



Miguel
KERTSMAN
Three Concertos

Chamber Symphony No. 2 'New York of 50 Doors'

Marina Piccinini, Flute
Orsolya Korcsolán, Violin

Martin Kuuskmann, Bassoon
Gergely Sugar, French horn and Shofars

London Philharmonic Orchestra
Dennis Russell Davies

Miguel
KERTSMAN

(b. 1965)

Concerto Brasileiro for Flute, Strings and Percussion (2005) 15:56

- | | | |
|---|---|------|
| 1 | I. Overture, Bagunça | 5:25 |
| 2 | II. Choro – <i>attacca</i> : (solo cello: Morena Del Mar) | 3:32 |
| 3 | III. Repentes, Baião, Xaxado con brio | 6:58 |

Concerto for Violin, Horn, Shofar and Orchestra (2013) 16:41

- | | | |
|---|------|------|
| 4 | I. | 2:50 |
| 5 | II. | 4:18 |
| 6 | III. | 2:00 |
| 7 | IV. | 7:33 |

Journey for Bassoon and Orchestra (2012) 21:40

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|------|
| 8 | I. Tallinn | 8:35 |
| 9 | Intræludium 1 p'ra 2 | 1:25 |
| 10 | II. New York | 5:38 |
| 11 | Intræludium 2 p'ra 3 | 1:00 |
| 12 | III. Recife | 5:02 |

13 Chamber Symphony No. 2 'New York of 50 Doors' (2015) 11:12



Photos: Elle Hailey



Miguel Kertsman (b. 1965)

Three Concertos • Chamber Symphony No. 2 'New York of 50 Doors'

Brazilian-born Miguel Kertsman has enjoyed an international career as a composer, keyboardist, producer, audio engineer and music executive. His music, not easily categorised, shows influences from all over the world. He has worked in numerous genres and formats, including the concert stage, jazz, progressive rock, electronica, film and game scoring. The four works on this disc – including three concertos performed by the soloists for whom they were written – bridge diverse elements that, in Kertsman's hands, result in genre-bending music for the concert stage with a unique sound and wide appeal.

Kertsman composed his *Concerto Brasileiro for Flute, Strings and Percussion* on commission from the Austrian Flute Society and soloist Marina Piccinini in 2005. The opening movement, *Overture, Bagunça*, begins with a splash of colour and proceeds along a rather modernistic path with string *glissandi* and extended techniques for the soloist. But this frenetic activity cuts off abruptly at the end of the 18th bar. Strings begin a solemn, chorale-like passage that introduces a sense of tonality until cadencing on an ambiguous harmony, at which point flute and percussion try to bring back the modernistic, deconstructed vibe. But the strings return to their chorale – this time with a lyrical melody on flute riding above them. Eventually, these competing forces of lyricism and modernity coalesce into a seductive dance, capped by a cadenza-like coda from the soloist.

The second movement, *Choro* (a reworking of an earlier piece written c. 1990), opens with an extended duet for flute and cello, their sinuous lines interacting with and complementing each other. Kertsman adds percussive colour from a *pandeiro* (a Brazilian hand drum similar to a tambourine) before strings introduce a more solemn idea, soon joined by the flute. The third movement, *Repentes, Baião, Xaxado con brio*, commences *attacca* and launches into an infectiously rhythmic dance. Kertsman composed the lyrical, modal *Repente* theme for a *Concerto for Strings* when he was only 19 and, having a special fondness for it, has

repurposed it in other works as well. As the composer explains, 'A *repente* is a form of folk music from northeastern Brazil, where the city of Recife is located. *Repentistas* would walk along the streets and beaches, each with a local type of guitar called a *viola sertaneja* and singing improvised verses about anyone or anything ... they are fantastic artists! Another variant of those street musicians, the *emboladores*, would do the same, but instead of accompanying themselves with *violas sertanejas*, they would do so with a *pandeiro*.' The composer recreates this childhood memory of music he would hear 'as I was enjoying being a kid and drinking a nice glass of cold maté tea blended with lime, apple or milk at a restaurant nearby.' Throughout the movement – although more stately passages provide contrast – irresistible rhythmic propulsion is the order of the day.

The *Concerto for Violin, Horn, Shofar and Orchestra* announces its propensity for uncommon sonorities at the outset – a trio consisting of solo violin, shofar and bass clarinet, supported by splashes of percussion. The shofar – part of Jewish tradition – is an ancient instrument, originally made from a ram's horn, that Kertsman believes 'can give a sense of transcendence'. It resembles a *berrante*, played by cattle rangers in the hinterlands of Brazil, thus demonstrating the commonality in widely divergent folk traditions. Because embouchure alone controls its pitch, its tuning can be very distinctive. In Kertsman's *Concerto*, the soloist alternates three shofars (tuned to three different basic pitches: B flat 3, B flat 4 and B 4) with a modern French horn. The brief first movement revels in these sounds, along with metallic sonorities of bowed percussion, clusters of string harmonics, and an introspective melodic episode followed by a coda. The second movement features much imitative counterpoint between violin and horn, juxtaposing a playful idea in duple-compound metre with a solemn five-note motif.

The shofar returns in the third movement, in which seconds (both minor and major) form the backbone of the melodic material. Sonority again seems paramount, with

ethereal soundscapes, the percussion playing a more active role, and a haunting solo violin theme navigating within. The concluding movement, by far the longest of the four (and mostly scored in 11/4), brings a new melodic theme together with elements from each of the preceding – both horn and shofar, stepwise motion, triplet figures, the five-note motif, much interplay between soloists, extended percussion (including two Brazilian *berimbaus*) – to which the composer adds, nearly half-way through, a rhythmic bass line reinforced by organ, culminating with majestic thematic statements in the *Concerto's* closing bars.

Kertsman, who composed the work in 2013, has noted: 'There isn't any specific meaning or intent with the piece, other than its musical message itself, going beyond labels, borders or divisions. Music, as time and space themselves, is universal and can help ... bring people together.' He has also observed, 'The solo parts require both extreme virtuosity and warm, lyrical sounds, and Orsi (Orsolya) Korcsolán and Gergely Sugar bring the music to life just wonderfully.'

Kertsman titled his bassoon concerto *Journey for Bassoon and Orchestra*, reflecting some of the paths he and his long-time friend Martin Kuuskmann have travelled, both musically and geographically. He began writing the piece in 2012, developing it from a piece for bassoon and piano he and Kuuskmann had premiered at the Blaine Music Festival in 2010. The outer movements are named after the cities of their births (Tallinn for Kuuskmann, and Recife for Kertsman); the central panel on the map, New York, has been a centre of activity (one of many) for the composer. More importantly, the many styles evident in the work reflect Kertsman's wide-ranging musical interests, encompassing traditionalism and experimentation with equal fervour. The work is scored for solo bassoon, strings, piano, celesta, organ and percussion (including a Brazilian *cuica* in the third movement).

The opening movement unfolds slowly, beginning with a lyrical line for the soloist that is gradually joined by *tutti* strings and solo violin. Kertsman says the music was written in Chicago, 'looking at Lake Michigan's vastness from my apartment window' – a landscape that gave him the feeling of Nordic lands. The music builds to a forceful

climax, at which point the soloist returns to the opening idea, this time accompanied by piano and celesta. The organ intervenes to create a *quasi religioso* passage rife with suspensions; against increasingly turbulent strings, the soloist tries to re-establish his opening phrase. Finally spent, strings and organ yield to the soloist and he returns to the beginning, repeating the first 15 bars of the movement (although this time without celesta).

What follows is the first of two short interludes that feature the bassoon soloist exploring some of the instrument's extended techniques: multiphonics, voice-singing, pure air and key clicks.

At Kuuskmann's request, Kertsman developed the *New York* movement from one of his jazz works, *The Band*, written in 1989 for his New York-based progressive jazz ensemble, the Amazonica Universal Orchestra. The soloist plays a series of laid-back licks in dialogue with xylophone, accompanied by a rhythm section consisting of piano, drum set and bass. After a brief reference to the first movement's theme from the soloist, jazz returns with a more frenzied vibe. Strings introduce a steady chromatic idea that fails to disrupt the party, until, finally, they take over with a solemn chorale and the soloist returns yet again to the opening idea of the first movement.

Rhythm is the predominant force in the final movement. Over a steady *ostinato* for snare and bass drums (initiated by the soloist with air and key clicks at the end of the second interlude), strings begin an extended *fugato*. This leads to a lively dance tune from the soloist, in the style of a *frevô* – a traditional Brazilian dance, originating in Recife, that is said to make listeners and dancers feel as if they are boiling on the ground. The music reaches a shattering climax with slithering chromatics before the soloist returns to the work's opening theme, which is eventually picked up by the strings as well. Although the movement was composed in Vienna, the composer says the movement is 'reminiscent of my childhood in that beautiful city where the world and the city itself somehow seemed to be nothing but sunny and happy.'

Kertsman's *Chamber Symphony No. 2* presents a vivid and colourful portrait of the city that never sleeps.

The Vienna Symphony Chamber Orchestra (and its conductor, Gergely Sugar, who is also the horn soloist on this recording) commissioned the work in 2014 and premiered it in 2015. Because they requested a 'jazzy piece', Kertsman repurposed two main themes and the episodic modulations, representing different sounds and cultures present in NYC, from an earlier work, *New York of 50 Doors*. And because the orchestra would be performing John Adams' *Chamber Symphony* on the same concert, they asked him to use the same orchestration: four woodwind players (flute doubling piccolo, oboe, clarinet doubling bass clarinet, bassoon doubling contrabassoon), three brass players (French horn, trumpet and trombone), synthesizer, percussion (greatly expanded in the Kertsman work) and solo strings. The synthesizer (which stands in for a lead synth sound, a Hammond B3 organ and a Clavinet) takes the lead in introducing the main motif – a descending four-note chromatic phrase followed by a flurry of semiquavers that leads to some impressive virtuosity from trumpet and

French horn later in the piece. Some form or other of this idea permeates much of the musical discourse, as does a feeling of jazz, most especially in the sophisticated rhythms of the percussion section. Melodic intervals are routinely narrow; Kertsman avoids expressive leaps, suggesting a city with an incredibly rich cultural diversity that is busy and complex, active and focused.

Also notable throughout is the unusual interplay of instrumental colours, starting at the beginning with piccolo and contrabassoon. Kertsman makes every tonal strand stand out in the texture. Doubling is rare; nothing is wasted.

Kertsman's work in studio keyboard playing, producing, audio engineering and acoustics took up a large part of his time in the first two decades of his career. But since 2008 he has been able to fully focus again on composition. 'I have always been a composer first', he says, and his passion and enthusiasm for musical creation is evident not only in his words but in the works recorded here as well.

Frank K. DeWald

Marina Piccinini



Photo: Marco Borggreve

Flautist Marina Piccinini is in demand worldwide, appearing with the symphony orchestras of Boston, Vienna, Tokyo, Montreal and Toronto, among others, as well as the Rotterdam Philharmonic and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. She has worked with conductors including Andrés Orozco-Estrada, Alan Gilbert, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Seiji Ozawa, Kurt Masur, Pierre Boulez, Leonard Slatkin, Gianandrea Noseda and Jukka-Pekka Saraste. She has collaborated with the Tokyo, Brentano, Mendelssohn, and Takács string quartets, and pianists Andreas Haefliger and Mitsuko Uchida. She is a Resident Artist at the Marlboro Music Festival, and performs at the Salzburg, Mostly Mozart and Saito Kinen Festivals. www.marinapiccinini.com

Orsolya Korcsolán

Photo: Aron Erdőhafi



The Hungarian-born violinist, Orsolya Korcsolán, has established herself as one of the most versatile violin players of her generation. Discovered by Sir Georg Solti, the Juilliard alumna won numerous awards in New York before settling in Vienna. She has shared the stage with distinguished conductors and instrumentalists such as Lorin Maazel, Zubin Mehta, Christoph Eschenbach, Valery Gergiev, Michael Tilson Thomas, David Krakauer and Avi Avital, and has recorded for Deutsche Grammophon and Solo Musica München. She is an advocate of Suppressed Music, and a keen performer of contemporary violin compositions.

www.orsolyakorcsolan.com

Martin Kuuskmann

Photo: Karl J Kaul



Multiple GRAMMY®-nominated Estonian-born bassoon virtuoso, Martin Kuuskmann, is a professor of bassoon at the University of Denver Lamont School of Music and has taught at the Manhattan School of Music and in festivals around the world. He has eleven bassoon concertos written especially for him, including the 2007 and 2017 GRAMMY®-nominated concertos by David Chesky and Christopher Theofanidis. He has performed with many leading orchestras including the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra, the MDR Leipzig Radio Symphony Orchestra, and conductors including Neeme, Paavo and Kristjan Järvi, Risto Joost and Robert Spano. As a chamber musician he has played with the Berlin Philharmonic Winds, Ensemble Berlin, Leif Ove Andsnes, Kirill Gerstein, Lars Anders Tomter and many others.

Gergely Sugar

Photo: Aron Erdőhafi



Horn player Gergely Sugar is a member of the prestigious Vienna Symphony Orchestra and is professor of horn at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, Institut Oberschützen. He studied horn at the music universities of Budapest, Vienna and Graz with Adam Friedrich, Friedrich Gabler and Hector McDonald respectively, as well as conducting with Kees Bakels, David Giménez Carreras and Jorma Panula in St Petersburg, Russia.

www.sugargergely.com

London Philharmonic Orchestra (Concertmaster: Vesselin Gelev)

Photo: Patrick Harrison



One of the finest orchestras on the international stage, the London Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. Subsequent Principal Conductors have included Sir Adrian Boult, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Kurt Masur. In 2007 Vladimir Jurowski became the Orchestra's current principal conductor. The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been performing at Southbank Centre's Royal Festival Hall since it opened in 1951, becoming Resident Orchestra in 1992. Each summer it plays for Glyndebourne

Festival Opera, where it has been Resident Symphony Orchestra for over 50 years. It also performs regularly around the UK and frequently tours abroad. The Orchestra broadcasts regularly on television and radio, and has recorded soundtracks for numerous films including *The Lord of the Rings*. In summer 2012 the Orchestra was chosen to record all the world's national anthems for the London 2012 Olympics. In 2005 it began releasing live, studio and archive recordings on its own CD label.

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Dennis Russell Davies

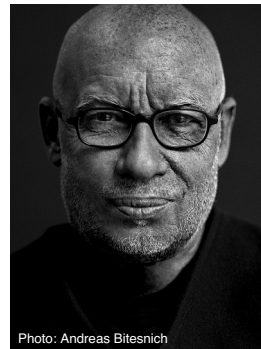


Photo: Andreas Bitesnich

When Dennis Russell Davies assumed his new position as chief conductor and artistic director of the Filharmonie Brno in September 2018, he marked his 48th season leading major orchestras, opera companies and festivals throughout Europe and the United States including long-term engagements with the Stuttgart State Opera, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra, the Bonn Opera and the Beethovenhalle Orchestra, the Cabrillo Music Festival, the Vienna Radio Orchestra and, most recently, the Sinfonieorchester Basel, and the Linz Opera and the Bruckner Orchester Linz. His vast discography has brought him many honours and awards, and includes the complete symphonies of Haydn, Bruckner, Honegger and Philip Glass. He has recorded extensively as conductor and pianist for the ECM label and Orange Mountain Music. Born in Toledo, Ohio, he studied at The Juilliard School in New York under pianists Lonny Epstein and Sascha Gorodnitzki, and conductors Jean Morel and Jorge Mester.

www.dennirrusselldavies.com

Miguel Kertsman



Photo: Gerald Trimmel

Brazilian-American composer Miguel Kertsman, born in Recife in 1965, graduated from Berklee College of Music in 1986 with honours, subsequently continuing conducting studies with Attilio Poto at Boston Conservatory, and composition with Stanley Wolfe at New York's Juilliard School. Kertsman's compositions span music genre boundaries encompassing symphonic, chamber, and vocal music for the concert stage, as well as theatre, experimental, jazz, and electronica. Works have been commissioned, performed, or recorded by artists such as mezzo-soprano Angelika Kirchschrager, guitarist John Williams, conductor Dennis Russell Davies, and orchestras including the Vienna Symphony Orchestra, the London Philharmonic, the Bruckner Orchestra Linz, and the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. His music has been globally released or published by Sony Classical, RCA Victor/BMG, Universal Edition and other labels. Miguel Kertsman has designed post-graduate programme curricula and courses in composition, music production and management, holding lectures, masterclasses and colloquia at universities including Danube University, Northwestern University, the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki Arts University, the Janáček Academy, and elsewhere. In addition to his composition

work, as a solo recording artist, Miguel Kertsman's progressive pieces, experimental releases and unique keyboard playing have also earned him a place on the international scene.

www.miguelkertsman.com

Brazilian-American composer, Miguel Kertsman, writes in numerous genres embracing classical music, jazz, progressive rock, electronica and film, bridging these diverse elements to craft a unique sound world. *Concerto Brasileiro* explores lyricism and modernity through solemn chorale-like writing and seductive dances laced with Brazilian folk rhythms. Uncommon sonorities, haunting themes and ethereal landscapes mark out the *Concerto for Violin, Horn, Shofar and Orchestra*, while traditionalism and experimentation define the *Journey for Bassoon and Orchestra*. *Chamber Symphony No. 2* explores and celebrates New York's rich cultural diversity.

Miguel
KERTSMAN
(b. 1965)

1–3	Concerto Brasileiro for Flute, Strings and Percussion (2005)	15:56
4–7	Concerto for Violin, Horn, Shofar and Orchestra (2013)	16:41
8–12	Journey for Bassoon and Orchestra (2012)	21:40
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WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

Marina Piccinini, Flute 1–3 • Orsolya Korcsolán, Violin 4–7

Martin Kuuskmann, Bassoon 8–12

Gergely Sugar, French horn and Shofars 4–7

Vesselin Gellev, Concertmaster and Violin solo 8

Catherine Edwards, Synthesizer 13 • James Sherlock, Organ 4–12

London Philharmonic Orchestra

Dennis Russell Davies

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A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

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