



2015/16 Season: Constellations

Persichetti @ 100
and Music from the
Generation He Inspired

31ST SEASON
17 & 18 October, 2015
Curtis Institute of Music
Philadelphia, PA

Introduction: Vincent Persichetti @ 100

Vincent Persichetti was one of the most widely respected musicians of his generation. A prolific composer, brilliant educator and lecturer, and prodigious pianist, he composed more than 150 works in virtually all genres and for virtually all performing media, while serving for 40 years on the faculty of the Juilliard School, many of them as chairman of the composition department.

During his lifetime Persichetti influenced the musical lives of thousands of people from all walks of life, and his name came to signify a comprehensive musicianship virtually unparalleled among American composers. Countless young pianists were nurtured on his sonatinas and the Little Piano Book, while many other young instrumental students first experienced serious contemporary music through his works for band; church choirs turned to his Hymns and Responses for the Church Year as an inexhaustible resource, while many young composers have found his classic textbook Twentieth Century Harmony to be an indispensable tool; among professional soloists and conductors his sonatas, concertos, and symphonies stood among the masterworks of American music. Throughout his life Persichetti encouraged healthy, creative participation in music at all levels of proficiency, while shunning dogmas that advocated one composition-al approach at the expense of others.

He was beloved and admired as a teacher, and was in great demand as a lecturer, using his comprehensive knowledge of the repertoire, extraordinary gift for improvisation, awe-inspiring piano technique, and mischievous wit to captivate audiences. He immersed himself in all aspects of music with an infectious, childlike enthusiasm devoid of pomposity.

When he was 65 he told an interviewer: “I’ve not yet decided what I’ll do with my life. Perhaps I will concertize as a pianist, but, on the other hand, shouldn’t I bring audiences some of those neglected orchestral pieces? Then again I’d love to have a larger herb farm, if it weren’t for my keen interest in sailing. I know I’d like the life of the Maine lobster fisherman, but my sculpting would keep me on solid ground. I’m too busy with composing to consider what my life’s work will be. I suppose, though, at some point I should decide to work for a living.”

Excerpted by the author from *Voices of Stone and Steel: The Music of Schuman, Persichetti, and Menin* by Walter Simmons (Scarecrow Press, 2011).

Panel Discussion: Persichetti Diaspora

Saturday, 17 October, 2015

Zimbalist Room, Curtis Institute of Music

Featuring panelists Daniel Dorff, Jan Krzywicki, Behzad Ranjbaran, Linda Reichert, Marga Richter, Larry Alan Smith, and Michael White.

Persichetti students Steve Reich, Richard Danielpour, and William Schimmel send their regrets that they are unable to participate in today's panel. They offered the following reminiscences of their former teacher:

STEVE REICH: It must have been 1961. I was a student at Juilliard and went in for a composition lesson with Vincent Persichetti. I wanted help analyzing harmonies in my music and Persichetti was completely clear and helpful. He helped me understand the underlying functional harmony in my supposedly 'free atonal' piece. He helped me understand my musical intuitions (without superimposing his own) thus making my own intuitions more conscious.

Vincent Persichetti's role as a teacher extended far beyond the classroom. I remember going to a concert by a former Persichetti student in the early '70s and just before it began Mr. Persichetti entered very quietly and took a seat in the rear of the hall. I happened to be sitting just a row ahead of him and when the concert was over, I greeted him, asking why he attended. He replied he tried to keep up with what his former students were doing. He then asked me 'What about that dominant 11th of yours?' I was momentarily blank and he added, 'You know, the one with the four organs.' I had no idea he had ever heard my piece *Four Organs*. Apparently he was interested in the music his students were composing but did not trumpet his presence.

Just a few weeks before Mr. Persichetti and I attended this concert, Hall Overton, a Persichetti protege and my former composition teacher, passed away. I asked Mr. Persichetti if he had heard about Hall's passing. He paused and said, 'I don't really believe in death'. I had no answer - but his words have stayed with me, as has his memory: an insightful teacher and exceptional human being. *September 2015*

RICHARD DANIELPOUR: I met Vincent Persichetti in January 1980, roughly 6 months before my Juilliard audition on June 1st of that year. Meeting him that first time I was struck by his kindness and gentleness (he reminded me so much of my father who passed away three years before), but he was also a man with a fierce knowledge and understanding of music; he had a photographic memory for the repertoire and he had an impish sense of humor combined with a yogi's wisdom. "We want musicians, not magicians," he said to me at that first meeting, and in my first lessons,

which began in September 1980, I understood more fully what he meant. Many of our lessons were conducted at the two pianos that were in his smallish studio- he would “talk to me” at the piano, sometimes tweaking the ideas that I had brought to him, sometimes continuing the piece at the piano and urging me on to improvise and “talk back to him” via the other piano....

In almost every lesson he offered me a Chesterfield filterless cigarette, knowing that I had asthma—it became a joke after several weeks and months and years—but it was unfortunately a cruel joke in that it probably helped to precipitate the lung cancer which eventually killed him in August 1987.

He seemed to understand every one of his students as the individuals they were. One day in 1984 after bringing him pages of a hyper-neo-romantic work that eventually became my first symphony, he exclaimed “I know what you want, you want EXTRA LOVE in your music!”

One day when writing what became my first String Quartet I said to him with great anxiety, “I have this strong idea for the last movement of this work, but I’m not sure I have the technique to fulfill it.” He said to me “if you have the idea you will eventually grow the technique to meet it.”

I used to bring him pages of questions most often about orchestration... toward the end of my six year tenure with him I brought in yet another list of questions and he looked at me with his Yoda-like smile and started laughing. “What’s so funny?” I asked.

He told me that I had not yet realized that I was at the point where I could finally answer my own questions, and be my own teacher.

This was a powerful lesson for me in the sense he knew that his goal for each one of us was that he should become, as a mentor obsolete, and yet ironically in the very loving care he extended to each of the students he taught he lives on just as we live on.

It was only many years later that I was able to know and appreciate his music more intimately. In this way and in all the other ways about him I learned one of the greatest lessons that can be learned—that to be a musician is the ultimate act of generosity, as everything we make, we give away.
October 2015

WILLIAM SCHIMMEL: Mr. Persichetti was my teacher in my last year in the [Juilliard] Doctoral program, 1973. I had finished my dissertation, a three hour Mass for Chorus and Orchestra. I took a long walk late that evening on First Avenue. My frequent First Avenue late night walks became

my “First Avenue Opera” which only I performed to myself as I walked. As I was walking I had this intense desire to stand underneath the 59th St Bridge at its highest point on York Avenue. As a lover of architecture, I stood there realizing that I was “framing space.” I then started hearing a rather abstracted version of Mozart’s *Ave Verum Corpus*.

I had a lesson the next day (one of my last) and I sheepishly told Mr. Persichetti about my late night stand under the bridge. He then said to me: “I once stood under the Delaware River Bridge (now the Ben Franklin Bridge in Philadelphia)—and by the way Schimmel, your piece isn’t finished yet. It needs one more meditation section—like an *Ave Verum Corpus*.”

September 2015

Panelist Biographies

For Behzad Ranjbaran and Marga Richter, please see Composer Biographies beginning on page 9.

DANIEL DORFF: Daniel Dorff’s music for flute and piccolo has entered the standard repertoire; he has written 7 commissioned works for the Philadelphia Orchestra’s education department, and the Minnesota Orchestra’s Kinder Konzert series has performed his music over 200 times. Recent highlights include 11 performances of *Three Fun Fables* by the Philadelphia Orchestra and Utah Symphony, and 38 performances of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* on the Minnesota Orchestra’s Kinder Konzerts. Dorff’s works have been performed by the Atlanta Opera, Baltimore Symphony, Pittsburgh Symphony, and conducted by maestros Alan Gilbert and Wolfgang Sawallisch. Dorff has also created arrangements for Sir James Galway and pop musicians Keith Emerson and Lisa Loeb.

Dorff was born in New Rochelle, NY; acclaim came early with First Prize in the Aspen Music Festival’s annual composers’ competition at age 18. He received composition degrees from Cornell and Penn; teachers included Crumb, Rochberg, Husa, Brant, Shapey, Siegmeister, and Wernick. He studied saxophone with Sigurd Rascher. Dorff served 1996-2015 as Composer-In-Residence for Symphony in C, where he played bass clarinet 1980-2002. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Music Publishers’ Association, Ives Society, Persichetti Society, and has served on the board of the National Flute Association.

JAN KRZYWICKI: Jan Krzywicki is active as a composer, conductor and educator. As a composer he has been commissioned by prestigious performers and organizations and performed nationally and internationally. He is the recipient of a 1996 Pew Fellowship in the Arts, a Rockefeller Foundation residency (Bellagio, Italy), a Bogliasco Foundation residency

(Bogliasco, Italy), ASCAP and Meet the Composer awards, and has been a Fellow at artist colonies such as The MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo. His work is published by Alphonse Leduc & Cie, Theodore Presser Co., and Tenuto Publications, and can be heard on Albany Records as well as other labels. As a conductor he has led chamber and orchestral groups in literature from the middle ages to the present, including a large number of premieres. Since 1990 he has been conductor of Network for New Music; he also conducts the New Music Ensemble at Temple University where he is a professor of music theory.

LINDA REICHERT: Linda Reichert, as Artistic Director and co-founder of Network for New Music, has helped lead the group into prominence as one of the finest new music ensembles and commissioning organizations in the greater Philadelphia region. As a pianist, Dr. Reichert has developed a reputation for championing and premiering new works of emerging and established composers, and regularly performs with the Network Ensemble and other chamber groups. She is in demand as a speaker, music panelist, and judge for numerous organizations and competitions; she teaches piano and coaches chamber music at the Settlement Music School.

Following his New York debut concert, LARRY ALAN SMITH was praised by The New York Times as “a young composer of great gifts.” Since that time, he has developed an international reputation as a composer, performer, educator and arts executive. Many of today’s outstanding soloists, chamber ensembles and orchestras have performed and commissioned works by Larry Alan Smith. Upon hearing the world premiere of his one-act opera, *Aria da Capo*, well-known Chicago-based critic Claudia Cassidy reported: “This is remarkable opera theatre . . . Smith has an ear for flaring brilliance . . . All this seems to me a true talent, primarily because I want to hear *Aria da Capo* again.”

He began his earliest musical training in Ohio, and pursued his studies in France with Nadia Boulanger and at the Juilliard School with Vincent Persichetti. While earning his B.M., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees at Juilliard, he was the recipient of several prizes, including the Joseph Machlis Prize for outstanding distinction in composition. During his final year of study, Dr. Smith was appointed to the faculty of the Juilliard School, where he taught from 1980-1986. Previously, he was on the composition faculty of the Boston Conservatory.

An award-winning and prolific composer, Larry Alan Smith is represented and published by the Theodore Presser Company. His works are also published by Bourne Music, E.B. Marks, Colla Voce Music and Tallow Tree Music Publishing, and his vocal works are distributed by Classical Vocal

Reprints. Dr. Smith is a member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), and he serves on a number of regional, national and international boards. He is currently the President of both the Vincent Persichetti Society and the Lotte Lehmann Foundation.

MICHAEL WHITE is the recipient of three Ford Foundation Fellowships; Guggenheim Fellowship; awards and grants from the Soros Foundation, Fell Foundation, William Penn Foundation, Columbia U., Unesco, Oberlin Conservatory, and ASCAP. He has given lectures for the New York Philharmonic, the New York Youth Symphony, and for festivals in Bowdoin, Maine; Charlottesville, Va.; and Rockport, Mass., among others and is a former faculty member of the Oberlin Conservatory and the Philadelphia Musical Academy (chairman, theory and composition dept.). Mr. White has had operas produced in Seattle (The Dybbuk); in Philadelphia (The Metamorphosis); in London (Through the Looking Glass); and in Riga, Latvia (Diary of a Madwoman). He has also had many performances of chamber and vocal works in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Seattle, and Chicago.

Mr. White holds degrees from Oberlin Conservatory; Chicago Musical College; B.S. and M.S. in composition, The Juilliard School; and composition studies with Peter Mennin and Vincent Persichetti.

He was Chairman of the Literature and Materials Department at Juilliard for ten years, and has been a member of the Graduate Faculty at Juilliard for 33 years.

The discussion will be followed by a performance of Persichetti's Serenade No.10, Opus 79, for flute and harp by Edward Schultz, flute; and Rong Tan, guest artist, harp.

Concert: 18 October 2015

Featuring Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia, English Horn

River of Light (2007)

Hirono Oka, Natalie Zhu

Richard Danielpour (1956—)

Quintet (1954)

for Piano & Strings, op. 66

Hirono Oka, Julia Li, Burchard Tang,
Priscilla Lee, Natalie Zhu

Vincent Persichetti (1915–87)

intermission

Nagoya Marimbas (1994)

Christopher Deviney, Angela Zator-Nelson

Steve Reich (1936–)

Threnody (2006)

Paul Arnold, Che-Hung Chen, John Koen

Marga Richter (1926–)

Concerto (2015)* for English Horn & Strings

Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia, English Horn
Paul Arnold, Che-Hung Chen, Guillaume Combet, Mary Javian, Jan Krzywicki,
Priscilla Lee, Julia Li, Hirono Oka, Michal Schmidt, Burchard Tang

Behzad Ranjbaran (1955–)

I. Adagio lamentoso

II. Allegro scherzando

III. Grave lamentoso

IV. Moderato con moto

*** NNM Commission / World premiere**

THE NETWORK ENSEMBLE

Jan Krzywicki, conductor

English Horn

Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia

Piano

Natalie Zhu, guest artist

Percussion

Christopher Deviney

Angela Zator-Nelson

Violin

Paul Arnold

Guillaume Combet

Julia Li

Hirono Oka

Viola

Che-Hung Chen

Burchard Tang

Cello

John Koen

Priscilla Lee

Michal Schmidt

Bass

Mary Javian

ABOUT THE ENSEMBLE

With its adventurous and innovative programming and virtuoso performances, Network for New Music breaks new ground in contemporary classical music. Artistic Director Linda Reichert draws in the very best composers from across the nation and the world and programs their work with well-known Philadelphia composers. As performed by the brilliant Network for New Music Ensemble (many of whom are also members of the Philadelphia Orchestra), the result is an invigorating and exceptional take on the best of contemporary

music and a window into the future's standard repertoire. For 30 years, Network's creative programming and spectacular musicianship have attracted world-class guest artists and composers such as Leon Fleisher, Christoph Eschenbach, John Harbison, and Michael Hersch. Through residencies, workshops and outreach concerts, the ensemble nurtures the gifts and enthusiasm of students who write and play the music of the next generation.

COMPOSER BIOGRAPHIES & PROGRAM NOTES

RICHARD DANIELPOUR has been commissioned by many international music institutions, festivals, and artists, including soloists Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Dawn Upshaw, Emanuel Ax, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, and Gary Graffman; the Guarneri, Emerson, and American string quartets and Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio; and institutions such as the New York City and Pacific Northwest ballets, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia and Stuttgart Radio orchestras, Orchestre National de France, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and many more.

With Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison he created Margaret Garner, his first opera, which premiered to sold-out houses in Detroit, Cincinnati, and Philadelphia in 2005 and had its New York premiere at New York City Opera in 2007.

Dr. Danielpour has received a Grammy Award, two Rockefeller Foundation grants, Charles Ives Fellowship and Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Guggenheim Fellowship, Beards Prize from Columbia University, and grants and residencies from the Barlow Foundation, MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Copland House, and American Academy in Rome.

In 2002 he was awarded a fellowship to the American Academy in Berlin, and he was the third composer--after Stravinsky and Copland--to be signed to an exclusive recording contract by Sony Classical.

On the Manhattan School of Music's composition faculty since 1993, Dr. Danielpour joined the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music in 1997.

River of Light (2007)

Commissioned by the Linda and Isaac Stern Foundation, Danielpour composed River of Light for Sarah Chang.

Danielpour writes about the work: "I composed River of Light with a metaphor in mind, that of 'crossing the river'—or, in more direct language, preparing to meet one's maker. The notion of the river as a symbolic boundary separating the here and the hereafter is as old as civilization itself. While crossing that river is for some a fearful idea, its peaceful passage requires a degree of trust and in some sense, preparation. "Writing this work may have been a small step for me toward that 'trusting' and 'preparing'; and, although I hope to be here for many years to come, I know I must begin to practice, in simple ways, the art of dying—even as all of us practice the art of being alive. For me, part of the practice of living and dying is grappling with the fact that a loved one, family member or friend can be here one moment, and gone the next. I found this to be especially true of Isaac Stern, to whose memory this piece for violin and piano is dedicated. To me, Mr. Stern seemed to be the kind person who would never actually die. Obviously the memory of his work and life is still very much with us. My practice as a human being leads me to ask, 'Why do we have to die?' River of Light, if not an answer to that question, is my attempt to prepare for the inevitable."

There have been few more universally admired twentieth-century American composers than VINCENT PERSICHETTI. His contributions have enriched the entire musical literature and his influence as performer and teacher is immeasurable.

Born in Philadelphia in 1915, Persichetti began his musical life at age five, first studying piano, then organ, double bass, tuba, theory and composition. By the age of 11, he was paying for his own musical education and helping to support himself by performing professionally as an accompanist, radio staff pianist, orchestra member and church organist. A virtuoso pianist and organist, he combined extraordinary versatility with an osmotic musical mind, and his earliest published

works, written when the composer was 14, exhibit mastery of form, medium and style.

Concurrent with these early activities, Persichetti was a student in the Philadelphia public schools and earned a Mus. B. degree in 1935 at the Combs College of Music. From the age of 20, he was simultaneously head of the theory and composition departments at the Combs College, a conducting major with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute and piano major with Olga Samaroff at the Philadelphia Conservatory, in addition to studying composition with a number of important American composers. He received a Diploma in Conducting from the Curtis Institute and Mus. M. and Mus. D. degrees from the Philadelphia Conservatory.

In 1941 Persichetti was appointed head of the theory and composition departments at the Philadelphia Conservatory and in the same year married pianist Dorothea Flanagan. In 1947 he joined the faculty of the Juilliard School of Music, assuming chairmanship of the Composition Department in 1963. Persichetti was appointed Editorial Director of the music publishing firm of Elkan-Vogel, Inc. in 1952.

Over the years, Vincent Persichetti was accorded many honors by the artistic and academic communities, including six Honorary Doctor of Music degrees, and honorary membership in numerous musical fraternities. He was a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and received the first Kennedy Center Friedheim Award, as well as numerous other awards including the Medal of Honor from the Italian Government. In addition to his many compositions for nearly every musical medium, which included some 100 commissions, he appeared as guest conductor, lecturer and composer at over 200 universities.

Persichetti wrote several works for orchestra, including nine symphonies; his style of orchestral writing reflected his considerable talent and experience as a conductor. His chamber and instrumental compositions include two unique series: the Serenade series, comprising 15 different works for diverse combinations of instruments, and the Parable series of 25 works, which occupied Persichetti's thoughts over a number of years. His unusual feeling for poetry produced numerous vocal and choral compositions of remarkably high literary and musical quality, exhibiting a unique wedding of text and

music which sets them apart from most other composers' efforts in this genre. More than any other major American composer, Persichetti poured his talents into the literature for wind band. From the *Serenade for Ten Wind Instruments*, Op. 1, to the *Parable for Band*, Op. 121, he provided performers and audiences with a body of music of unparalleled excellence.

In addition to his exhaustive compositional efforts, Persichetti found time to write one of the definitive books on modern compositional techniques, *Twentieth Century Harmony: Creative Aspects and Practice* as well as contributing to other publications, and co-authoring a biography of William Schuman. He was a teacher par excellence and a highly lucid theorist. In both capacities his great artistry was ever clear and impressive, providing an example of dynamic leadership for those who encountered his genius.

Pulitzer Prize-winning composer STEVE REICH has been called "America's greatest living composer" (*The Village VOICE*), "...the most original musical thinker of our time" (*The New Yorker*), and "...among the great composers of the century" (*New York Times*).

His music has been influential to composers and mainstream musicians all over the world. He is a leading pioneer of Minimalism, having in his youth broken away from the "establishment" that was serialism. His music is known for steady pulse, repetition, and a fascination with canons; it combines rigorous structures with propulsive rhythms and seductive instrumental color. It also embraces harmonies of non-Western and American vernacular music (especially jazz). His studies have included the Gamelan, African drumming (at the University of Ghana), and traditional forms of chanting the Hebrew scriptures.

Different Trains and *Music for 18 Musicians* have each earned him GRAMMY awards, and his "documentary video opera" works—*The Cave* and *Three Tales*, done in collaboration with video artist Beryl Korot—have pushed the boundaries of the operatic medium. Over the years his music has significantly grown both in expanded harmonies and instrumentation, resulting in a Pulitzer Prize for his 2007 composition, *Double Sextet*.

Reich's music has been performed by major orchestras and ensembles around the world, including the New York and Los Angeles philharmonics; London, San Francisco, Boston, and BBC symphony orchestras; London Sinfonietta; Kronos Quartet; Ensemble Modern; Ensemble Intercontemporain; Bang on a Can All-Stars; and eighth blackbird. Several noted choreographers have created dances to his music, such as Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Jirí Kylián, Jerome Robbins, Wayne McGregor, and Christopher Wheeldon.

"There's just a handful of living composers who can legitimately claim to have altered the direction of musical history and Steve Reich is one of them." — The Guardian (London)

[Reprinted by kind permission of Boosey & Hawkes.]

Nagoya Marimbas (1994)

Nagoya Marimbas is somewhat similar to my pieces from the 1960s and '70s in that there are repeating patterns played on both marimbas, one or more beats out of phase, creating a series of two part unison canons. However, these patterns are more melodically developed, change frequently and each is usually repeated no more than three times, similar to my more recent work. The piece is also considerably more difficult to play than my earlier ones and requires two virtuosic performers. — Steve Reich

World Premiere: 12/21/1994

Shirakawa Hall, Nagoya College of Music, Nagoya

Sekar Sakura / Yuki Kurihara / Maki Kurihara, marimbas

Recommended Recording: Bob Becker / James Preiss (Nonesuch 79430)

A Mid-Western native, MARGA RICHTER earned her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in composition from The Juilliard School. She has written over 160 works, encompassing virtually every (classical) genre. Her orchestral music has been played by more than 50 orchestras including the Atlanta and Milwaukee Symphonies and the Minnesota Orchestra, and recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Seattle Symphony, the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra and the Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra.

A series of works commissioned and recorded by MGM Records (LPs) in the 1950's include Sonata for Piano (Menahem Pressler), Lament for String Orchestra (Izler Solomon), Concerto for Piano

and Violas, Cellos and Basses (William Masselos, Carlos Surinach) and Aria and Toccata for Viola and Strings (Walter Trampler, Carlos Surinach).

Richter's ballet, *Abyss*, (1964) was performed on five continents and on Broadway in New York City by the Harkness Ballet, which commissioned it and subsequently by the Joffrey, Boston, Pennsylvania and Connecticut ballet companies and in concert sans ballet.

Twenty-six of her works are currently available on commercial CDs.

A comprehensive biography, *Marga Richter*, by Sharon Mirchandani, was published in 2012 by the University of Illinois Press.

Threnody (2006)

Although I had written a short piano piece, (Exequy) in 1980 in response to the unexpected death of my father, the notification of which was kept from me until I inquired about him from a family member, in about 2005 I began to think about writing a more substantial work to express our special bond which had frayed a bit in the 1970's, but had healed by the time of his death. I thought of this as an homage and a companion piece to the Lament I had written when my mother was dying. A work for piano and small orchestra featuring oboe and French horn suggested itself, but no actual music was written. Then, in 2008 I was commissioned by the American Chamber Ensemble to write a work for them, preferably for string trio, and Threnody is the result.

BEHZAD RANJBARAN is known for music which is both evocative and colorful, and also strong in structural integrity and form. He frequently draws inspiration from his cultural roots and Persian heritage in form or subject matter, as exemplified by the tone poems of the "Persian Trilogy", or the interpretation of sounds and styles in works such as the Violin Concerto and *Songs of Eternity*.

Ranjbaran's music has been performed all over the world, including South Korea, where *Awakening* (commissioned by Sejong Soloists) premiered at the Great Mountains Music Festival as a celebration of peace. His music has been performed by soloists such as Joshua Bell, Renée Fleming, Jean-Yves Thibaudet, and Yo-Yo Ma, and conductors including Charles Dutoit, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Marin Alsop, Robert Spano, Gerard Schwarz, JoAnn Falletta, Miguel Harth-Be-

doya, David Robertson, and many more. He has also served as composer in residence for the Philadelphia Orchestra's summer season at Saratoga, the Fort Worth Symphony, and the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music.

Some of his more notable compositions include works for soloist and orchestra. His Flute Concerto was commissioned and premiered by the Philadelphia Orchestra, with Jeffrey Khaner, flute, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, conductor. *Songs of Eternity*, using text from the Ruba'iyat of Omar Khayyam, was written for soprano Renée Fleming, and premiered with the Seattle Symphony under the direction of Gerard Schwarz. Joshua Bell was the soloist in the premiere performances of his Violin Concerto with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, also conducted by Schwarz. Mr. Bell went on to give the North American premiere with the Indianapolis Symphony under Mario Venzago, and gave subsequent performances with Peter Oundjian and the Toronto Symphony. Jean-Yves Thibaudet premiered the Piano Concerto with the Atlanta Symphony, conducted by Robert Spano; Thibaudet and Spano have since also performed it with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

The texts for two choral works also draw directly on Persian culture, as do some of his many chamber works, including Fountains of Fin, a eulogy for Amir Kabir, the 19th century slain Iranian vezir; Shiraz and Isfahan, celebrating two of Mr. Ranjbaran's favorite cities in Iran; and Enchanted Garden, inspired by the many beautiful gardens of his native land.

Described as "music's magical realist" (Philadelphia Inquirer) and "a master of the orchestra" (Dallas Morning News), Mr. Ranjbaran's compositions possess "radiant luminescence" (Washington Post) and "qualities of inherent beauty and strong musical structure that make... a satisfying musical entity" (Nashville Scene). Accolades continue for *Songs of Eternity*, described in the Fort Worth Star-Telegram as "...enchanted ... the piece wielded a peculiar, timeless magic..."; and the Liverpool Echo commented that the Violin Concerto is "high class, cohesive" and "when the concerto... just sings out a fine melodic line, the effect is ravishing." In describing the "Persian Trilogy" CD, American Record Guide said that "Ranjbaran has composed a noble and brilliantly conceived score, spectacularly orchestrated and filled with memorable tunes, meticulous develop-

ment, and impressive craftsmanship.”

Recordings include the “Persian Trilogy” on the Delos label by the London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by JoAnn Falletta. This orchestral cycle, comprising the works *Seven Passages*, *Seemorgh*, and *The Blood of Seyavash*, takes its inspiration from ancient Persian legends, as recounted in the 11th century epic poem “Shahnameh” (The Book of Kings). In 2008, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra performed a multimedia performance of the complete Persian Trilogy, with traditional storytelling (Naghali) and projections of Persian miniatures. Ms. Falletta has also conducted *Elegy for Cello and Orchestra* with soloist Yo-Yo Ma and the Buffalo Philharmonic, reviewed in the Buffalo press as “ethereal...fragile, almost like a mirage.” Among his other recordings is an all-Ranjbaran album of string music on Naxos, including *Awaking*, String Quartet, *Elegy*, and more.

Born on July 1, 1955 in Tehran, Iran, Mr. Ranjbaran is the recipient of the Rudolf Nissim Award for his Violin Concerto. His musical education started early when he entered the Tehran Music Conservatory at the age of nine. He came to the United States in 1974 to attend Indiana University and received his doctorate in composition from The Juilliard School, where he currently serves on the faculty.

Concerto for English Horn and Strings (2015)

From my earliest attempts to write for orchestra, the English horn has had a special place in my sound world. I was often drawn to its penetrating sound that is laced with dark and light sonorities. These qualities imply the dual characters of somber and ethereal, serious and joyful, and life and death. I also felt string instruments share similar attributes. So, when I was commissioned by the Network for New Music to write a piece for English horn for the occasion of the centennial concert of my teacher, Vincent Persichetti, I thought of a work for English horn and strings.

My English horn concerto is in four movements and lasts approximately 16 minutes. The first movement's thematic materials permeate throughout the concerto, thus providing a cyclical and unifying relationship between the movements.

The first movement, adagio lamentoso, is slow and elegiac in character. The mournful English horn melodic lines are supported by deep and dark

string sonorities in simple chordal accompaniments.

The second movement, allegro scherzando, is energetic, lighthearted, and at times witty. The virtuosic solo passages challenge the limits of what is possible on the English horn with fast running notes and large leaps to extreme registers.

The third movement, grave lamentoso, is a very slow quasi-cadenza for the unaccompanied English horn. It is a dialogue between two contrasting characters separated in extreme ranges. The elegiac, mournful part is soft, ethereal and played in the high register, while the dark, serious, and threatening part is in the lowest range of the English horn.

The fourth movement, moderato con moto, is joyful, lighthearted and written in a moderate quasi-dance tempo. There are chases, contentious clashes, and contrasting characters incorporating materials from the earlier movements. After many brilliant passages, the concerto comes to a close by recalling a delicate passage from the end of the second movement.
—Behzad Ranjbaran

GUEST ARTISTS

ELIZABETH STARR MASOUDNIA, solo English hornist of the Philadelphia Orchestra since 1995, has toured the globe with many of the orchestra world's finest conductors to wide critical acclaim.

She has premiered many pieces written expressly for her including the Nicholas Maw English horn concerto and David Ludwig's Piccola Notturna for English horn, harp and strings.

A native of Philadelphia, PA, Ms. Masoudnia graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with John de Lancie, former principal oboe of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Her teacher prior to that time was Louis Rosenblatt, former solo English horn of the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Ms. Masoudnia was a participant in the Marlboro Music festival and played oboe concertos with the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia and the New York Symphonic Ensemble on four tours of Japan and Southeast Asia. She also played solo English horn in the Minnesota Orchestra for seven years. She is a featured artist on a CD of Beethoven and Triebensee oboe trios, released on the ASV Quicksilver

label.

In addition to her private teaching studio, Ms. Masoudnia has given oboe and English horn lessons, English horn masterclasses, and orchestra and chamber music coachings at the following institutions: Curtis Institute of Music, Temple University, Philadelphia International Music Festival, Philadelphia Youth Orchestra, and All City Orchestra.

The recipient of a 2006 Musical Fund Society Career Advancement Award, the 2003 Avery Fisher Career Grant and the 2003 Andrew Wolf Memorial Chamber Music Award, pianist NATALIE ZHU is a winner of Astral Artistic Services' 1998 National Auditions. The Philadelphia Inquirer heralded Astral's presentation of Ms. Zhu in recital as a display of "emotional and pianistic pyrotechnics"; selections from the recital were later broadcast on National Public Radio's "Performance Today." Natalie Zhu began her piano studies with Xiao-Cheng Liu at the age of six in her native China and made her first public appearance at age nine in Beijing. At eleven she emigrated with her family to Los Angeles, and by fifteen was enrolled at the Curtis Institute, where she received the Rachmaninoff Award and studied with Gary Graffman. She received a Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music, where she studied with Claude Frank.

NETWORK FOR NEW MUSIC COMMISSIONING FUND

Since its founding 31 years ago, Network for New Music has commissioned more than 150 works by 120 gifted composers, 30 of them residing in the Philadelphia area. We have maintained a resident ensemble of outstanding musicians, ensuring that these new works come to life through expressive and virtuosic performances.

In honor of our milestone 30th Anniversary, and our long-standing role as Philadelphia's primary organization devoted to supporting and promoting the works of living composers, Network is proud to announce the creation of the **NETWORK FOR NEW MUSIC COMMISSIONING FUND**, an ongoing, dedicated commissioning fund designed to support and enhance our regular efforts to commission the works of both emerging and established American composers.

To find out more about the Fund, and how Network is creating the "standard chamber repertoire" of the future, visit our website at www.networkfornewmusic.org.

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2015–16 Season

Network for New Music illuminates connections between generations of American composers, while celebrating the 100th birthdays of two American titans of composition: Vincent Persichetti and Milton Babbitt.

10.18.2015

Curtis Institute of Music: Celebrating the music of **Vincent Persichetti** and his students, the Network Ensemble performs the world premiere of *Concerto for Strings and English Horn*, by **Behzad Ranjbaran**, with guest Elizabeth Starr Masoudnia. Also: Persichetti's *Quintet for Piano and Strings* (Philadelphia premiere) and works by **Steve Reich**, **Richard Daniel-pour**, and **Marga Richter**.

2.21.2016

Network returns to The Print Center to perform works by celebrated European and American composers: Wolfgang Rihm, Brian Ferneyhough, Kaija Saariaho, and others.

4.17.2016

Settlement Music School, Mary Louise Curtis Branch: Featuring the music of **Milton Babbitt** and a wide array of works by his students, this program includes Babbitt's *All Set* for jazz ensemble, as well as a jazz work by **Laura Karpman**; a world premiere by **David Rakowski**; a song grouping with popular songs by **Babbitt**, **Sondheim** and **Kern**; and the iconic *Philomel*, with guest soprano Ah Young Hong.

For information on more upcoming concerts, symposia and educational events during Network's 2015–16 season, visit our newly-redesigned website in the next few months!

www.networkfornewmusic.org