

## ELLEN TAAFFE ZWILICH: WORKS IN PERFORMANCE AROUND THE GLOBE –

***INCLUDING: Piano Quintet (2010) by New York Philharmonic Ensembles; Concerto for Trumpet and Five Players (1984) by the Gothenburg Symphony; Voyage for String Quartet (2012) by the Cassatt String Quartet in China and U.S.; Sonata in Three Movements (1974) on a New CD from Violinist Ariana Kim; Concerto Elegia (2015) Throughout the U.S.***

Any given concert season for Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, one of America's most honored composers, finds performances of her works worldwide, many of which she doesn't even know about. But an "anecdotal" report about the six months past and the six months ahead feature a range of works, newer and older, and artists that offer a dynamic snapshot of the life of the composer's work:

- **New York Philharmonic Ensembles** performs the **Piano Quintet (2011)**, a work that has the same instrumentation as, and thematic echoes from, Schubert's great "Trout" Quintet. It was called "a jazzy delight" by the San Diego Union Tribune, and David Patrick Stearns said in the Philadelphia Inquirer, "New companion pieces to long-established masterworks are arriving with increasing frequency, often with an inhibiting effect on the most strong-minded composer. But not Ellen Taaffe Zwilich [who] if anything, found an even more defined voice." [February 14, 2016, at Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY](#)
- **The Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra** performs **Concerto for Trumpet and Five Players (1984)**, in which the solo trumpet is complemented by flute/piccolo; clarinet/bass clarinet; percussion; contrabass; and piano, and about which The Boston Globe said, "the very sound of [it] quivered with imagination." [January 24, 2016, at The Gothenburg Concert Hall, Gothenburg, Sweden](#)
- **BlueWater Orchestra** of Cleveland performs **Concerto for Violin and Cello (1991)**, one of several works Zwilich has written for members of the Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio. [February 27, 2016, at The Breen Center, Cleveland, OH](#)
- **Violinist Jinjoo Cho**, the 2014 Gold Medalist of the International Violin Competition of Indianapolis, performs **Fantasy for Solo Violin (2014)** on her Carnegie Hall recital program. The work was commissioned by the competition and performed by the 16

semi-finalists. "Any work for solo violin presents technical challenges," said Zwilich at the time, "but it was my aim in writing *Fantasy for Solo Violin* to challenge the musical imagination and dramatic impulses of the violinist as well." [June 9, 2016, at Carnegie Hall, New York, NY](#)

- The **Cassatt String Quartet** performed ***Voyage for String Quartet (2012)*** at the Beijing Modern Music Festival in May 2015, and plans to perform it on July 15 and 19 at the [Seal Bay Festival](#) in Maine this summer. *Voyage* commemorates the centennials of the founding members – four siblings – of the original Galimir String Quartet. The premiere by the St. Lawrence String Quartet at the South Mountain Concerts series was praised by The Berkshire Eagle as "an instant success. ...much of the overall appeal is the invocation of tradition amid fresh areas of expression."

*Voyage* was also featured on the final concert of the inaugural [Bronislaw Huberman Project for Outstanding Young Players](#), a joint project of the iClassical Academy, the Jerusalem Music Center and the Raanana Music Center, on October 3, 2015. The legendary violinist Bronislaw Huberman had brought Felix and Renee Galimir from Vienna to Israel – very likely saving their lives – in 1936, and they became original members of the Palestine (later Israel) Philharmonic. Felix and Renee eventually reunited with sisters Adrienne and Marguerite in the United States, and Felix went on to become one of the most revered music pedagogues of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

- ***Concerto Elegia for Flute and String Orchestra (2015)*** was written for flutist Trudy Kane, former longtime principal flute of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and current faculty master artist at the Frost School of Music, University of Miami, which hosted the world premiere, conducted by Thomas Sleeper, in April 2015. The work, which South Florida Classical Review called "an outstanding addition to the flute repertoire," was commissioned by a consortium of 11 colleges, universities, and schools of music. In addition to the Frost School, those that have already presented performances include University of Nevada, Las Vegas; Boston Conservatory; and the University of Louisville.

Coming up is a performance at the [University of Michigan School of Music on January 27, 2016](#), and Trudy Kane will perform the work on August 13, 2016, at the [National Flute Association 2016 Convention](#). In addition, the work has been recorded for a future commercial release.

- **Violinist Ariana Kim** features the ***Sonata in Three Movements (1974)***, which was praised by The Strad for its "furious, driving energy," in her new recording [Routes of Evanescence: Music for Solo Violin & Violin +1 by American Women Composers](#).
- [The Israel Netanya Kibbutz Orchestra](#) presented six performances of the ***Clarinet Concerto (2002)***, conducted by Alexander Jiménez, throughout Israel in November 2015. The work was written in response to the events of 9/11, and described by Peter G. Davis in New York magazine as "a score truly inspired by a tragic event and one that is likely to transcend it." The orchestra's description of the program: "The Cuban-American conductor Jiménez and the American virtuoso clarinetist John Holden present

a program that is not only a collection of wonderful masterpieces, but works that characterized more than anything the state of mind at those particular points of time at the turn of the centuries (1800, 1900, 2000). Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, influenced by Viennese patriotism under Napoleon's occupation (around 1800), the most popular 'telenovela' at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century [Sibelius's *Pelléas et Mélisande*], and 9/11 – undoubtedly one of the strongest symbols of our time, dramatically represented in the Clarinet Concerto by Zwilich....”

- [Santa Cecilia Orchestra](#) of Los Angeles, an ensemble with a special focus on Latino music, featured one of Zwilich's most often-performed works, **Concerto Grosso (1985)**, written to mark the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Handel's birth, in “A Celebration of American and Latin Music” that also includes music by Piazzolla, Guerra, Copland, and de Falla at a January 16, 2016, concert at Wallis Annenberg Center, Beverly Hills, CA.

At a time when the musical offerings of the world are more varied than ever before, few composers have emerged with the unique personality of **Ellen Taaffe Zwilich**. Her music is widely known because it is performed, recorded, broadcast, and – above all – listened to and liked by all sorts of audiences the world over. Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians [8th edition] states: "There are not many composers in the modern world who possess the lucky combination of writing music of substance and at the same time exercising an immediate appeal to mixed audiences. Zwilich offers this happy combination of purely technical excellence and a distinct power of communication."

A prolific composer in virtually all media, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's works have been performed by most of the leading American orchestras and by major ensembles abroad. Her works include five symphonies and a string of concertos commissioned and performed over the past two decades by the nation's top orchestras.

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