NAXOS

AMERICAN CLASSICS

# THE AMERICAN TRUMPET

Eylar • Rouse • Starer • Sondheim
Carbon • McKinley • Froom

Jeffrey Silberschlag, Trumpet
Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

# THE AMERICAN TRUMPET

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|---|---|---|
| | **Leo Eylar (b. 1958):** | |
| | **Dance Suite** for Trumpet and String Orchestra (1994) | **13:45** |
| 1 | **In Sync** | **4:38** |
| 2 | **Romanza** | **4:19** |
| 3 | **Steppin' Out** | **4:48** |
| | **Steven Rouse (b. 1953):** | |
| 4 | **Enigma-Release** from *The Avatar* (1991, rev. 1994) | **4:56** |
| | **Robert Starer (1924-2001):** | |
| 5 | **Invocation** for Trumpet and String Orchestra (1962) | **5:19** |
| | **Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930),** | |
| | **arr. Silberschlag / orch. W.T. McKinley:** | |
| 6 | **Johanna** from *Sweeney Todd* (1979) | **5:22** |
| 7 | **Not While I'm Around** from *Sweeney Todd* (1979) | **4:43** |
| | **John Carbon (b. 1951):** | |
| 8 | **Notturno** for Trumpet, Harp and Strings (1944) | **12:17** |
| | **William Thomas McKinley (b. 1938):** | |
| | **Miniature Portraits** | |
| | for Trumpet, Bassoon and Strings (1988) | **17:26** |
| 9 | **Burlesco** | **1:42** |
| 10 | **Humoresque** | **1:42** |
| 11 | **Satirico** | **2:28** |
| 12 | **Sarcasmo** | **1:52** |
| 13 | **Ironico** | **2:10** |
| 14 | **Fantastico** | **2:23** |
| 15 | **Triste: Jazzy** | **2:11** |
| 16 | **Enigmatico** | **2:58** |
| | **David Froom (b. 1951):** | |
| 17 | **Serenade** for Trumpet and Strings (1994) | **5:35** |

## The American Trumpet: Leo Eylar (b. 1958) · Steven Rouse (b. 1953) · Robert Starer (1924-2001)

**Stephen Sondheim (b. 1930) · John Carbon (b. 1951) · William Thomas McKinley (b. 1938) · David Froom (b. 1951)**

The trumpet originated in antiquity, assumed its modern form in Europe during the nineteenth century and is now played throughout the world, but the instrument found a particularly congenial home in the United States. Its robust, assertive tone resonated with the character of America's young republic, and it is not surprising that the first great American poet, Walt Whitman, heard the song of nature, the pageant of human history and a vision of mankind's future in the playing of his Mystic Trumpeter. The trumpet figured prominently in one of the first distinctly American musical idioms, that of the marches composed by John Philip Sousa. With the start of the twentieth century, the trumpet became a principal voice of a new American music, jazz. But the trumpet also occupies an important place in American concert music. Among other things, two iconic compositions — Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* (later incorporated into his *Symphony No. 3*) and Charles Ives's *The Unanswered Question* — feature the instrument.

In view of all this, it seems only natural that America has developed a unique style of trumpet playing. The hallmarks of the American school, which was established and defined largely by William Vacchiano, are virtuosity and brilliance of tone. A longtime principal trumpeter with the New York Philharmonic, Vacchiano was also a dedicated teacher. Among his students were Gerard Schwarz, who established himself as the finest trumpeter of his generation before turning decisively to conducting, and Jeffrey Silberschlag, whose artistry is featured on this recording. Determined to expand the repertory of music showcasing the virtues of the American trumpet school, Jeffrey Silberschlag asked a number of composers to write pieces for him. Most of the works on this disc resulted from his requests.

Born in Los Angeles in 1958, Leo Eylar has been professionally active as a violinist, conductor and composer. He studied violin at Northwestern University and the University of Southern California, and trained as a conductor at Vienna's Hochschule für Musik and the San Francisco Conservatory, where he later joined the faculty. He currently teaches at California State University in Sacramento. Eylar wrote *Dance Suite for Trumpet and String Orchestra* in 1994 for Jeffrey Silberschlag. The first of the work's three movements, *In Sync*, uses rhythms and melodic inflections of jazz within a modernist idiom; indeed, the composer describes it as "a bebop-inspired tribute to Charlie Parker." The ensuing *Romanza* brings a quiet reverie, while the finale, *Steppin' Out*, begins with an angular fugue before turning to the rhythms of the waltz, tango and that lively Italian dance, the saltarello. The piece closes with an energized reprise of the wide-stepping motif heard at the start of its initial movement.

*Enigma-Release* is the central portion of a three-movement piece, *The Avatar*, by Steve Rouse. Originally scored for trumpet and piano, it was orchestrated by the composer at the request of Jeffrey Silberschlag. The composer notes that the music was inspired by the Hindu notion of enlightened beings, known as avatars, who strive to assist the spiritual journeys of less developed souls. Before attaining a state of enlightenment, an avatar undergoes a struggle for release from ignorance and misapprehension. *Enigma-Release* suggests that process in musical terms. A series of chords for string orchestra, punctuated by occasional chime tones, seem to meander aimlessly until, at length, the trumpet rises above the orchestral sonority, transcending it both literally and metaphorically. Born in 1953, Steve Rouse completed master and doctoral degrees in composition at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Leslie Bassett and William Albright. Since 1988 he has taught at the University of Louisville.

Robert Starer (1924-2001) studied in his native Vienna and in Jerusalem, where he took refuge in 1938. After serving in the Royal Air Force during World War II, Starer moved to the United States and completed his training at The Juilliard School, in New York. He later

taught at Juilliard and at the City University of New York, where he was a distinguished professor of composition. Starer wrote *Invocation* in 1962 for a television broadcast marking the Jewish High Holy Days. Scored for trumpet and strings, the piece begins with the trumpet intoning rhapsodic phrases in the manner of Jewish liturgical chant. Soon the strings adopt a similar manner of declamation and engage in an increasingly urgent dialogue with soloist. The music builds to a climax, then subsides, eventually returning to the sonorities heard in the opening measures.

Stephen Sondheim is the reigning master of another very American genre, the Broadway musical. Over a career that spans more than half a century, Sondheim has written both the music and lyrics for a series of shows that brought unprecedented sophistication to Broadway. Among his works are *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*, *A Little Night Music*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Sunday in the Park with George* and *Into the Woods*. Jeffrey Silberschlag first performed the two songs heard on this recording in his own adaptation for trumpet and piano. Subsequently, with Stephen Sondheim's consent, he commissioned William Thomas McKinley to orchestrate the accompaniment. (McKinley scored this for harp, xylophone and strings.) Both songs are from *Sweeney Todd*, and both convey, in different circumstances, a quality of ardent determination.

A native of Chicago, John Carbon was born in 1951 and studied composition at Rice University and the University of California at Santa Barbara, where his teachers included Thea Musgrave and Peter Racine Fricker. He composed *Notturno for Trumpet, Harp and Strings* in 1994 expressly for Jeffrey Silberschlag. The piece conveys a programmatic scenario based on Carbon's memories of warm summer nights in Madrid. The opening minutes suggest the city returning to life as its citizens wake from their afternoon siesta. The music grows more active as traffic builds and people take to the streets. Finally, the composer notes, "the music begins to calm into a sensual serenade, as the only strollers left on the street are the lovers, embracing in front of the now-closed shop windows. The music ends quietly, as it began, with the city once again asleep."

As its title suggests, William Thomas McKinley's *Eight Miniature Portraits* is a set of brief character pieces, each suggesting a different *dramatis persona*. (Unlike Elgar with his *Enigma Variations*, McKinley has not identified particular persons with these pieces.) The composer originally wrote this work as a duo for trumpet and bassoon. He later added accompaniment by string orchestra. McKinley initially found that the disparate sounds of the trumpet and bassoon gave rise "to ideas of satire, humor, irony ... and the like," but as the music took shape it assumed a more serious character. Several of the movements quote familiar works: Dvořák's *Humoresque* in the second portrait, Bach's *Second Brandenburg Concerto* in the fifth, and Gershwin's *Second Prelude* in the seventh. Born in 1938, William Thomas McKinley is a multi-faceted musician, an accomplished classical and jazz pianist, as well as a prolific composer. His music has been played by the London Symphony Orchestra, the Warsaw Philharmonic, and the Seattle Symphony, as well as by distinguished soloists. His many honors include awards from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts.

David Froom was born in California in 1951 and studied at the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Southern California, where his principal teacher was William Kraft, and at Columbia University, where he worked under Chou Wen-chung and Mario Davidovsky. A Fulbright Fellowship brought him to England, where he studied at Cambridge University with Alexander Goehr. He teaches at St. Mary's College of Maryland, where he chairs the Music Department. Froom composed *Serenade for Trumpet and Strings* in 1994 for Jeffrey Silberschlag. The piece is based on the theme stated at the outset by the trumpet and soon repeated by the string orchestra. Subsequent treatment of this idea has the trumpet playing over nearly the whole of its range and evinces the instrument's capacity for deeply lyrical expression.

**Paul Schiavo**

## Jeffrey Silberschlag

Photo: Bruno Murialdo

Jeffrey Silberschlag has appeared as trumpet soloist throughout Europe, the United States and Israel. He has performed with many of the world's leading musicians, and composers Morton Gould, William Thomas McKinley, Paul Chihara, Robert Hall Lewis, Lorenzo Ferrero and James Cohn have all written pieces for him. Silberschlag has held the position of Principal Trumpet with the Italian Radio Television Symphony Orchestra, Turin, the New York City Opera – National Company, and the Jerusalem Symphony. As a trumpet soloist he can be heard on Delos, MMC and Crystal. He has also appeared as a conductor with major orchestras in the United States and abroad, and has directed premières of works by such composers as Morton Gould, Lorenzo Ferrero, Ludovico Einaudi, Paul Chihara, Chou Wen-Chung, David Froom, Kenji Bunch, Judith Shatin, Scott Wheeler, Nathan Lincoln-DeCusatis, Lou Karchin, Vivian Aldenberg Rudow, and William Thomas McKinley. Jeffrey Silberschlag serves as artistic director and head of music performance at St Mary's College of Maryland, and is the Steven Muller Distinguished Professor in the Arts. Additionally, he is the music director of the Chesapeake Chamber Orchestra, President of the St Mary's County Arts Council and on the Board of Trustees of the Maryland Youth Symphony.

## Deborah Greitzer

Deborah Greitzer, bassoonist, is currently the Artistic Director of The New York Times Foundation's Young Performers Concert Series. She has been performing internationally since the age of nineteen and is a two-time winner of the Artists International Prize for Chamber Music and a recipient of Yale University's George Wellington Miles Award. In 1991 she was a co-winner of the Norton T. Dodge Award for Creative and Scholarly Achievement, and has held principal bassoon positions with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra, New York City Opera National Company, Maderia Bach Festival and the Italian Radio Television Symphony Orchestra, Turin.

## Seattle Symphony

The Seattle Symphony, founded in 1903, has gained international prominence with more than 140 recordings, twelve GRAMMY® nominations, two Emmys and numerous other awards. Gerard Schwarz led the Orchestra from 1985 to 2011, and is now Conductor Laureate. The Seattle Symphony is internationally recognized for its innovative programming and extensive recording history. The Orchestra performs in one of the world's finest concert venues – the acoustically superb Benaroya Hall – in downtown Seattle. Under the leadership of Music Director Ludovic Morlot since September 2011, the Symphony is heard live from September through July by more than 315,000 people. For more information on the Seattle Symphony, visit www.seattlesymphony.org.

## Gerard Schwarz

Photo: Ben VanHouten

Gerard Schwarz serves as Music Director of the Eastern Music Festival and Conductor Laureate of the Seattle Symphony. A renowned interpreter of nineteenth-century German, Austrian and Russian repertoire in addition to contemporary American composers, Schwarz recently completed his final season as music director of the Seattle Symphony after an acclaimed 26 years. His previous positions as Music Director include New York's Mostly Mozart Festival, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the New York Chamber Symphony. As a guest conductor he has worked with many of the world's finest orchestras and opera companies. His discography of over 350 releases showcases his collaborations with the Seattle Symphony, the Berlin Radio Symphony, The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Czech Philharmonic, the London Symphony Orchestra and L'Orchestre National de France, among others. His pioneering recordings of American symphonists Diamond, Hanson, Hovhaness, Piston and William Schuman have received high critical praise, as have his cycles of works by Brahms, Mahler, Rimsky-Korsakov, Robert Schumann, Shostakovich, Richard Strauss, Stravinsky and Wagner. Schwarz has received hundreds of honours and accolades including two Emmy Awards, 13 GRAMMY® nominations, six ASCAP Awards and numerous *Stereo Review* and *Ovation Awards*. He holds the Ditson Conductor's Award from Columbia University, was the first American named Conductor of the Year by *Musical America* and has received numerous honorary doctorates. The National Academy of Recording Arts & Sciences gave Schwarz its first "IMPACT" lifetime achievement award.

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## Jeffrey Silberschlag, Trumpet

### Deborah Greitzer, Bassoon*

## Seattle Symphony • Gerard Schwarz

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**A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet.**
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**The unique qualities of the American trumpet tradition are celebrated in this wide-ranging disc. From the drama of Leo Eylar's dazzling *Dance Suite* to the wit of William McKinley's *Miniature Portraits*, virtuosity and brilliance are assured. The two songs from Sondheim's musical *Sweeney Todd*, orchestrated by McKinley with the composer's consent, convey a quality of ardent determination. Jeffrey Silberschlag is the dedicatee of a number of these works and he carries on the illustrious lineage of American trumpeters. He is partnered by Gerard Schwarz, himself one of the great trumpeters of his generation, before turning to conducting.**

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