

# YEHUDI WYNER



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In an essay arguing for the treatment of literature as a medium of performance, the critic, Richard Poirier, inadvertently but impeccably described the achievement of Yehudi Wyner. “It’s performance that matters,” declared Poirier: “pacing, economies, juxtapositions, aggregations of tone, *the whole conduct of the shaping presence.*” In a half-century of brilliant musical invention, Wyner has repeatedly revealed just this—the whole conduct of the shaping presence — in electrifying music that dramatizes the process of artistic discovery while rendering a complete and self-sufficient artistic world. Rather than relying on any pre-compositional system or theory, Wyner’s music embodies a sensibility and a technique that are radically responsive to the occasion and conditions of music making itself. “Out of an accumulation of secretive acts,” Poirier proposed, “a form [emerges] that presumes to compete with reality itself for control of the minds exposed to it.” Poirier’s image of a performing self, a presence projected in each artwork that is as visceral as it is refined, as brutally physical as it is conceptually nuanced, could find no finer embodiment than the music of Yehudi Wyner. In every gesture, it projects a creative imagination gripped by a relentless process of self-discovery.

This unrelenting process, joined with Wyner’s equally unrepentant expressive candor, yields a rich, dense emotional return — never more so than in a sequence of large-scale works that the composer has produced in recent years. Wyner’s *Prologue and Narrative* for cello and orchestra (1994) is an especially breathtaking contemplation of the dynamics of lyricism and virtuosity. Opening with low register double stops and arpeggiations — a gorgeous, brooding, throat-clearing by the solo cello that releases a powerful lyrical impulse — the music is animated by a dramatic juxtaposition of lyricism and virtuosity. Fueled by this elemental opposition, the music passes through many moods and manners. Along the way, we encounter a suave, Ellingtonian, dance tune, moments of dense, Schoenbergian, motivic elaboration, extended, cantabile dialogues between soloist and ensemble, a stunning, low register apotheosis for cello and euphonium, as well as high altitude explorations of the top of the cello’s range. The dialectic of virtuosity and lyricism eventually unleashes an outpouring of romantic song that seems

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entirely inevitable and unsentimental — and then the work closes with a quiet peroration that magically dissipates the cantabile release.

Wyner's *Lyric Harmony* (1995) also spins an extended argument out of ephemeral moods and an interplay of virtuosity and song. It exemplifies one of Wyner's consistent achievements: the creation of long forms that are at once entirely personal but as nuanced, sustained, and dramatic as those of the tonal tradition. Recent chamber works exhibit a similar dialectic of lyricism and virtuosity, played out over long musical spans. The 1997 *Horntrio* mines the dramatic potential unleashed by the convergence of disparate elements—horn, violin, and piano—producing at first a bravura display of relentlessly contrasting *dramatis personae*, and eventually, over the course of three extended movements, an unanticipated integration of forces that yields both an intense outpouring of lyricism and a release of hyper-kinetic, hyper-dramatic actions. By contrast, the 1999 *Quartet* for oboe and string trio, while exploring a similar interplay of lyricism and athleticism, unfolds from a less dramatic and agonistic principle, favoring, rather, a subtle recalibration of familiar elements: tonal sonorities, harmonic anticipations and voice-exchanges: the weights and balances of each pressure point and structural function tweaked to produce a mercurial flow of moods and magical transformations. In all of the orchestral and chamber music produced over the last decade, Wyner has explored ever more inventive ways to reconcile his predilection for spontaneity and emotional fluidity with the sustained and poised arguments of long forms.



Consummate virtuosity in both composition and performance are rarely embodied in the same person. However, since beginning his formal musical studies as a pianist at Juilliard, Wyner has combined a dazzling career as a performer with a rich life in musical composition. It is almost unnerving to find a musical impulse that is at once so sophisticated and knowing and yet so *tactile*; or a compositional imagination so inextricably bound to the physical engagement with resonating instruments; or a creative imagination so deeply informed by the subtleties and particularities of musical articulation; or a refined sensibility so attuned to intricacies of form, on the large scale and small, and yet so committed to exploration and a process of self-discovery on the fly. The results may seem paradoxical: uncensored lyricism merges with scrupulous technique; and a transparent, forthright expressivity is tempered by acute self-awareness and discipline. This unique musical sensibility invites us to open our

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hearts as well as our ears and to embrace its beauty — even while it engages weighty matters of tradition and modernity. However, tracing the techniques or searching for the antecedents of Wyner’s music can seem futile or irrelevant: the overwhelming effect is of the ingenuity and potency of the shaping presence.

Of course, Wyner’s capacious musical mind is stocked full; the composer himself has catalogued no end of eclectic musical passions and antecedents, from Monteverdi to Sinatra, Perotin to Boulez, the rhythms of jazz and the contours of Jewish cantillation. However, it is equally relevant to say that his music, like that of Rachmaninoff or Art Tatum, is rooted in an extraordinarily subtle conception of how to play an instrument — *his* instrument, the piano (as deeply and personally his as it was Rachmaninoff’s or Tatum’s). In Wyner’s music for piano, with or without other performers, the thrust produced by the instrument’s combustible rhythmic engine seems to defy the force of gravity, even as the music seems to hug the ground, digging into each accent and articulation. Wyner’s unparalleled sense of pianistic touch also infuses all of his instrumental music — yielding a polyphony of unrelentingly diverse rhythmic effects, far beyond what notation can capture. At the same time, even as it inspired (and is inspired by) virtuosity and a unique understanding of instrumental resonance and articulation, Wyner’s music can be as delicately lyrical as Webern. Comparing the composer to disparate predecessors (whether Webern, or Rachmaninoff, or Art Tatum) may seem facile; the truths revealed by the comparisons are surely partial. For a body of work that assimilates so much, even as it reinvents itself anew in each new context, such far-flung comparisons, however apposite, are bound to be paradoxical, even misleading. To focus either on the sources of his inspiration or to look for comparable musical achievements diverts attention away from the music’s own contextual processes, which emerge spontaneously from within — fleeting impulses that set off an extended journey.

An object lesson, the opening of *Commedia* for clarinet and piano (2002): The music begins with an explosion of virtuosity — a clarinet arabesque plummeting down three octaves, then suddenly running feverishly in place at the bottom of its range. It’s joined by an equally agile and volatile partner, the piano — at first trading licks with the clarinet and then setting off sequentially on its own. The piano manically repeats a rhythmic motive while careening through space almost as quickly as it can fly, while the clarinet assumes a more ruminative, lyrical attitude. Then a series of sudden, magical shifts: the clarinet and piano continue their process of motivic elaboration, flickering between intense contrapuntalism and hints of a more tranquil arpeggiation. The

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music remains compulsively sequential, but its character seamlessly evolves. The partners intertwine in a mellow but ever-responsive interaction that threatens to spike dramatically at any moment, as the musical substance unfolds fluently but quixotically, becoming suddenly more mercurial and dense in structure at one moment, suddenly more placid and structurally static the next, but never surrendering its propulsive energy — until an ephemeral rapprochement occurs and a definitive point of stasis is achieved: all forward momentum briefly evaporates into thin air.

All this occurs in a single arc, some two and a half minutes of densely concentrated but fluent drama. To say that this music is a study in contrasting articulations, or in the magical transformation of angular contrapuntal lines into fluid, legato arpeggiations, or in the elaboration of harmonies based on thirds and their inversions, or even simply in instrumental virtuosity would be true enough — but entirely inadequate. The composer engages all aspects of the musical substance, working and reworking of the material in repeated acts of performing and listening, to conjure the epiphanic moment and inscribing it in a legible form. What emerges is the “whole content of the shaping presence.” It is, as Poirier would have it, the performance that matters — in Wyner’s work, a virtually magical sense of performance, flowing into and emanating out of the act of composition.



However futile it may be to attempt to site the antecedents of Yehudi Wyner’s music, the sources of his compositional vocation were straightforward. The son of a distinguished composer of Jewish liturgical music and art songs, Wyner understood the work ethic and discipline required for a compositional career at an early age, and he acquired both a reverence for the art of music and a voracious appetite for musical engagement as a pianist at Juilliard. He went on to study composition with Richard Donovan and Paul Hindemith at Yale and Walter Piston at Harvard, where he also engaged in a formative encounter with the music of Handel, as a student of Randall Thompson. While working with Piston, Wyner wrote his *Partita* for piano (1952), a piece that already reveals the enormity of his compositional gift. The five-movement suite introduces us to a young composer bursting with ideas and eager to demonstrate his mastery of and personal take on the American neo-classical idiom. Even as it fleetingly evokes the legacy of Copland or Stravinsky, the music has an utterly distinctive cast, demonstrating an original compositional imagination and a grasp of the subtle qualities and consequences of instrumental tone production that marks a strong imagination

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and integrated musical persona. Already, the confluence of lyricism and virtuosity that remains a hallmark of Wyner's oeuvre is fully manifest.

It was, however, during a stint as the recipient of a three-year fellowship in composition at the American Academy in Rome, that Wyner hit his stride and developed his characteristic voice. The Italian experience, he has said "was among the profoundest and most long-lasting influence[s] on my life":

[It provided a] view of other cultures....a connection with the past, the chain of generations; a tolerance and an acceptance of many other ways of life, of culture; the possibility for integrating, even in an informal way, ideas from all over the world and ideas from all over one's internal landscape, finding things that would be normally regarded as disparate, disorganized or as simply messy; finding that there were ways to have those live together, to be integrated, to result in a new synthesis.

In Piston and Hindemith, he had encountered celebrated pedagogues, known for their systematic approach to compositional technique. However, Wyner's restless musical imagination would not be satisfied by fixed compositional methods or aesthetic ideologies. By contrast, the Roman sojourn provided him with an experience of vitality and beauty in cultural, historical, and architectural heterogeneity that would unsettle the received ideas of his earlier education and challenge him to burst open the closed forms of the neo-classical models that had preoccupied him during his student years.

The crowning achievement of Wyner's Roman experience was his *Concert Duo* (1955-7), a masterpiece of the post-war chamber literature and a startling advance in the composer's work. A half-century after its conception, it remains one of the most breathtaking leaps in a compositional oeuvre to be taken by any modern American composer. If the rich, historical heterogeneity of Rome inspired Wyner to free himself from closed neo-classical forms and to invite everything in his imagination into his music, he also came to terms, decisively in the *Concert Duo*, with the newly emerging, major works of his colleague, Elliott Carter. Carter's own Rome Prize Fellowship overlapped with the first year of Wyner's stay at the American Academy. As Wyner later recalled: "I began to study some of Elliott Carter's music before [joining him at the American Academy in] Rome, because I really had had no experience with it whatsoever...I began to look into his music. Oh what an impact it had! It was a time of the *Piano Sonata* just having been done, the *Cello Sonata*. The [first] *String Quartet* had just been written, but I don't think it had been heard in America yet." The opening of the *Concert Duo* — with its opposition of

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mechanical, *secco piano* attacks and *legato*, lyrical violin lines — nods deeply toward Carter's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. And the grasp of large-scale process — the taut control of dramatic flow over the course of two extended movements (both of which elaborate a small parcel of initiating musical ideas that are extended almost unimaginably far in the gamut of dramatic intensities and harmonic possibilities, instrumental behaviors and textural configurations, ensemble interactions and colors) — also reflects the ambition, techniques, and scope of Carter's contemporaneous work. However, the compressed, quixotic, emotional life of the *Concert Duo*, its thrilling and unsettling emotional alchemy and sudden, magical motivic transformations, reveals an utterly unprecedented and distinctive musical imagination.

Wyner finished the *Concert Duo* after returning from Rome to New York, where he briefly settled into a journeyman musician's eclectic career that included regional travels north and south, performing odd jobs at New Jersey dinner clubs as well as accompanying the Juilliard ballet classes of the choreographer, José Limón. In an unrelenting round of heterogeneous free-lance gigs, he honed his skills at spontaneous music-making and refined his sense of the expressive potential in each musical event and each musical occasion. Since 1963, he has taught composition in various universities, primarily Yale, SUNY-Purchase (where he was dean of the music division), Cornell, Harvard, and Brandeis. He has also sustained a distinguished career as a solo and collaborative performer — for 30 years as a member of the Bach Aria Group and in countless performances with a wide array of brilliant instrumentalists and singers, among them, his wife, the soprano, Susan Davenny Wyner, with whom he collaborated in numerous celebrated recitals during the 1970s. Since the end of her singing career and the development of her second major musical career, as a conductor, Susan and Yehudi Wyner have collaborated in a wide range of artistic enterprises and an ongoing musical dialogue. He also singles out a precipitous plunge into the world of opera (when he became the director of the Turnau Opera Company in the early 1960s) as an especially thrilling and transformative experience. As the *Boston Globe* music critic, Richard Dyer, has astutely observed, however, Wyner is neither a conventional academic musician, nor the kind of performer to pursue a traditional concert pianist's career. Rather, he has created an idiosyncratic symbiosis of musical activities — composing, performing, and teaching — that uniquely complement each other, focusing each aspect of his artistic life.

Moreover, although he works in a wide range of musical media and has composed music for all kinds of

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occasions, his oeuvre does not neatly divide into periods, genres, or any other categories. However much his musical thought has evolved over the decades since the *Concert Duo*, his artistic compass has remained steady. And the shaping presence and sensibilities at work — whether in early and recent compositions, liturgical works or cabaret songs, music for large forces or intimate works on a small scale — are equally forthright and immediately recognizable.

Wyner's music often evokes the sense of a protagonist grappling with conflicting tendencies: a charged rhetoric of unpredictable, often rapidly contrasting moods; a candid lyricism that is ever susceptible to irony or encroachments of high drama; an unbridled virtuosity, often in unresolved interplay with passages of serenity or exhaustion. In Wyner's music such tensions, or even paradoxes, fuel the inexorable forward movement.

In giving musical shape and plot to these tensions, Wyner creates his most characteristic effects. For example, by subtly adjusting the relationship between contrasting materials — so that one element appears almost subliminally, only to emerge eventually as a destabilizing threat or epiphanic revelation — Wyner virtually imbues his music with its own unconscious: Musical potentialities that are latent or repressed in one context return, often in uncanny, revelatory forms, in another. In traversing the two large movements of the *Concert Duo*, for example, we take a trip through the mirror darkly. Musical elements, latent in one passage, become dominant in another; material that could simply be regarded as contrasting — when linked by an inverted logic of complementation — comes to be experienced as an uncanny doppelganger. In the interplay of the two movements of the *Concert Duo*, the foregrounding and backgrounding of contrasting elements is scrupulously but subtly inverted: an element of sustained, cantabile lyricism, intermittently present but largely suppressed in the first movement, comes to the fore in the second; the overtly dramatic rhetoric of the first movement recurs only as an anomaly in the introspective, overwhelmingly lyrical second. Similarly, the piano, the dominant instrument of the first movement, cedes to the violin in the second, and the mode of engagement between the participants is similarly interchanged: the independent behavior of the instruments in the first movement yields to a new capacity for interdependence in the second.

In the way it dramatizes complexity and models psychologically dense experience, as well as in the emergent logic of its contrasts, associations, and progressions, this music calls to mind a famous passage from George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, which explicitly describes an encounter with Rome:

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[A]ll this vast wreck of ambitious ideas, sensuous and spiritual mixed confusedly with the signs of breathing forgetfulness and degradation, at first jarred her as with an electric shock, and then urged themselves on her with that ache belonging to a glut of confused ideas which check the flow of emotion. Forms both pale and glowing took possession of her young sense, and fixed themselves in her memory even when she was not thinking of them, preparing strange associations which remained through her after years.

For Wyner (as for George Eliot, Freud, and so many other pilgrims to the Eternal City), the archeological jumble and flow of Rome triggered a decisive epiphany and, for the composer, a challenge: to absorb the glut of ideas presented by the world, as well as its sensuality and spirituality, its aches and electric shocks, and its strange associations — and to transmute them all into musical form.



In Wyner's music from the *Concert Duo* onward, the surfacing of latent material discovered (as it were) inside a complex musical utterance seems to figure something deeply human — the possibility for change, renewal, and new forms of self-awareness and understanding. For instance, *Passage* for seven instruments (1983), written for the tenth anniversary of Collage New Music, begins with a sequence of sustained, lush harmonies redolent of Rosenkavalier and Duke Ellington, but bearing the distinctive stamp of Wyner. A contrasting element, an interjection of pointillistic piano gestures insinuates itself not as a stark contrast, but rather as a nagging implication within, which eventually coalesces into a sequence of violent eruptions. The rich, legato harmonies floating ephemerally above respond to this development, becoming denser, more compressed, and occluded. When the texture ultimately thins out and the music turns back on itself, the sonority is familiar, but utterly transformed by delicate shifts of character and resonance. The harmony once again seems transparent, but also uncanny, fragile, even world-weary. The transformed echo of the opening is excruciatingly beautiful — but also exquisitely informed by everything that's happened along the way.

In the context of an entirely different formal challenge and musical occasion, Wyner's 1959 *Passover Offering* for flute, clarinet, trombone, and cello, a series of character pieces inspired by the Hagaddah, offers another dialectic of overt and latent possibility: a musical journey in which the narrative of the Exodus provokes a dramatic meditation on the tension between freedom and oppression. In the twinned, opening movements ("Oppression/Enslavement" and "Uprising/Plague/Exodus"), slavery and

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freedom are dialectically intertwined as the ruminative lyricism of the first movement yields to the urgent, manic energies of the second — a hair-raising exercise in motoric rhythm. (“Metronome indications should be taken seriously, especially ones which seem at first to be extreme,” the composer warns curtly in a performance note.) Although the “Desert March” that follows is less harried, and the fourth movement, “Despair/Hope,” finally achieves a more sustained lyricism, the unresolved energies generated in the opening opposition of oppression and release are not fully dissipated. The closing “Silent Prayer/Promised Land” offers a radical simplification: the lovely combination of low register flute and ‘cello harmonics in a simple but enigmatic utterance, which seems to register but not resolve the preceding conflicts. The composer’s version of the Passover fable is hardly a story of national triumph, but rather an ever-unresolved personal drama of opposing forces.

Wyner’s conjuring of opposing characters or forces may also yield less fraught results. Both of Wyner’s compositions for clarinet and piano, *Commedia* and *Cadenza!* (1969), the latter of which may be performed with harpsichord or piano, generate urbane, virtuoso comedy out of instrumental disparities. The first movement of *Cadenza!* (“Cadenze”) is a study in power relationships between two mock-heroic agents, each capable of breathtaking feats of virtuosity and musical invention. Their agonistic dialogue is relaxed in the second movement (“Aria”), as the piano’s arabesques become a stunningly florid, even self-parodying, accompaniment to a sustained clarinet line. Then a Webernesque satire, “Dodecadenza” sets the stage for the final movement, “Decadenza,” in which the competition between forces resumes its antagonism, and the two instruments argue their way brilliantly to an inconclusive double bar. The character of *Commedia* is altogether more lyrical and its argument more sustained; the clarinet and piano often negotiate an intimate partnership, built out of the composer’s astute compositional insight into the blending of sonorities in every kind of textural configuration and ensemble interaction. However, *Commedia*, like *Cadenza!*, exercises a penchant for play and a playful competition between heterogeneous actors — the flip side of Wyner’s dramas of psychological resistance and revelation.

An element of humor, even vulgarity, may intrude on the scene at almost any moment in Wyner’s music, however serious its demeanor and intentions. “Gravity concealed behind the jest” is one of the composer’s favorite phrases to describe the effect, which is most obviously manifest in explicitly light-hearted but emotionally nuanced pieces such as the cabaret songs, *Restaurant*, *Wines*, *Bistros*, *Shrines* (1994) — but also in the incursion of bebop into the *Concert Duo* or the insinuation of blues

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harmonies into any number of pieces. Indeed, whether the mood is overtly playful or sober, whether the context lyric, dramatic, the composer is always attuned to what he has called “the density of the material” — the multiplicity of its expressive implications and the effects made in bringing them to the surface. Wyner has often commented on the innuendoes of vernacular music in his pieces, always noting that jazz or pop sonorities appear as points on a harmonic continuum. His *Intermedio* for soprano and string orchestra (1974), he suggests, is “made from a handful of notes and chords which share certain audible characteristic with the vernacular style of the 1930s. Thus it is no accident that snatches of popular song emerge from the flow of the music in a natural way, evolving from the tonal texture rather than being arbitrarily imposed on it.” He has described the harmonic grounding of the gorgeous song cycle, *On This Most Voluptuous Night*, for soprano and chamber ensemble (1982), in much the same terms: “The compositional language is a varied one, ranging from strong tonal allusion to highly chromatic or atonal procedure. Nevertheless, at the core of all the invention is a narrow context, a chord or two, a characteristic series of tones, from which most, if not all, the material of the piece is drawn. Even the vernacular elements are derived from this governing context.” Similarly, *Passage I* “deals with vernacular materials, with utterly familiar musical material. A small collection of ordinary harmonies is set in motion...”

What these descriptions don’t try to capture, however, is the sense of discovery that occurs as Wyner negotiates his way through his gamut of harmonic dialects. A shift from chromatically saturated structure to cocktail jazz harmonies may occur out of the blue, producing a sudden jolt and revealing a previously latent possibility that lies dormant, at the edge of consciousness. Wyner’s *Three Short Fantasies* for piano are a particularly intense exploration of the expressive potential of re-imagining a highly chromatic idiom from different angles—its different harmonic possibilities and taut gestures spontaneously resurfacing and evaporating to form a case study in perspectivism. Alternatively, a stable idiom may be sustained over an entire movement or work — but quietly inflected by moments of harmonic contrast and intensification that suggest deep undercurrents, as is the case in Wyner’s transcendently charming Marianne Moore settings for women’s chorus and piano, *O to be a dragon* (1989). Or yet again, a capacity for transparency and calm may emerge out of a hyper-dramatic, chromatic dialect, as in the solo piano piece, *Toward the Center* (1988). The principle accommodates countless variations.

Wyner has explicitly articulated the impulse underlying his practice of harmonic alchemy — fittingly, in

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describing a piece based on religious materials and themes, the 1976 *Dances of Atonement* for violin and piano. “Like much of my work,” he has written, “*Dances of Atonement* seeks to transform simple, even commonplace material into abstract, mystical, or otherwise unforeseen states of being.” The process can, of course, work the other way around: complex material can be transmuted into simple utterances, to the same effect. The point of emphasis, however, is that the conjuring of “mystical or otherwise unforeseen states of being,” in Wyner’s musical world, is not the exclusive entitlement of either sacred or secular music. Rather, the composer rejoices in mingling the quotidian and the transcendent. Although the *Dances of Atonement* incorporate ancient Sephardic melodies, the musical rhetoric (like most of Wyner’s overtly Jewish music) is hardly elevated or pious. The second dance, “V’hakohanim” (a convocation of the Priesthood), reaches a stunning apotheosis that lovingly evokes the blues on its way to an enigmatic ending. Indeed, “V’hakohanim shares” affinities with the last song of *On This Most Voluptuous Night*, where Wyner finds a perfect literary match for his spiritual sensibilities: William Carlos Williams’s poem, “Puerto Rico Song.” “Well, God is/love,/so love me,” the speaker in the poem teases—and then repeats and varies the theme: God/is/love, so love me well.” Wyner’s also resets these words repeatedly, testing a variety of affects and attitudes, ending with an extended peroration that can be described as neo-classical calypso music. Its cheerfulness somehow inflects the poem’s underlying current of transience and loss all the more palpably and voluptuously.

The theme of transience, the experience of loving and losing the world, runs through much of Wyner’s music. It surfaces especially overtly in another extended song cycle, *The Second Madrigal: Voices of Women* (1999), where we encounter a variety of female voices, all embodied in a solo soprano, meditating on, sometimes fretting overtly about, processes of aging and the loss of beauty. Characteristically, Wyner works with the most palpable and immediate images—there is nothing coy or withholding in either his music or his choice of texts; but he inflects both with an equally characteristic subtlety and irony. The theme of aging and loss is simultaneously conveyed and belied by the extraordinarily beautiful, affecting, even consoling music that Wyner has crafted to express it — perhaps most tellingly, by the music’s ever-changing vocal and instrumental resonances and colors, which seem at once ephemeral but unfaded, bursting with vitality.

The thematic elements in play in Wyner’s large song cycles — the mingling of transcendence and dailyness, individual and communal experience, and the discovery of epiphanies in the exploration of a richly inflected

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harmonic language — all pre-date the composition of *Voluptuous Night* and *The Second Madrigal* by decades. Indeed, they are fully manifest in his *Friday Evening Service* (1963), an utterly unique rendering of the Sabbath evening liturgy bursting with harmonically invention, nuanced psychology, and unique personality. Wyner's virtually congenital understanding of the subtleties of the Jewish Sabbath service — its emotional flow and spiritual aspirations, its dialectic of choral and individual utterance, and its metabolism of strophic and through-composed structures — is fully integrated with a heterogeneous modernist idiom that evanescently references everything from the hieratic world of *Les Noces* to a distinctly American neo-classicism, the cantorial tradition, atonality, jazz. What results is a stunning enactment of cosmopolitan, American, modernist, Jewish experience.

Thus, it was (and still is) performance that matters, the shaping presence of a composer who seduces us into experience a new relationship to the sacred and secular, erudite and vernacular, the virtuosic and lyrical. As this essay is written, we await another gift from this ever restless and assured musical imagination: a piano concerto *Chiavi in Mano*, written for Robert Levin and the Boston Symphony. In virtuosity and lyricism, again, we anticipate revelation.

— Martin Brody

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# YEHUDI WYNER

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2(pic).2(ca).2(bcl).2+cbn/421+btbn.0/timp(crotales)/str
- Fragments from Antiquity (1978) ..... 25'  
Text: Yang Kuang, Sappho, Semonides of Amorgos,  
Archilochus of Paros  
Soprano; 2(pic).2.2+bcl.2/4.2.1+btbn.1/timp.3perc/hp/str
- Intermedio (1974) ..... 16'  
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- Lyric Harmony (1995) ..... 19'  
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- Prologue and Narrative (1994) ..... 28'  
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for hn, vn, pf

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## PIANO

Easy Suite (1949) .....	ca. 12'
New Fantasies (1991) .....	ca 20'
score 50484638 for sale in "Fantasies for Piano"	
Partita (1952) .....	ca. 15'
Post Fantasies (1993-97) .....	ca 15'
score 50484638 for sale in "Fantasies for Piano"	
Sonata (1954) .....	20'
Three Short Fantasies (1963-71) .....	ca. 8'
score 50484638 for sale in "Fantasies for Piano"	
"Short Fantasy No. 3" score 50502110 for sale in "Twentieth Century Americans"	
Toward the Center (1988) .....	18'
Wedding Dances: From the Notebook of Suzanne de Venné (1993) .....	10'

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## VOCAL/CHORAL

Canto Cantabile (1972) .....	10'
for soprano and concert band	
Dedication Anthem (1957) .....	12'
for cantor, SATB chorus, and organ	
Florida Express (1993) .....	2'
for soprano and piano	
Fragments from Antiquity <i>see under Orchestra</i>	
Friday Evening Service (1963) .....	35'
for cantor (tenor or baritone), SATB chorus and organ also exists in version for orchestra	
The Grass is High (1979) .....	2'
for soprano and piano	
Intermedio <i>see under Orchestra</i>	
Leonardo Vincitore (1988) .....	5'
for 2 sopranos, string bass, and piano	
Liturgical Fragments for the High Holidays (1971) .....	8'
for cantor, guitar, and recorder	
Lucille and Sam, Sam and Lucille (1991) .....	2'
for voice and piano	
A Mad Tea Party (from Alice's Adventures Underground) (1996) .....	15'
for soprano, 2 baritones, fl, vn, vc, pf	
Memorial Music I & II (1971-73) .....	8'
Text: from Ki K'shimcho, Psalm 39, Isaiah 40 for soprano and 3 flutes	
Nothing but in Things (2004) .....	2'
Text: Richard Harteis for voice and piano	
O To Be a Dragon (1989) .....	15'
Text: Marianne Moore four songs for women's chorus and piano	
Old Glory Music (1964) .....	23'
for female voices, fl(pic)[=rec], perc, hpd[=clavichord], org	
On This Most Voluptuous Night (1982) .....	26'
Text: William Carlos Williams for soprano, fl, hn, 2vn, va, vc, pf	
Orpheus (2003) .....	4'
Text: William Meredith for voice and piano	
Praise Ye the Lord (1996) .....	8'
for soprano, fl, ob, cl, bn, 2vn, va, vc, db, pf	
Psalm 143 (1952) .....	8'
for a cappella SATB chorus	
Restaurants, Wines, Bistros, Shrines (1994) .....	14'
song cycle for soprano, baritone, and piano	

The Second Madrigal: Voices of Women (1999) .....	26'
Text: Emperor Ch'ien-wen of Liang, Steve Kowitz, Chu Shu Chen, Anna Swir, May Swenson for soprano, wind quintet, string quintet and percussion	
Shir Hashirim (1993, 1997) .....	3'
for a cappella mixed voices; or a cappella women's chorus	
Songs (1950-2000)	
for voice and piano	
Psalms and Early Songs .....	15'
Text: Bible, Yeats, Wilbur (Psalm 199; Psalm 66; When You Are Old and Grey, Exeunt)	
The Sun (1951) .....	2'
Text: W. J. Turner	
Monkeys (1957) .....	2'
Text: Padraic Colum	
Adagio .....	3'
Disillusionment of 10 o'clock (1979) .....	2'
Text: Wallace Stevens	
Three Medieval Latin Lyrics (1955) .....	13'
Text: trans. Helen Waddell (Young and Gold-haired; Ah God, ah God; O Lovely Restless Eyes)	
The Day We Die (1998) .....	2'
Text: Southern Bushmen	
Torah Service with Instruments (1966) .....	12'
for SATB chorus, 2tpt, hn, tbn, db (no cantor)	
Wedding Music (1976) .....	12'
for sop, fl, cl(bcl), gtr(egtr), bongos	

## YEHUDI WYNER

### DISCOGRAPHY

#### All the Rage

Laurel Ann Maurer, flute; Mark Neiwirth, piano  
*4Tay Records CD 4021*

#### Brandeis Sunday

Lydian String Quartet  
*New World Records CD 80549*

#### Concert Duo

Michelle Makarski, violin; Brent McMunn, piano  
*New World Records CD 80391*

Matthew Raimondi, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano  
*CRI CD 701*

#### Dances of Atonement

Daniel Stepner, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano  
*New World Records CD 80549*

#### Demon's Welcome from 'The Mirror' (Suite)

James Guttman, double bass; Robert Schulz, percussion;  
Daniel Stepner, violin; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet  
*Naxos CD 8.559406*

#### Horntrio

Jean Rife, horn; James Buswell, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano  
*Bridge Records CD 9134*

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- Informal Piece  
Daniel Stepner, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano  
*New World Records CD 80549*
- Intermedio  
Susan Davenny Wyner, soprano; string orchestra, Yehudi  
Wyner, conductor  
*CRI CD 701*
- Memorial Music I & II  
Susan Davenny Wyner, soprano; Jonathan Drexler, Mary  
Posses, Peter Standaart, flutes  
*CRI CD 701*
- The Mirror  
Judi Brown Kirchner, mezzo-soprano; James Guttmann,  
doublebass; Matthew Kirchner, tenor; Richard Lalli, baritone;  
Carol Meyer, soprano; Robert Schulz, percussion; Daniel  
Stepner, violin; Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; Yehudi  
*Naxos CD 8.559423*
- On This Most Voluptuous Night  
Dominique Labelle, soprano; Lydian String Quartet;  
Christopher Krueger, flute; Jean Rife, horn; Yehudi  
Wyner, piano  
*New World Records CD 80549*
- Passage I  
Musical Elements; Daniel Asia, conductor  
*CRI CD 701*
- Passover Offering  
Richard Stoltzman, clarinet; David Taylor, trombone;  
Ronald Thomas, cello; Carol Wincenc, flute  
*Naxos CD 8.559423*
- Prologue and Narrative  
Andrés Diaz, cello; Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra; James  
Yannatos, conductor  
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- Quartet for Oboe and String Trio  
Peggy Pearson, oboe; Bayla Keyes, violin; Mary Ruth Ray,  
viola; Rhonda Rider, cello  
*Bridge Records CD 9134*
- The Second Madrigal: Voices of Women  
Dominique Labelle, soprano; ensemble conducted by  
Yehudi Wyner  
*Bridge Records CD 9134*
- Serenade for Seven Instruments  
Boston Symphony Chamber Players  
*CRI CD 701*
- String Quartet  
Lydian String Quartet  
*New World Records CD 80549*
- Tanz and Maisele  
Bruce Creditor, clarinet; Jennifer Langham, cello; Daniel  
Stepner, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano  
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- Three Short Fantasies  
Robert Miller, piano  
*CRI CD 701*

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