

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Producer: Silas Brown

Recorded at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall
December 22, 2014 (*Winter's Tale*);
December 21, 2015 (*Three Manhattan Bridges*)

Mastering: Silas Brown

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for the Albany Symphony.

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Michael Torke **THREE MANHATTAN BRIDGES**

Albany Symphony | David Alan Miller, CONDUCTOR
Joyce Yang, PIANO | Julie Albers, CELLO





THE COMPOSER



The music of Michael Torke 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*), Michael Torke has created a substantial body of works in virtually every genre.

Career highlights include: *Color Music* (1985–89), a series of orchestral pieces that each explore a single, specific color; *Javelin*, recorded both for Argo and for John William’s *Summon the Heroes*, the official 1996 Olympics album; *Four Seasons*, an oratorio commissioned by the Walt Disney Company to celebrate the millennium; *Strawberry Fields*, whose “Great Performances” broadcast was nominated for an Emmy Award; and two evening-length story ballets, *The Contract*, and *An Italian Straw Hat*, for James Kudelka and the National Ballet of Canada.

In 1998 Torke was Composer in Residence for the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, for which he wrote and recorded *Rapture*, his percussion concerto, and *An American Abroad*, a tone poem.

In 2003 Torke founded Ecstatic Records and re-issued the Decca/Argo catalog of his works. Subsequent recordings include *Blue Pacific*, *Tahiti*, and *Miami Grands*.

His most recent 2015 recording, *Concerto for Orchestra* inspired *American Record Guide* to write, “This is a composer with a completely developed style, and has established himself as one of our truly great composers. He’s an American treasure.”

THE MUSIC

Three Manhattan Bridges

Three Manhattan Bridges is a concerto for piano and orchestra, in three movements, with the titles, I. George Washington Bridge, II. Queensboro Bridge, III. Brooklyn Bridge.

There is a muscular, industrial strength that bridges convey, while at the same time a poetic beauty expressed. Music works in a similar way, in that it combines ideas of formal masculinity with graceful femininity without these extremes being in conflict or contradicting one another.

Classical composers historically had a direct relationship with their audience: when an audience didn’t like a piece, a composer concluded he had failed, not that the audience was lacking in their understanding or appreciation. Modernism destroyed this relationship with its audience, characterized by an adversarial and imperious attitude. So I like the metaphor of trying to build a bridge to an earlier stance that music once had with towards its listeners.

A commanding, chordal theme that opens the first movement imparts the tensile strength and monumentality of the George Washington Bridge, and yet the music becomes extremely active as the busy traffic on the bridge would be. The moody, night-time setting of the second movement whose opening woodwind shapes echo the curving cables lit up after dark might call to mind the famous dawn scene in Woody Allen’s *Manhattan*. A somewhat jazzier third movement, with its broad second theme seemed fitting for one of our country’s oldest and certainly most famous suspension bridges.

The antecedent of this piece is probably my 1994 composition, *Javelin*, while I was also aware of the influences of Ravel, Rachmaninoff, and Gershwin. It was written for the pianist, Joyce Yang, and dedicated to her.

Winter’s Tale

Though not based on Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, this concerto for cello and orchestra is nevertheless inspired by lines from the play: from moody winter thoughts, through warmer and more redemptive springtime feelings. Each of the five movements is similar in structure, organized in a palindromic fast-medium-slow-medium-fast scheme, but each movement has its own melodies, harmonies, and affect. My ear was led by the melancholic yet singing richness of the solo ‘cello’s sound.

—MICHAEL TORKE



THE PERFORMERS



Pianist **Joyce Yang** came to international attention in 2005 when she won the silver medal at the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition. The youngest contestant at 19 years old, she also took home the awards for Best Performance of Chamber Music and of a New Work. In 2010 she received an Avery Fisher Career Grant.

Yang has performed with the New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, BBC Philharmonic, and the Chicago, Houston, Pittsburgh, San Francisco, and Sydney symphony orchestras, among many others, working with such distinguished conductors as James Conlon, Edo de Waart, Lorin Maazel, Manfred Honeck, David Robertson, Leonard Slatkin, Bramwell Tovey, and Jaap van Zweden. She has appeared in recital at New York's Lincoln Center and Metropolitan Museum, Washington's Kennedy Center, Chicago's Symphony Hall, and Zurich's Tonhalle.

Avie Records has released two Joyce Yang solo albums: *Collage*, featuring works by Scarlatti, Liebermann, Debussy, Currier, and Schumann; and *Wild Dreams*, with music by Bartok, Hindemith, Schumann, Rachmaninoff, and transcriptions by Earl Wild. Her discography also includes Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto with Denmark's Odense Symphony Orchestra (Bridge Records), the Brahms and Schumann Piano Quintets with the Alexander String Quartet (Foghorn Classics), and a debut album with her frequent duo partner, violinist Augustin Hadelich (Avie).

Born in Seoul, Korea, Yang received her first piano lesson from her aunt at age four. In 1997 she moved to the United States to begin studies at the pre-college division of the Juilliard School. After winning the Philadelphia Orchestra's Greenfield Student Competition, she performed Prokofiev's Third Piano Concerto with that orchestra at just twelve years old. She graduated from Juilliard with special honor as the recipient of the school's 2010 Arthur Rubinstein Prize and its 30th Annual William A. Petschek Piano Recital Award. Joyce Yang is a Steinway artist. www.PianistJoyceYang.com



American cellist **Julie Albers** is recognized for her superlative artistry, her charismatic and radiant performing style, and her intense musicianship. She was born into a musical family in Longmont, Colorado and began violin studies at the age of two with her mother, switching to cello at four. She moved to Cleveland during her junior year of high school to pursue studies through the Young Artist Program at the Cleveland Institute of Music, where she studied with Richard Aaron. Miss Albers soon was awarded the Grand Prize at the XIII International Competition for Young Musicians in Douai, France, and as a result toured France as soloist with Orchestre Symphonique de Douai.

Julie Albers made her major orchestral debut with the Cleveland Orchestra in 1998, and thereafter has performed in recital and with orchestras throughout North America, Europe, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, and New Zealand. In 2001, she won Second Prize in Munich's Internationalen Musikwettbewerb der ARD, and was also awarded the Wilhelm-Weichsler-Musikpreis der Stadt Osnabruch. While in Germany, she recorded solo and chamber music of Kodaly for the Bavarian Radio, performances that have been heard throughout Europe. In 2003, Miss Albers was named the first Gold Medal Laureate of South Korea's Gyeongnam International Music Competition, winning the \$25,000 Grand Prize.

In 2015 Miss Albers was named principal cellist of the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and enjoys this position very much as well as other chamber music projects throughout the year. Teaching is also a very important part of her musical life. She currently is Assistant Professor and holds the Mary Jean and Charles Yates Cello Chair at the McDuffie Center for Strings at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia.

Miss Albers' debut album with Orion Weiss includes works by Rachmaninoff, Beethoven, Schumann, Massenet, and Piatigorsky and is available on the Artek Label. Julie Albers performs on a N.F. Vuillaume cello made in 1872. www.cellistjuliealbers.com



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 oldest award honoring conductors for their commitment to American music, 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, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and San Francisco, as well as the New World Symphony, the Boston Pops and the New York City Ballet. In addition, he has appeared frequently throughout Europe, Australia and the Far East as guest conductor.

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 extensive discography also includes recordings of the works of Todd Levin with the London Symphony Orchestra for Deutsche Grammophon, as well as music by Michael Daugherty, Kamran Ince, and Michael Torke for London/Decca, and of Luis Tinoco for Naxos. 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.

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Michael Torke THREE MANHATTAN BRIDGES

Michael Torke

Three Manhattan Bridges, for piano and orchestra [31:11]

- 1 I. George Washington Bridge [13:45]
- 2 II. Queensboro Bridge [8:29]
- 3 III. Brooklyn Bridge [9:24]

Joyce Yang, PIANO

Winter's Tale, for cello and orchestra [25:25]

- 4 I. Allegro [4:15]
- 5 II. Andante (Perdita's Flowers I) [5:00]
- 6 III. Largo [6:46]
- 7 IV. Andante (Perdita's Flowers II) [4:55]
- 8 V. Allegro [4:44]

Julie Albers, CELLO

Albany Symphony Orchestra

David Alan Miller, CONDUCTOR

Total Time = 57:24

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