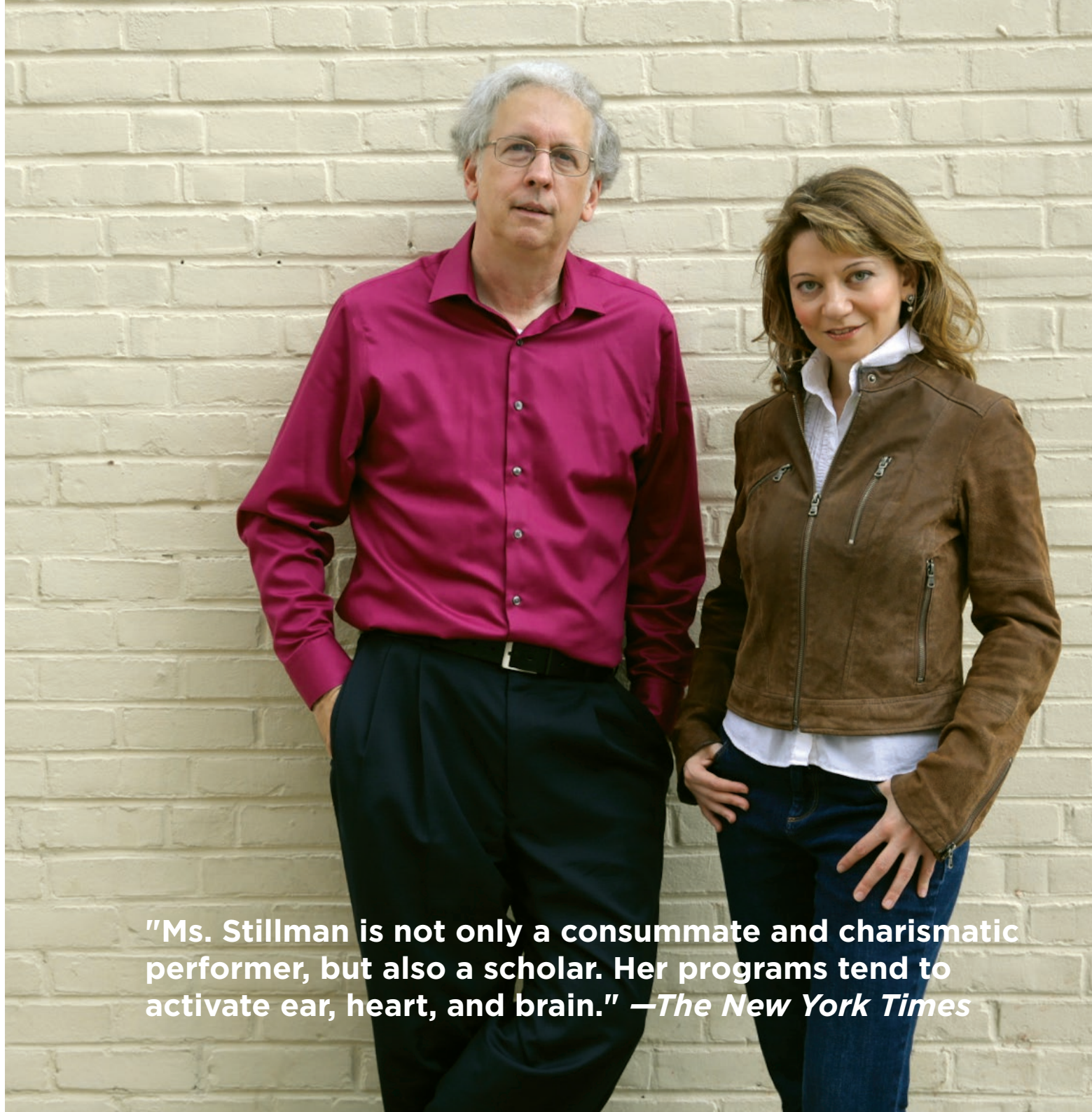


Danielpour
Finko

FREEDOM

MIMI STILLMAN, flute | CHARLES ABRAMOVIC, piano





"Ms. Stillman is not only a consummate and charismatic performer, but also a scholar. Her programs tend to activate ear, heart, and brain." —*The New York Times*

FREEDOM

MIMI STILLMAN, FLUTE CHARLES ABRAMOVIC, PIANO

MIECZYSLAW WEINBERG (1919-1996) (17:08)

Five Pieces for Flute and Piano (1947)

1. Landscape 2:58
2. First Dance 1:21
3. Second Dance 6:23
4. Melody 4:05
5. Third Dance 2:21

DAVID FINKO (1936) (18:49)

Sonata for Flute and Piano (2012)

6. Largo 5:34
7. Con moto 3:44
8. Lento assai 4:06
9. Con moto, appassionato 5:25

RICHARD DANIELPOUR (1956) (17:07)

Remembering Neda: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano (2009)

10. Lamentation 3:53
11. Desecration 3:23
12. Benediction 9:51

YUMI KENDALL, CELLO

(53:04)

A Note from Mimi Stillman

It is with great pleasure that I introduce “Freedom,” which brings together two works commissioned by my Dolce Suono Ensemble and one discovery, all receiving their first recordings here. This has been a journey of over six years of artistic exploration and planning during which pianist Charles Abramovic and I performed and lived with these works extensively. It began when we commissioned Richard Danielpour to write a trio for Dolce Suono Ensemble - pianist Charles Abramovic, cellist Yumi Kendall, and me. I had known and worked with Richard since my student days at the Curtis Institute of Music and had long been thinking of collaborating on a new piece. As it happened, the people of Iran erupted in protest for their freedom while he was composing the work in 2009, sparking Richard to reflect on his Persian-Jewish roots and the plight of the Iranian people living under a brutally repressive regime. The result was ***Remembering Neda: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano***, a work of great depth, a powerfully emotional contribution not only to our repertoire for flute, cello, and piano trio, but to the chamber music repertoire at large.

The next piece to enter my life was Mieczyslaw Weinberg's ***Five Pieces for Flute and Piano***. In 2011, I met with Bret Werb, the musicologist at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, to get his advice on a project I was planning on the music of the Holocaust. Toward the end of our conversation, Werb showed me a facsimile of a flute and piano work by Mieczyslaw Weinberg he had come across in St. Petersburg, saying he could not find references to any public performances since shortly after it was written in 1947, and published by the Soviet Composers' Union the following year. Playing through it, I was immediately captivated by its beauty and depth. This fortuitous meeting resulted in a nearly four-year journey of exploration of Mieczyslaw Weinberg's *Five Pieces for Flute and Piano* and his life and music. I had the privilege of giving the United States premiere of the work with Charlie on the Dolce Suono Ensemble series in Philadelphia in 2013, with subsequent performances at the National Flute Association in Chicago and on concert tours.

Mieczyslaw Weinberg suffered personal tragedy at the hands of both the Nazis and the Soviets. A Polish Jew, he narrowly escaped the Nazi invasion by fleeing to the Soviet Union, but his whole family was murdered in the Holocaust. For Weinberg and his fellow artists working under the Soviet regime, artistic expression was fraught with the threat of censorship, imprisonment, and murder. He formed a close friendship with Dmitri Shostakovich, and both composers were persecuted in the anti-Formalist purge of Stalin in 1948, along with Prokofiev, Khachaturian, and other composers. It is not known whether political events played a role in Weinberg's *Five Pieces*, effectively lost until recently, but the piece does come from a particularly turbulent period in Weinberg's life. He was imprisoned for several months in 1953, but was saved in part because of Stalin's death.

Five Pieces for Flute and Piano is a suite of contrasting character pieces. "Landscape", a lyrical movement, connotes a sense of spaciousness through ample rubato and silences. Three movements are contrasting dances - "First Dance," a march-like Allegretto which is sometimes elegant, at times ponderous; "Second Dance," which veers from a classical-sounding minuet to an off-kilter waltz; and "Third Dance," a virtuosic Presto in which flute and piano engage in playful dialogue culminating in a rousing finale. The fourth piece, "Melody," is the emotional core of the set, a soulful, at times anguished song.

I decided to commission David Finko to write his ***Sonata for Flute and Piano*** in 2012 after I performed and recorded his piccolo concerto with Orchestra 2001 and conductor James Freeman. I was impressed with Finko's compositional craft, part of a lineage stretching back through Shostakovich to Prokofiev to Rimsky-Korsakov. And I was moved by the searing personal stamp in his music when he reflects on his history of narrowly escaping the Nazis and suffering persecution under the Soviets as an artist and as a Jew. Something resonated with me as a Jewish artist of Eastern European descent, and I knew that if David wrote for me the result would be a profoundly eloquent work.

Working on this collection of pieces has been one of the most inspiring projects in my musical life, as it deals with the universal human yearning to be free. Danielpour writes on this theme, and the life stories of Weinberg and Finko are a testament to their courageous dedication to their art.

I dedicate this recording to the artists who at different times and places have dared to express themselves whatever the risks, in recognition of the triumph of artistic freedom and of the human spirit.

For further reading about this project,
visit www.mimistillman.org and www.dolcesuono.com

Notes from the Composers

DAVID FINKO, *SONATA FOR FLUTE AND PIANO*

The sonata was written for Mimi Stillman in 2012 and is dedicated to her. I identified the role of the flutist as protagonist in a loosely structured narrative throughout. The Largo opens with soft yet ominous chords in the piano for which I have a mental picture of a devastated city after a nuclear bombing. The flute enters with tentative steps, the image of a sole survivor roaming through this desolate landscape. Anguished cries interrupt the quietly flowing music. The second movement, Con moto, is a kind of dance exhibiting fury, virtuosity, and humor. A slow middle section provides a peaceful meditation. The Lento assai is gentle, dreamlike, and melancholic. The fourth movement, Con moto, appassionato, is dramatic and energetic. The flute's motif at the beginning of the sonata is now heard in loud passages. The piece ends with shimmering major sonorities, indicating that the lone voice finally obtains inner peace. —**David Finko**

RICHARD DANIELPOUR, *REMEMBERING NEDA: TRIO FOR FLUTE, CELLO, AND PIANO*

Remembering Neda: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano was composed in the fall of 2009 in remembrance of Neda Agha-Soltan, a young woman who was shot to death in protests during the summer of 2009 in Tehran. She was part of a wave of thousands of young Iranians who took to the streets in the wake of what were very likely rigged elections in Iran in June 2009. Because of Iran's repressive government (some have called it a "police state") which has evolved in recent years, and because of the way women in particular have been brutalized in that country, Neda has become, for Iranians and others, a symbol of the struggle to prevail against such political and social injustices. Her death was documented on television; millions throughout the world watched this young woman die on video. And when I saw this myself, I realized that I needed to say something about it in the way I am most articulate - through music.

My parents, Persian Jews, were born in Iran and came to the US when they were young. I was born in USA but spent a year as a child in Iran (1963), during the reign of the Shah Mohammed Pahlavi. My memories of that time are still quite clear. My mother, a sculptor, worked on several pieces commissioned by the Pahlavi family in the 1970s. And in the spring of 1980, roughly a year after the Iranian Revolution of 1979 when the Ayatollah Khomeini seized power, one of my paternal uncles was imprisoned, tortured and executed for the crime of owning land in Israel. Other members of my family were forced to leave Iran in the months and years that followed. I have kept much of my personal history at a distance from my work as a composer - until now. *Remembering Neda* is a cry for understanding in this most troubled place in the world. It is a lamentation for the losses incurred during this dark time in Iran. And it is a prayer of hope that this most unfortunate of situations will one day change. —**Richard Danielpour**

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Dolce Suono Ensemble: Stillman, Kendall, Abramovic

The Artists

MIMI STILLMAN, one of the most celebrated and innovative flutists of her generation, has been hailed by The New York Times as “a consummate and charismatic performer.” Called “the coolest flute player” by Philadelphia Magazine, she is critically acclaimed for her dazzling artistry and communicative powers. She has performed as soloist with orchestras including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Bach Collegium Stuttgart, Orquesta Sinfónica de Yucatán, and as recitalist and chamber musician at venues including Carnegie Hall, The Kennedy Center, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, Symphony Space, La Jolla Chamber Music Society, Verbier Festival (Switzerland), Kingston Chamber Music Festival, and Kol HaMusica (Israel). At age 12, Ms. Stillman was the youngest wind player ever admitted to the Curtis Institute of Music, where she studied with Julius Baker and Jeffrey Khaner. Her many awards include Young Concert Artists international Auditions, Astral Artists, the Bärenreiter Prize for Best Historical Performance for Winds, and the 2012 Women in the Arts Award from Women for Greater Philadelphia.

A wide-ranging artist, Ms. Stillman is equally at home with the classical canon, new music, and Latin genres. She holds an MA in history from the University of Pennsylvania and is a published author on music and history, integrating scholarship with her artistic vision in projects with her hallmark, thought-provoking depth. A Yamaha Performing Artist and Clinician, Mimi Stillman has taught masterclasses for the National Flute Association, Eastman School of Music, University of California, Cornell University, and conservatories and flute societies throughout the world. She is on faculty at Curtis Institute of Music Summerfest and Music For All National Festival.

Ms. Stillman can be heard on several CDs for EMI, Innova, and other labels, as well as a film score for Kevin Bacon. Her recording “Odyssey: 11 American Premieres for Flute and Piano,” with pianist Charles Abramovic (Innova), has received rave reviews on four continents. Her recordings can be heard on Performance Today, Sirius XM Satellite Radio, and WWFM The Classical Network where she is broadcast co-host. She is a frequent guest speaker at arts organizations and interviewee on radio, television, and online media. Her unique project *Syrinx Journey*, a tribute to Claude Debussy on his 150th anniversary through her daily recordings of *Syrinx* on her blog, garnered an international following.

As Artistic Director of Dolce Suono Ensemble which she founded in 2005, Mimi Stillman has created a dynamic force in the music world. With acclaimed performances and the premieres of 42 commissioned works in ten seasons, Dolce Suono Ensemble was Chamber Music America’s featured American Ensemble and won the Knight Arts Challenge for its “Música en tus Manos” engagement initiative with the Latino community. **www.mimistillman.org**.

CHARLES ABRAMOVIC is widely acclaimed for his performances as soloist, chamber musician, and recording artist. He has performed throughout the United States and Europe, with engagements at festivals in Berlin, Salzburg, Bermuda, Dubrovnik, Aspen, and Vancouver. He made his orchestral debut at the age of 14 with the Pittsburgh Symphony, and has performed as soloist with orchestras including the Baltimore Symphony, Colorado Philharmonic, and Florida Philharmonic. He has performed with artists such as Midori, Viktoria Mullova, and Sarah Chang. He is a founding member of Dolce Suono Ensemble, for which he performs as pianist and harpsichordist, and has served as artistic co-curator and commissioned composer. Mr. Abramovic has recorded for EMI, Innova, Naxos, Albany, Bridge, and other labels. His recording of the solo piano works of Delius for DTR has been highly praised. A distinguished composer as well as interpreter of new music, he has recorded the works of Babbitt, Schuller, and Schwantner. He is Professor of Keyboard Studies at Temple University. His teachers have included Natalie Phillips, Eleanor Sokoloff, Leon Fleisher, and Harvey Wedeen. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music, Peabody Conservatory, and received his doctorate from Temple University.

"Mimi Stillman is one of those artists who transform the everyday moments of our lives into something unforgettable." —*Diario de Yucatán*

YUMI KENDALL joined The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2004 as assistant principal cello upon graduation from the Curtis Institute of Music where she studied with the late David Soyer and Peter Wiley. She is a founding member of the Dryden String Quartet. She has performed chamber music on the Kennedy Center's Fortas Chamber series, the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, the Marlboro Music Festival, Kingston Chamber Music Festival, Angel Fire, the Verbier Festival, and Carnegie Hall's Emerson String Quartet Workshop. She has served on the faculties of the New York State School for Orchestral Studies, the Philadelphia International Music Festival, the University of Pennsylvania chamber music department, and the National Orchestral Institute.

"All programs should have this much to say, and say it so well." —*The Philadelphia Inquirer*

With deepest appreciation to Marshall Levine and Harriet Potashnick Levine for commissioning *Remembering Neda: Trio for Flute, Cello, and Piano*, and to The Philadelphia Cultural Fund and the Samuel S. Fels Fund.

Weinberg and Finko recorded September 2-3, 2014, Danielpour recorded December 16, 2013 at Gould Rehearsal Hall, Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia

Mixed and mastered by Drew Schlegel

Weinberg and Finko produced and recorded by Drew Schlegel

Danielpour produced and recorded by George Blood with assistant engineer Tadashi Matsuura

Innova director: Philip Blackburn

Operations director: Chris Campbell

Publicist: Steve McPherson

www.innova.mu

Graphic design: Mark Willie / Photos: Vanessa Briceño



