named the Music Director Designate of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra as well as the Music Director of the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra. He is also the Music Director of the Princeton Symphony and Principal Conductor of the Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias (OSPA) in Spain.

Paul  
**MORAVEC**  
(b. 1957)

- Violin Concerto (2010, rev. 2013) <sup>1</sup> \*** 27:15
- |          |   |       |
|----------|---|-------|
| <b>1</b> | – | 11:09 |
| <b>2</b> | – | 5:15  |
| <b>3</b> | – | 3:46  |
| <b>4</b> | – | 7:14  |
- Shakuhachi Quintet (2012) <sup>2</sup> \*** 18:28  
*A Kyo-Shin-An Arts and Meet the Composer Commission*
- |          |   |      |
|----------|---|------|
| <b>5</b> | – | 8:06 |
| <b>6</b> | – | 5:18 |
| <b>7</b> | – | 5:04 |
- Equilibrium (2015) <sup>3</sup> \*** 7:12
- Evermore (2004) <sup>4</sup>** 2:36

**\*WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDING**

**Maria Bachmann, Violin** <sup>1, 3, 4</sup>  
**James Nyoraku Schlefer, Shakuhachi** <sup>2</sup>  
**Stephen Gosling, Piano** <sup>3, 4</sup>  
**Voxare String Quartet** <sup>2</sup>  
**Symphony in C** <sup>1</sup> • **Rossen Milanov** <sup>1</sup>

This recording was made possible thanks to generous sponsorship from Adelphi University.

Recorded at Gordon Theater, Rutgers-Camden Center for the Arts, Camden, NJ, on 2nd March, 2013 (tracks 1-4); at the Recital Hall in the Performing Arts Center, Purchase College, State University of New York, on 22nd June, 2012 (tracks 5-7); and at Westchester Studios, Pelham, NY, on 8th December, 2014 (tracks 8 and 9).

Producer, engineer, and editor: Adam Abeshouse

Publisher: Subito Music Publishing

Booklet notes: Howard Pollack

Cover photo of Maria Bachmann by Lisa-Marie Mazzucco



**AMERICAN CLASSICS**

Paul Moravec is one of the most admired and acclaimed composers of our time, his music standing out for its melodic grace, lyrical intensity and rich harmonic language. The grandly conceived *Violin Concerto* rates among one of his most important accomplishments and, with its romantically sensuous elegance and joyous finale, has already earned a place as one of the outstanding American works in this genre. The elegiac *Shakuhachi Quintet* integrates the classical Japanese bamboo flute with the Western string quartet, while *Equilibrium* was composed especially for this album, recalling the B-A-C-H motive also heard in the *Violin Concerto*. Evoking the tradition of delicious encore pieces, *Evermore* was written as a wedding gift for Maria Bachmann.

**www.naxos.com**

Playing  
Time:  
**55:41**