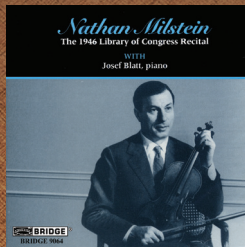
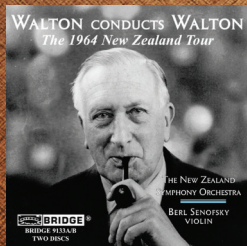




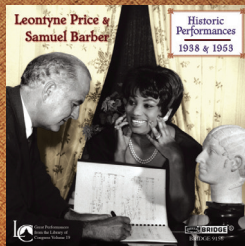
George Szell
Budapest String Quartet
Brahms, Schubert
9062



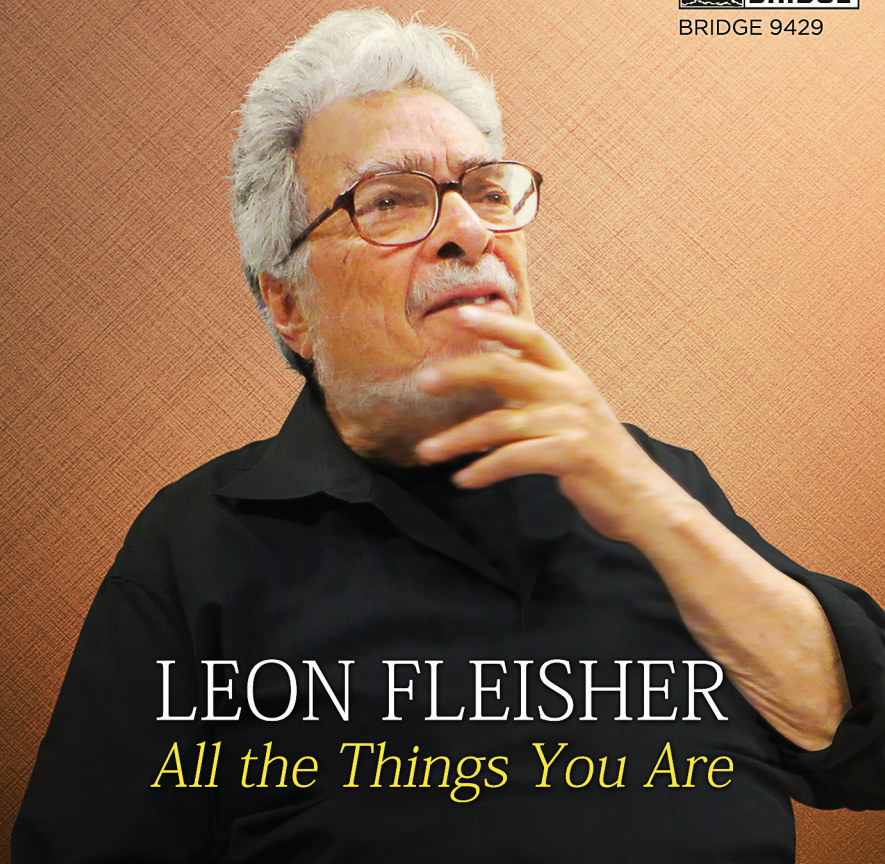
Nathan Milstein
Bach, Mendelssohn
Chopin, Wieniawski
9064



Walton conducts Walton
Sir William Walton
Berl Senofsky
9133A/B



Leontyne Price
Samuel Barber
Barber, Poulenc, Fauré
9156



LEON FLEISHER
All the Things You Are

LEON FLEISHER
piano

1) Chaconne (17:56)

*Arranged for Left Hand by Johannes Brahms
as Etude No. 5 (1879)*

J.S. Bach
(1685-1750)

2) L.H. (1995) (7:13)

*for Leon Fleisher
For Left Hand*

Leon Kirchner
(1919-2009)

3) The Man I Love (2:58)

*Arranged for Left Hand by Earl Wild as
Etude No. 3 (1954, rev. 1976)*

George Gershwin
(1898-1937)

4-6) Musical Offerings (1997/98) (11:17)

*In Celebration of Leon Fleisher at 70
For Left Hand*

George Perle
(1915-2009)

I. (3:56)

II. (3:39)

III. (3:42)

Producer: David Starobin

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Photograph of Leon Fleisher: Becky Starobin, 2014

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Piano: Steinway D (Hamburg) provided by Mary Schwendeman

Concert Services

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The Roger Shapiro Fund was established by composer/pianist Dina Koston, who named the fund after her husband, psychiatrist Roger Shapiro. The Roger Shapiro Fund facilitates the commissioning, performance and recording of new music, and endeavors to encourage innovative approaches to the presentation and promotion of contemporary music by composers from the US and abroad. Leon Fleisher and Dina Koston were co-directors of the Theater Chamber Players, a Washington D.C. based ensemble which was active from 1968 through 2003. The Theater Chamber Players were the resident ensemble of the Smithsonian Institution, and later resident at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater. Ms. Koston, Mr. Fleisher and their chamber ensemble introduced a large body of contemporary compositions in innovative programs which combined the new with masterpieces from the past.

Bridge Records is grateful to the Roger Shapiro Fund for their generous support of the present recording.

7) Prelude No. 6 (6:10)
For Left Hand

Federico Mompou
(1893-1987)

8) Thoughts of Evelyn (2000) (6:50)
For Piano

Dina Koston
(1940-2009)

9) All the Things You Are (4:50)
Arranged for Left Hand by Stephen Prutsman

Jerome Kern
(1885-1945)



Leon Fleisher—“the pianistic find of the century,” said Pierre Monteux—was born in San Francisco in 1928 and accepted into the studio of master pianist Artur Schnabel at age nine. Here began the understanding that music came first and the piano came second. Seven years later Fleisher made his New York Philharmonic debut; afterwards, the New York Times placed him in the top echelon of young performing artists. When, in 1952, Fleisher became the first American to win the Queen Elisabeth competition, the twenty-four-year old had seemingly secured his future. One result was a series of legendary recordings soon made with conductor George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. Ironically, it was the same Szell who said to Fleisher, prior to an orchestral tour of Russia in 1965, “You can’t play.” Focal dystonia was not understood in the sixties, but its meaning for Fleisher was clear enough. The recent cramping and curling fingers in his right hand threatened “the most complete pianist of his generation” with extinction.

It was Schnabel’s example of placing music before the piano that saved Fleisher, who, while looking to cure his malady, began to reinvent himself (*My Nine Lives* is the title of his recent memoir). In 1968, Fleisher helped form Washington’s Theater Chamber Players, a chamber ensemble whose size and varying forces

Conservatory and the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

Leon Fleisher holds numerous honors including the Johns Hopkins University President’s Medal and honorary doctorates from the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, Amherst College, Boston Conservatory, Cleveland Institute of Music, Juilliard School of Music, Peabody Institute and Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. In 2005, the French government named him Commander in the French Order of Arts and Letters, the highest rank of its kind. He was Musical America’s 1994 “Instrumentalist of the Year,” and this year was named the Royal Philharmonic Society’s “Instrumentalist of the Year.” Mr. Fleisher received the 2007 Kennedy Center Honors for his contribution to U.S. culture. His memoir, *My Nine Lives: A Memoir of Many Careers in Music*, co-written with Washington Post music critic Anne Midgette, is available on Doubleday. He and his wife, Katherine Jacobson, a noted pianist with whom he frequently tours, live in Baltimore, MD.



re-issued Mr. Fleisher's deep catalog, making virtually all of his recordings available on CD or digital downloads. His recordings of the five Beethoven concertos on Columbia were inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2008, and in In 2013, SONY issued a 23-CD set of Mr. Fleisher's recordings, including the performances with George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra.

Mr. Fleisher's dedication to sharing his insights and mentoring the next generation is evidenced by his memorable annual master classes at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, the Steans Institute at Ravinia, and others. After many acclaimed Carnegie Hall Workshops in New York (excerpts may be seen at www.franksalomon.com), Mr. Fleisher recently led the first Carnegie Hall Workshop at Suntory Hall in Japan. He regularly conducts master classes around the world including such venues as the Royal Academy of Music in London, the Hochschule für Musik und Theater, Hannover, Germany, and the Dublin Conservatory of Music, Ireland. Mr. Fleisher currently holds positions at the Peabody

necessitated the employment of a conductor. The next year Fleisher became music director of the Annapolis Symphony Orchestra, and in 1973 associate conductor of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Theater Chamber Players, all the while, so flourished it was invited to be the resident chamber ensemble of the Kennedy Center when it opened in 1979.

Describing himself as a "musician who conducted," Fleisher likewise intensified his efforts as a musician who taught. Admiring students referred to him as "Obi-Wan Kenobi." Based at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, Fleisher taught at the Royal Conservatory in Toronto and Curtis Institute as well, and the discipline merged with his accumulating experience with large groups: in 1985 he was named Artistic Director of Tanglewood Music Center. For Fleisher, to be at a "center of the American musical tradition" was validation of high degree, but the memory of the two-fisted pianist was the more compelling.

Fate allowed for one hand, so in order to keep his hat in the ring Fleisher championed concertos for piano left-hand and orchestra, and for decades this was the public's perception of the artist. A change occurred around 1990 when Fleisher began to concentrate

on the intimacy of solo recitals, and a remarkable change took place as the decade continued: examples of two-handed repertoire began to appear in his concerts, both solo and orchestral. In 1995, for example, thirty years after the heartbreak with Szell, he performed Mozart's K. 414 with von Dohnányi conducting the Cleveland Orchestra. All of this was made possible by an increasing medical knowledge not available to earlier generations, and after the turn of the millennium the fully-matured artist came to perceive his right hand problem for what it was. "I will never be cured. I have focal dystonia," Fleisher acknowledged. "But there is no more affliction," he also said, emphatically, the medical remedies having had their effect.

The present disc presents a characteristic Leon Fleisher solo recital, say, 2001. The repertoire is mostly left hand piano. Many of the works were written for Fleisher who perceives his art this way: "You can't see music as it passes through the air. You can't grasp it and hold on to it. You can't smell it. You can't taste it. But it has a most powerful effect on most people. And that is a wondrous thing to contemplate."

of a renewed life in music. He began focusing on repertoire for the left hand only, forging a new path as a soloist, conductor and teacher. In 1985 he was named Artistic Director of Tanglewood; he launched a conducting career as co-founder of the Theater Chamber Players in Washington D.C., then with the Annapolis and Baltimore Symphony Orchestras.

In the new millennium, experimental treatments finally restored the mobility in Mr. Fleisher's right hand. The extraordinary renaissance of his career has been documented extensively, particularly around the 2004 release of his critically acclaimed album *Two Hands*. The *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *LA Times*, *Billboard*, *Gramophone* and many others hailed the recording as one of the top discs of the year. He has since made several recordings including *The Journey* (Vanguard Classics, 2006); the Brahms *Piano Quintet* with the Emerson String Quartet (Deutsche Grammophon, 2007); the premiere recording of *Hindemith's Klaviermusik mit Orchester* (Ondine, 2009), and his first two-handed concerto recording in 40 years, *Mozart Piano Concertos* (Sony, 2009). In 2008, Sony

scene in San Francisco and those who influenced it, including Alfred Hertz, the second-ever director of the San Francisco Symphony, and the great French conductor, Pierre Monteux. It was there that he first met Arthur Schnabel – an event that was undoubtedly the most consequential in his musical life. Mr. Fleisher made his formal public debut in 1944 with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Pierre Monteux, who famously recognized him as “the pianistic find of the century.”

In 1952, Leon Fleisher became the first American to win the prestigious Queen Elisabeth competition in Brussels, placing him among the world's premier classical pianists. He concertized with every major orchestra and made numerous touchstone recordings for Columbia/Epic (now SONY) under the direction of George Szell and the Cleveland Orchestra. At the height of his success in 1965, he was suddenly struck silent with a neurological affliction later identified as focal dystonia, rendering two fingers on his right hand immobile. Rather than end his career, Mr. Fleisher set off on an epic journey in search

Leon Fleisher’s signature work as a performing pianist will no doubt be his realizations of the arrangement made by Johannes Brahms of the concluding *ciaccona* from J. S. Bach’s *Partita in D minor for Solo Violin* (BWV 1004). Bach composed the *chaconne* sometime between 1718 and 1720. In 1877 Brahms wrote his colleague Clara Schumann, “On one stave, for a small instrument, the man (Bach) writes a whole world of the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings.” “When I play it with the left hand alone,” Brahms continued, “I can secure undiluted joy from this piece...” and he went on to make a transcription. Save for an occasional filling out of a harmony and some performance indications for phrasing and dynamics, Brahms’ effort is noteworthy for its fidelity to the original. Many a Fleisher recital has opened with the result: a cathedral made of tones.

There is some uncertainty as to the exact title of Leon Kirchner’s *For the Left Hand*. The brief work is sometimes identified as *L.H.*, and at other times it is referred to as *Left hand for Leon Fleisher*. However this may be, Kirchner fashioned the piece in 1995, writing that the music was inspired by Fleisher’s artistry and text from Emily Dickinson’s *Wild Nights* and Edna St. Vincent Millay’s *Renascence*.

LEON FLEISHER

The image shows a handwritten musical manuscript for the piece "Ah the sea! Might I but moor tonight in thee" by Emily Dickinson. The manuscript is written on three systems of five-line staves. The top system contains the title and the composer's name, "(Emily Dickinson)", and a handwritten note "L.H. for Leon Fleisher". The music is written in a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The first system includes the following fingerings: 3 2 1 2 3, 1 3, 1 5 1 5, 2 1 2 3 5, 4 3 2 1 2 3. The second system includes the annotation "Basso continuo" and "G#". The third system includes the annotation "C". The manuscript is heavily annotated with pencil markings, including circles around notes and groups of notes, and various other markings.

Detail from the manuscript of Leon Kirchner's *L.H.* with
Leon Fleisher's penciled fingerings and the inscription:
["Ah the sea! Might I but moor tonight in thee" (Emily Dickinson)]

Legendary pianist Leon Fleisher represents the gold standard of musicianship and, at 85 years young, continues to impart his life-affirming artistry throughout the world, thriving in a sustained career as conductor and soloist, recitalist, chamber music artist, and master class mentor. Mr. Fleisher's musical pedigree alone is remarkable: he was the youngest-ever student of the great Artur Schnabel, who studied with keyboard giant and pedagogue Theodor Leschetizky, a pupil of Carl Czerny, who in turn studied with Ludwig van Beethoven.

First-generation American, Mr. Fleisher was born in San Francisco in 1928, and began playing piano at the age of four. To his delight, he was withdrawn from kindergarten and set up with a succession of private tutors, which constituted his formal education for the rest of his childhood. (He jokes: "I've long thought of entitling my autobiography *I Was A Kindergarten Dropout.*") Mr. Fleisher gave his first public recital at age eight, and was thrust into the relatively new classical music

to Evelyn Swarthout Hayes, pianist, teacher, educator, wife of impresario Patrick Hayes, who founded the Washington Performing Arts Society, and general doyenne of Washington, D.C. music in the second half of the 20th century.

Stephen Prutsman's 1987 arrangement of Jerome Kern's *All the Things You Are*, lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, was designed for Fleisher's left hand. The introductory lines are rarely included in the many recordings dating from the 1940s: "Time and again I've longed for adventure / Something to make my heart beat the faster / What did I long for, I never really knew."

The rest of the song speaks for itself.

—Notes by Ray Sprenkle



Impetuous, far ranging, featuring wildly spiraling lines, L.H.'s pungent atonal harmonies span the keyboard and require the broadest dynamic range.

In 1976 the renowned virtuoso Earl Wild revised his Gershwin-based *Seven Virtuoso Études on Popular Songs*. One of these, a paraphrase of *The Man I Love* titled Étude No. 3, was originally written for left hand alone, and it is this lesser known version that Fleisher has performed through the years. Harold C. Schonberg once described Wild as a "super-virtuoso of the Horowitz class." Fleisher's virtuosity, in full display with the Wild paraphrase, is directed to different ends.

George Perle created *Musical Offerings for Left Hand Alone* for Fleisher's 70th birthday in 1998. "These three 'Musical Offerings' are collectively for you and individually for the three musical 'victims,' 'martyrs,' or 'sacrifices' to whom the individual pieces are respectively dedicated," wrote the composer to the pianist. Fleisher, in his *Memoirs*, referred to the Bach-derived title as meaning both "gift" and "sacrifice." He then remarked on Perle's "bittersweet poetry." Bernard Holland, writing for a two-CD

GEORGE PERLE
333 CENTRAL PARK WEST
NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10025

Dear Leon,

I trust you've done as I asked and thrown away my first lame beginning of a piece for left hand alone that I left with you when we celebrated your 69th birthday at Tanglewood last summer. By the time your 70th birthday comes around I'll certainly be able to give you a handsomely "engraved" (on the computer) copy of the enclosed "Musical Offerings", and maybe it will even be published by then. If it is, we can mainly thank Randall Thompson's "Alleluia," and therefore Tanglewood to some considerable extent, for making this possible. My publisher, E.C.Schirmer, largely depends on their income from this piece to subsidize a basically unprofitable composer like myself.

These three "Musical Offerings" are collectively for you and individually for the three musical "victims," "martyrs," or "sacrifices" to whom the individual pieces are respectively dedicated. I have in mind the German word for "offerings," which also has these other meanings.

I hope you will like these three pieces. I do. (I feel quite free in expressing a positive evaluation of my own music, since I am my own worst critic.) I'll be disappointed if you don't, but I can always comfort myself by recalling what N. Rubenstein thought of Tchaikovski's Bb Concerto, and perhaps the same example will induce you to give it a second chance. My piano music is quirky and takes some getting used to. In any case, I would appreciate your advice about notational matters before sending it off to my copyist.

Love from both of us, to both of you. I think you will have a good year because you have a good conscience, which is more than I can say about some other people. We enjoyed your visit with us enormously and look forward to a repeat performance.

George

release of Perle's music on the Bridge label in 2008, noted the composer's "trademark love for brief, elegant, highly energized phrases separated by marked pauses." The observation holds here.

Frederico Mompou, 1893-1987, a Catalan composer and pianist, wrote a piano music that carries with it a kind of incantatory, meditative sound. "The music of Mompou is the music of evaporation," writes pianist and admirer Stephen Hough. "The printed page seems to have faded, as if the bar lines, time signatures, key signatures, and even the notes themselves have disappeared over a timeless number of years." The sixth of Mompou's eleven Préludes is for left hand alone and dates from 1930. According to the composer, the basic material for the brief work was suggested to him as he played casually on the piano while talking to a friend.

In retrospect, the entrepreneurial composer Dina Koston proved to be of enormous consequence in Fleisher's life. It was she who first suggested conducting to Fleisher, and it was she, along with Fleisher, who organized Theater Chamber Players, an ensemble that specialized in juxtaposing modern works with masterpieces from the past. *Thoughts of Evelyn* is Koston's six-minute homage