

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Producer: Silas Brown, Michael Torke
Session Producer for *West, East, South*: Doron Schachter
Mastering: Silas Brown
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March 6, 2017 (*West, South, and East*)
January 7, 2019 (*Sky*)
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West, South, and East commissioned by Paul Underwood.

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Photo of Michael Torke: Bryan Hainer

Albany Symphony | David Alan Miller, CONDUCTOR
Tessa Lark, VIOLIN | Peter Kolkay, BASSOON
Ryan Roberts, OBOE | Weixiong Wang, CLARINET

Michael Torke **SKY**



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THE COMPOSER



Michael Torke's music has been commissioned by such orchestras as The Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the San Francisco Symphony; by such ballet companies as New York City Ballet, Alvin Ailey, and the National Ballet of Canada; by such opera companies as the Metropolitan Opera, Théâtre du Châtelet, and the English National Opera; by such large ensembles as the London Sinfonietta, Lontano, and De Volharding; and such small ensembles as the Smith, Ying, and Amstel Quartets.

He has worked with such conductors as Simon Rattle, Kurt Mazur, Edo de Waart, and David Zinman; such choreographers as Christopher Wheeldon, James Kudelka, and Juri Kilián; and collaborated with such librettists as A. R. Gurney, Michael Korie, and Mark Campbell; and such directors as Des McAnuff, Bart Sher, and Michael Greif.

He has been commissioned by entities such as the Walt Disney Company, and Absolute Vodka; worked with such soloists as Tessa Lark, Christopher O'Reilly, and Joyce Castle; and written incidental music for such companies as The Public Theater, The Old Globe Theater, and Classic Stage Company; and been composer in residence with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

His music has been called "some of the most optimistic, joyful and thoroughly uplifting music to appear in recent years" (*Gramophone*). Hailed as a "vitaly inventive composer" (*Financial Times*) and "a master orchestrator whose shimmering timbral palette makes him the Ravel of his generation" (*New York Times*), Torke has created a substantial body of works in virtually every genre.

THE MUSIC

The concerto is an old form, but it remains popular because of the appeal of a single instrument taking the starring role, with all the exhibitionism and egotism that entails. But how to make it fresh? Among the possibilities, a composer could inject an unexpected style, or he could write

for less obvious solo instruments. This collection of concertos is my attempt to explore those options.

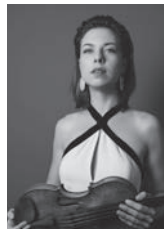
For **Sky**, a concerto for violin, I took Bluegrass, a style I was not familiar with, studied its vernacular, and then imposed classical forms onto it. In the solo part, you hear banjo picking, a slow Irish reel (harkening back to the music of those who settled Kentucky), and triple time fiddle licks.

For **West, South, and East**, the concertos for bassoon, oboe, and clarinet, respectively, the choice of solo instruments is not in itself novel, although relatively few have been written for them. Testing the limits of what these instruments can do, I sought to discover unstale musical expression.

Variety within unity is an organizing principle of the music I write. Those terms — seemingly contradictory — may be resolved in the realm of music. If we trace the word "concerto" back to its origins, we find another apparent contradiction. In Italian, it means "in agreement," whereas in Latin, it means "to compete." The concerto form seeks to resolve this disparity by setting up a contest between soloist and orchestra but, at the same time, creating concord within the ensemble. This tension has the potential to be quite compelling and, in the end, it is what continues to draw us again and again to this age-old form.

—Michael Torke

THE MUSICIANS



Violinist **Tessa Lark**, Silver Medalist in the 2014 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, recipient of a 2018 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Fellowship and a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant, and winner of the 2012 Naumburg International Violin Competition, is one of the most captivating artistic voices of our time. A budding superstar in the classical realm, she is also a highly acclaimed fiddler in the tradition of her native Kentucky. Since making her concerto debut with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra at 16, Ms. Lark has appeared with dozens of orchestras, festivals, and recital venues including Carnegie Hall, Ravinia, San Francisco Performances,

Marlboro Music, Lincoln Center's Great Performers Series, the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, and Australia's Musica Viva Festival. Recent and upcoming highlights include debuts with the Seattle and Indianapolis symphonies and the Buffalo and Rochester philharmonics. In January 2019 she made her debut with the Albany Symphony Orchestra in the world premiere of *Sky*, a bluegrass-inspired violin concerto written for her by Michael Torke, and since then she has performed the work with numerous other orchestras. Ms. Lark is a graduate of New England Conservatory with an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School. She plays a ca. 1600 G.P. Maggini violin on loan from an anonymous donor through the Stradivari Society of Chicago.



Called "stunningly virtuosic" by the *New York Times*, **Peter Kolkay** is the only bassoonist to receive an Avery Fisher Career Grant and to win first prize at the Concert Artists Guild International Competition. Mr. Kolkay serves as associate professor of bassoon at the Blair School of Music at Vanderbilt University, and is an Artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He has presented solo recitals at Weill Recital Hall, Merkin Hall, the Chicago Cultural Center, and Centro Cultural

Ollin Yolitzli in Mexico City, and is a regular performer at the Music@Menlo and Bridgehampton Chamber Music summer festivals. Mr. Kolkay actively engages with composers in the creation of new works for the bassoon; he gave the world premiere of Joan Tower's bassoon concerto with the South Carolina Philharmonic, and recently premiered a new work for bassoon and string quartet by Mark-Anthony Turnage with the Calidore Quartet at the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Mr. Kolkay holds degrees from Lawrence University, the Eastman School of Music, and Yale University, and studied with Frank Morelli, John Hunt, Jean Barr, and Monte Perkins. A native of Naperville, Illinois, he now calls the Melrose neighborhood of Nashville home.

Award-winning oboist **Ryan Roberts** is the newly appointed English hornist of the New York Philharmonic. Ryan has performed as guest principal oboe with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, and the New York Philharmonic; he has also performed with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, and the Ft. Worth Symphony.



Before joining the New York Philharmonic, Ryan was a member of the New World Symphony under the direction of Michael Tilson-Thomas. In 2018, Ryan was the first prizewinner of the International Double Reed Society's Young Artist Competition and the National Society of Arts and Letters' Woodwind Competition. As a Kovner Fellow graduate of The Juilliard school, Ryan studied with Elaine Douvas and appeared frequently as principal oboist of the Juilliard Orchestra, where he was recognized by the *New York Times* for his "exquisite" performance of Sibelius's *Swan of Tuonela* with Esa-Pekka Salonen in 2017. An avid chamber musician, Ryan performs at the Marlboro Music Festival during the summer under artistic directors Mitsuko Uchida and Jonathan Biss; he has also collaborated in recitals with the Pacifica Quartet and Emanuel Ax. When he isn't making reeds, Ryan enjoys practicing piano and hiking with his dog-nephew Charlie.



Born in China, **Weixiong Wang** is the Principal Clarinetist at the Albany Symphony Orchestra. Weixiong is the winner of several international competitions, including first prize of AudiMozart Woodwind Competition at Bolzano, Italy, The Juilliard Concerto Competition, and The International Crescendo Award. Weixiong has performed frequently with Albany Symphony, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mark Morris Dance Company, and Lake Placid Sinfonietta. Weixiong's highlight concerto engagements include The Juilliard Orchestra, U.S Army Band Pershing's Own, Albany Symphony, Bolzano Orchestra Haydn, Salzburg Youth Orchestra, and Tulsa Symphony.

Weixiong is also the founder and Head Engineer of Skillman Music, a production company in New York City where he has produced records and directed concert broadcasts for Young Concert Artists, The Orchestra Now, The Violin Channel, Concert Artists Guild, Todd Philips, Augusta Mckay Lodge, Philippe Quint, Hyesang Park, Will Liverman, and many more.



Grammy Award-winning conductor **David Alan Miller** has established a reputation as one of the leading American conductors of his generation. Music Director of the Albany Symphony since 1992, Mr. Miller has proven himself a creative and compelling orchestra builder. Through exploration of unusual repertoire, educational programming, community outreach and recording initiatives, he has reaffirmed the Albany Symphony's reputation as the nation's leading champion of American symphonic music and one of its most innovative orchestras. He and the orchestra appeared twice at "Spring For Music," the festival of America's most creative orchestras at

New York City's Carnegie Hall.

Other accolades include Columbia University's 2003 Ditson Conductor's Award, the 2001 ASCAP Morton Gould Award for Innovative Programming and, in 1999, ASCAP's first-ever Leonard Bernstein Award for Outstanding Educational Programming.

Frequently in demand as a guest conductor, Mr. Miller has worked with most of America's major orchestras, including the orchestras of Baltimore, Chicago, Cleveland, Detroit, Houston, Indianapolis, Los Angeles, and New York, among others.

Mr. Miller received a Grammy Award in January, 2014 for his Naxos recording of John Corigliano's *Conjurer*, with the Albany Symphony and Dame Evelyn Glennie. His recordings with the Albany Symphony include discs devoted to the music of John Harbison, Roy Harris, Morton Gould, Don Gillis, Peter Mennin, and Vincent Persichetti on the Albany Records label.

A native of Los Angeles, David Alan Miller holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and a master's degree in orchestral conducting from The Juilliard School. Prior to his appointment in Albany, Mr. Miller was Associate Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. From 1982 to 1988, he was Music Director of the New York Youth Symphony, earning considerable acclaim for his work with that ensemble.

The **Albany Symphony** fulfills its mission by performing, commissioning, and recording the work of established and emerging American composers while bringing a fresh perspective to time-honored classics. The Symphony is one of this region's most revered music and cultural organizations, having won numerous national awards for its adventurous programming of contemporary music and innovative educational efforts involving area schools. Founded in 1931, the Albany Symphony is the oldest and only professional symphony orchestra based in New York's Capital Region, serving a significant and diverse population within a 75-mile radius covering more than seven counties and parts of three states. Annual programming includes a nine-concert classical series with performances throughout the region, nineteen consecutive years of the American Music Festival, the new music ensemble Dogs of Desire, a three-concert family series, and holiday and pops concerts.

The Albany Symphony was founded in 1931 by conductor John Carabella, and achieved not-for-profit status in 1935. The Orchestra has evolved artistically under the leadership of music directors Carabella, Rudolf Thomas, Ole Windingstad, Edgar Curtis, Julius Hegyi, Geoffrey Simon, and David Alan Miller.



LEFT TO RIGHT: MICHAEL TORKE, DAVID ALAN MILLER, TESSA LARK, SILAS BROWN

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SKY • MICHAEL TORKE • ALBANY SYMPHONY • DAVID ALAN MILLER, CONDUCTOR

Albany Symphony | David Alan Miller, CONDUCTOR

- Sky, concerto for violin* [24:03]
- | | | |
|--------|----------|------|
| 1 I. | Lively | 9:44 |
| 2 II. | Wistful | 8:14 |
| 3 III. | Spirited | 6:05 |
- Tessa Lark, violin

- West, concerto for bassoon* [9:59]
- | | | |
|--------|------------|------|
| 4 I. | Lively | 4:38 |
| 5 II. | Andantino | 3:26 |
| 6 III. | Brilliante | 1:55 |
- Peter Kolkay, bassoon

- South, concerto for oboe* [10:07]
- | | | |
|--------|------------|------|
| 7 I. | Lyrical | 3:43 |
| 8 II. | Languorous | 3:38 |
| 9 III. | Animato | 2:46 |
- Ryan Roberts, oboe

- East, concerto for clarinet* [10:33]
- | | | |
|---------|------------------------|------|
| 10 I. | Always moving forward | 3:57 |
| 11 II. | Cantabile e misterioso | 3:28 |
| 12 III. | Rhapsodic | 3:08 |
- Weixiong Wang, clarinet

Total Time = 54:42

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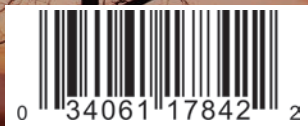
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