

MICHAEL HERSCH

Widely considered as, "one of the most fertile musical minds to emerge in the U.S. over the past generation," (*The Financial Times of London*), Michael Hersch continues to compose music of tremendous power and invention. Writing in *The Washington Post* more than a decade ago, critic Tim Page heralded the arrival on the international stage of "a Promethean creator who has been charged with relaying his particular message. He combines a mixture of urgency and facility that is dazzling."

Mr. Hersch's work has been conducted in the U.S. and abroad by conductors including Mariss Jansons, Alan Gilbert, Robert Spano, Marin Alsop, Carlos Kalmar, Yuri Temirkanov, James DePriest, and Gerard Schwarz, and has been performed by the major orchestras of Saint Louis, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Baltimore, Dallas, Cincinnati, Seattle, Oregon, Singapore, and ensembles including the String Soloists of the Berlin Philharmonic, and the Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia, among others. He has written for such soloists as Garrick Ohlsson, Thomas Hampson, Midori, Boris Pergamenschikow, Shai Wosner, Walter Boeykens, Peter Sheppard-Skaerved, Michael Sachs, and Daniel Gaisford. His solo and chamber works have appeared on programs throughout the world - from the Chamber Society of Lincoln Center to the Philharmonie in Berlin; from the British Museum and the Dartington New Music Festival in the U.K., to the Romaeuropa Festival in Italy; from Tanglewood in Boston to the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan.

Recent commissions include major works for the Cleveland Orchestra, and a new song cycle for baritone Thomas Hampson. Mr. Hersch's new string quartet commissioned by the Blair String Quartet, *Images from a Closed Ward*, will receive premiere performances in New York, Philadelphia and Nashville in 2012. Also scheduled for the upcoming season is Mr. Hersch's second piano concerto, *along the ravines*, commissioned by pianist Shai Wosner and the Borletti-Buitoni Trust. The work will receive its premiere with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra with Mr. Wosner as soloist. During the summer of 2011, Mr. Hersch's concerto for horn and orchestra, *a sheltered corner*, commissioned for the 50th anniversary of the Eastern Music Festival, premiered. In August of 2010, Mr. Hersch's *Symphony No. 3* was premiered by Marin Alsop and the Cabrillo Contemporary Music Festival Orchestra, a festival commission. His violin work, *in the snowy margins*, was premiered by Peter Sheppard-Skaerved at the Dartington New Music Festival in the U.K. Other recent commissions include Mr. Hersch's, *A Forest of Attics*, for the Network for New Music's 25th anniversary season, which premiered during the spring of 2010, and was selected as one of the most important classical music events of the year by *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. The paper said of the work, "A Forest of Attics' threw a Molotov cocktail into the concert: Everything before it paled in comparison. ...the music felt like war, with gestures erupting like sirens, high wind writing that sounded like screaming and rapid-fire percussion - all deployed with the control of a master but little sense of resolution. Hersch has written some towering works in recent years; this is yet another."

His music increasingly recorded, Vanguard Classics is in the midst of an acclaimed three volume survey of Mr. Hersch's complete music for solo strings. This project comes several years after the landmark 2007 boxed-set release of Mr. Hersch's, *The Vanishing Pavilions*, with the composer at the keyboard. Mr. Hersch's second disc for the label, featuring the composer performing his own works in addition to those of Feldman, Rihm and Josquin, was selected by *The Washington Post* and *Newsday* as among the most important recordings of 2004-05. That disc followed-up his first, released in 2003, which features Mr. Hersch performing his *Two Pieces for Piano* and *Recordatio*, with additional performances of Mr. Hersch's chamber works for strings by the String Soloists of the Berlin Philharmonic. In 2006, a CD of Mr. Hersch's orchestral works, including his early *Symphonies Nos. 1 & 2*, was released on the Naxos American Classics series with Marin Alsop conducting the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra.

In 2001, while living in Germany, Mr. Hersch completed his *Symphony No. 2*, which was commissioned by Mariss Jansons and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. It was the second Hersch work which Jansons and the orchestra toured with to Carnegie Hall. A work for clarinet and cello written for clarinetist Walter Boeykens was premiered at the Pantheon in Rome that year as part of the Romaeuropa Festival. During the summer of 2002, Hersch's *Octet for Strings*, commissioned by Boris Pergamenschikow and the Kronberg Akademie, was given its premiere at the Schloss Neuhardenberg Festival in Brandenburg. For the 2002/03 season Mr. Hersch was selected as the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's resident composer by Music Director Mariss Jansons. Mr. Hersch's *Piano Concerto*, commissioned by Garrick Ohlsson and the orchestras of St. Louis, Oregon and Pittsburgh, was premiered during the fall 2002. In early 2003, at the Philharmonie in Berlin, the String Soloists of the Berlin Philharmonic performed two of Hersch's works including the *Octet for Strings* and the premiere of his *Duo* for viola and cello. Later that year Mr. Hersch gave the world premiere of his *Recordatio* and *Two Pieces* at the Musica XXI Romaeuropa Festival in Italy. During this same concert, cellist Daniel Gaisford gave the premiere of Mr. Hersch's *Sonata No. 2 for Unaccompanied Cello*. In the fall of 2004, his work for violin and piano, *the wreckage of flowers*, which was commissioned by Midori, was given performances by the violinist and pianist Robert McDonald in Lisbon, London and New York. *Arraché*, which was commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra for the opening of their new concert hall, was premiered in early 2005. On October 14th, 2006 in Philadelphia, Mr. Hersch gave the world premiere of his *The Vanishing Pavilions* -- a work for solo piano with a duration of over two hours. He recorded the work the following year.

Also regarded among today's most formidable pianists, Mr. Hersch has appeared on the Van Cliburn Foundation's *Modern at the Modern* Series, the Romaeuropa Festival, the Phillips Collection in Washington D.C., the Festival of Contemporary Music *Nuova Consonanza*, the Warhol Museum, the Network for New Music Concert Series, the Left Bank Concert Society, the American Academy in Berlin Series, Festa Europea della Musica, St. Louis' Sheldon Concert Hall, and in New York City at Merkin Concert Hall, the 92nd St. Y - Tisch Center for the Performing Arts, and Carnegie Hall's Weill Recital Hall, among others.

Born in Washington D.C. in 1971, Michael Hersch first came to international attention at age twenty-five, when he was awarded First Prize in the American Composers Awards. The award resulted in a performance of his *Elegy*, conducted by Marin Alsop in New York's Alice Tully Hall in early 1997. Later that year he became one of the youngest recipients ever of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Composition. Mr. Hersch has also been the recipient of the Rome Prize (2000), the Berlin Prize (2001) and both the Charles Ives Scholarship (1996) and Goddard Lieberman Fellowship (2006) from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. Mr. Hersch was a fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, the Norfolk Festival for Contemporary Music, and the Pacific Music Festival in Sapporo, Japan. He studied at the Peabody Institute of Music in Baltimore with additional studies at the Moscow Conservatory in Russia. He currently serves as Chairman of the Department of Composition at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

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