



AMERICAN CLASSICS



RICHARD DANIELPOUR

String Quartets Nos. 5–7

Delray String Quartet



Richard Danielpour (b. 1956)

String Quartets Nos. 5–7

My *Fifth*, *Sixth*, and *Seventh String Quartets* were composed within an eleven-year span from 2004 to 2014. *Quartets Nos. 5 and 6* were composed in 2004 and 2009 respectively, and have a fair amount in common. They were both composed in Northern Italy, at the Bogliasco Center near Genoa, on the Mediterranean Sea. They also both carry Italian subtitles, and both works are about the art of “letting go”.

String Quartet No. 5, ‘In Search of La vita nuova’ (2004), borrows its subtitle from Dante, and deals with my relationship to Italy over the last 35 years. I had always believed that Italy was, for me, a place of renewal and perhaps even a place where things became radically alive. It was finally on this trip that I began to understand that the magical place that many of us seek, is always within us. The trajectory of this three-movement work follows essentially that journey and sense of discovery. It was a commission for the Guarneri Quartet, and was the second work that I had written for them, with the first being a concerto for string quartet and orchestra titled *Voices of Remembrance*. There is an elliptical quality at the end of this quartet; it feels to me, many years later, almost intentionally unresolved or open, and I believe it may have unconsciously been because I had already thought about the connection to and content of what would become my *Sixth Quartet*.

String Quartet No. 6, ‘Addio’ (2009), was commissioned by the Eastman School of Music and Dartmouth College for the Ying Quartet. This nearly thirty minute, three-movement quartet, deals with the string quartet as a metaphor for family, and narrates the story of how families are eventually broken apart through distance, time, and ultimately through death. I specifically wanted a quartet whose members were actually related to one another, which is why I specifically asked the Ying Quartet, who are siblings, to premiere this work. (Oddly enough, one of its members, decided to leave the group shortly before the premiere of the piece.) The last movement, is particularly unusual and unique to my seven quartets in that the coda of the last movement consists of a hymn with variations, in which with each variation, one of the players leaves the stage until finally

only the cellist is left. In the last thirteen bars of the piece, the three offstage players, two violinists and the violist, play off stage in answer to the cellist’s final soliloquy before they conclude the work together on an enigmatic C major chord. There are several subtle quotes dealing with the notion of ‘farewell’. Beethoven’s *Piano Sonata No. 26, ‘Les Adieux’, Op. 81a*, Strauss’s *Four Last Songs* and Mahler’s *Ninth Symphony* are all covertly woven into the fabric of this piece.

My *String Quartet No. 7, ‘Psalms of Solace’* (2014), was written as a complement of sorts to my *String Quartet No. 3, ‘Psalms of Sorrow’* (1994). Both quartets employ a human voice in the last movement. In *No. 3*, I wrote a lyric baritone part with psalm texts translated by Steven Mitchell. But in *No. 7*, there is a soprano part in the last of the four movements, in which the soloist sings settings of psalm texts in Hebrew as well as a final text in the coda of the last movement, in English, which consists of a dovetailed sentence, borrowed from both the Book of Isaiah together with the Gospel of Luke (“Seek the Lord while He may be found, draw upon Him while He is near – for the Kingdom of God is within you.”).

If my *Fifth Quartet* was about the search for that magical place that we all seek, my *Seventh* was about a different search: the search for the Divine. Each movement relates to an attempt to find God. The intellect, the force of will, and romantic love are the topics of each of the first three movements respectively, but they all appear to fall short in their search for the Divine until they give way to the last movement. The soprano part in the last movement was written expressly for Hila Pliitmann, who has performed and recorded two of my earlier works involving soprano and orchestra.

Finally, I want to thank the Delray String Quartet for their tireless devotion to this project and to the performance of these, my last three quartets. The *String Quartet No. 7* was commissioned by the Delray String Quartet, with the generous assistance of Donald Thompson.

Richard Danielpour

String Quartet No. 7, ‘Psalms of Solace’

IV. Lento, solemn and prayerful

Ka-vo ky-vi-ti A-do-nai
Va-yet e-lai va-yish-ma sha-và-ti
Va-ya’ a-le-ni mi-bor sha-on
Mi-tit ha-ya-ven
va-ya-kem ai se-la rag-lai
ko-nen a-shu-rai
Vay-i-ten b’fi-shir kha-dash
te-hi-la l’e-lo hey-nu
yir-u ra-bim v’-yi-ra-u
v’-yiv-te-khu ba’ A-do-nai

(Psalm 40, 1–3)

Shi-ru l’a-do-nai shir kha-dash
Shi-ru l’a-do-nai shi-ru l’a-do-nai
Bar khu she-mo,
bas-ru my-om le-yom y’-shu-a-to

(Psalm 96, 1–2)

Seek the Lord while He may be found,
call upon Him while He is near.

(Isaiah, 55–6)

For the Kingdom of God is within you.

(Luke 17–21)

*Isaiah text from Revised Standard version.
Luke text from American King James version.*

*I waited patiently for the Lord;
He inclined to me and heard my cry.
He drew me up from the desolate pit
out of the miry bog
and set my feet upon a rock,
making my steps secure.
He put a new song in my mouth,
a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear,
and put their trust in the Lord.*

(Psalm 40, 1–3)

*Sing to the Lord a new song;
Sing to the Lord all the earth!
Sing to the Lord, bless His name,
Tell of His salvation from day to day.*

(Psalm 96, 1–2)

Hila Plitmann



Photo: Marc Royce

A glittering jewel on the international music scene, GRAMMY® Award-winning soprano Hila Plitmann is known worldwide for her astonishing musicianship, light and beautiful voice, and the ability to perform challenging new works. She regularly premieres works by today's leading composers while maintaining a vibrant and extraordinarily diverse professional life in film music, musical theatre, and song writing. Described as a performer with "tremendous vocal and physical grace," and "a vocal instrument that is simply unreal in its beauty," Plitmann is in constant demand as a singer of new and contemporary music. She has worked with many leading conductors and has appeared as a headliner with the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and numerous other orchestras and ensembles worldwide.

www.hilaplitmann.com

Delray String Quartet

Mei Mei Luo, Violin I • Tomás Cotik, Violin II • Richard Fleischman, Viola • Claudio Jaffé, Cello



Photo: So-Min Justine Kang Photography

The Delray String Quartet has established itself as one of the cultural jewels of the South Florida region. The quartet, formed in 2005 by the former concertmaster of the Florida Philharmonic, Mei Mei Luo, is based at the Colony Hotel in Delray Beach, Florida with its current line-up featuring Brazilian cellist Claudio Jaffé, Argentinian violinist Tomás Cotik, and Miami native Richard Fleischman on viola. The ensemble recently made its New York City debut at Bargemusic – New York's floating concert hall, in addition to an invitation to appear at the Mainly Mozart festival in Miami. The quartet has contributed to the string quartet repertoire by commissioning new works from American composers Kenneth Fuchs and Richard Danielpour. Recordings of the Delray String Quartet can be found on the Centaur and Naxos American Classics labels.

www.delraystringquartet.com

Richard Danielpour



Award-winning composer Richard Danielpour has established himself as one of the most gifted and sought-after composers of his generation. His music has attracted an international and illustrious array of champions, and, as a devoted mentor and educator, he has also had a significant impact on the younger generation of composers. His list of commissions includes some of the most celebrated artists of our day including Yo-Yo Ma, Jessye Norman, Dawn Upshaw, Emanuel Ax, Gil Shaham, Frederica von Stade, Thomas Hampson, Gary Graffman, Anthony McGill, the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio, the Guarneri and Emerson String Quartets, the New York City and Pacific Northwest Ballets, and institutions such as the New York Philharmonic, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the chamber orchestras of Vienna and of the Mariinsky Theatre, the Orchestre National de France, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and many more. With Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison, Danielpour created *Margaret Garner*, his first opera, which premiered in 2005 and had a second production with New York City Opera. He has received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Fellowship, a Guggenheim Award, the Bearn Prize from Columbia University, two Rockefeller Foundation Fellowships, and the Berlin Prize from the American Academy in Berlin. He served on the composition faculty of Manhattan School of Music from 1993 to 2017. In the Fall of 2017, he became a fully tenured professor of music at the Herb Alpert School of Music at UCLA. He is

also currently a member of the faculty of the Curtis Institute of Music where he has taught since 1997. Danielpour is one of the most recorded composers of his generation – many of his recordings can be found on the Naxos and Sony Classical labels. Danielpour's music is published by Lean Kat Music and Associated Music Publishers.

www.richard-danielpour.com

Richard DANIELPOUR

(b. 1956)

String Quartet No. 5, 'In Search of *La vita nuova*' (2004) 21:23

- 1 I. Maestoso 7:25
- 2 II. Relentlessly driven, sustained 6:04
- 3 III. Adagio, cantabile 7:54

String Quartet No. 6, 'Addio' (2009) 28:12

- 4 I. Moderato e triste 8:32
- 5 II. Presto giocoso 7:05
- 6 III. Cantabile e sostenuto 12:35

String Quartet No. 7, 'Psalms of Solace' (2014) 25:42

- 7 I. Misterioso e cantabile 5:54
- 8 II. Presto 3:46
- 9 III. Adagietto, simply flowing 6:43
- 10 IV. Lento, solemn and prayerful 9:19

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Hila Plitmann, Soprano 10

Delray String Quartet

Mei Mei Luo, Violin I • Tomás Cotik, Violin II

Richard Fleischman, Viola • Claudio Jaffé, Cello

Recorded: 20–23 May 2015 at The Hit Factory, Miami, Florida, USA

Producer and editor: Judith Sherman • Engineer: Dave Poler

Assistant editor: Jeanne Velonis • Assistant engineer: Perry Jimenez

The sung texts and translations can be found inside the booklet,
and may also be accessed at www.naxos.com/libretti/559845.htm

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Booklet notes: Richard Danielpour • Cover photo by Dylan Sciaba



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Each of these three quartets is informed by a particular theme: *String Quartet No. 5*, subtitled 'In Search of *La vita nuova*', reflects Richard Danielpour's relationship with Italy over the decades, conveying a sense of journey and discovery expressed in its ultimately elliptical trajectory. Concerned with the quartet as a metaphor for family, *String Quartet No. 6* explores ideas of distance, time and ultimately, leave-taking. *String Quartet No. 7*, subtitled 'Psalms of Solace', pursues the search for the Divine, successive movements taking intellect, the force of will, and romantic love as their subject before the appearance in the finale of a soprano voice.

www.naxos.com

Playing
Time:
75:55