

Celebraci-n de las Culturas de IberoamŽrica

Cuarteto Latinoamericano

Sunday, May 4, 2003, 3 pm
Hertz Hall

Saul Bitran, *violin*
Aron Bitran, *violin*
Javier Montiel, *viola*
Alvaro Bitran, *cello*

with

Sonia Rubinsky, *piano*

PROGRAM

Silvestre Revueltas Four Little Pieces

Steven Stucky *Nell'ombra, nella luce* *

Jorge Liderman Piano Quintet (*world premiere*) *

Con brio
Scherzando
Leggero

Sonia Rubinsky, *piano*

INTERMISSION

Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez *Cinco para Cuatro (U.S. premiere)* *

Roberto Sierra Twelve Bagatelles

* Dedicated to the Cuarteto Latinoamericano

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and the California Arts Council, a state agency.*

Four Little Pieces

Silvestre Revueltas (1899-1940)

Despite being Mexico's foremost composer of the 20th century, some misconceptions persist about Silvestre Revueltas and his music. The image of Revueltas as a bohemian composer who produced music sporadically and only through isolated and wanton fits of inspiration is totally false. In fact, he was a studious and disciplined musician, whose output reflects a career built on solid foundations and developed in a thoroughly organic way. Revueltas was first and foremost a talented violin player, having trained for the most part outside Mexico, and later working with various ensembles in his native country. In his capacity as a performer, Revueltas

came to be highly regarded, both at home and abroad. As a composer, he was a key figure of Mexican musical nationalism, equaled only by Carlos Chávez (1899-1978), and, even today, his music is considered the standard by which Mexican music of the first half of the 20th century is measured.

In the *Four Little Pieces for two violins and cello* (1929), Revueltas hints for the first time at what his chamber music language will be in the following years. The material is compact, and there is an abundance of bright tunes and ideas that are broken off or lost in the exuberance, soulfulness, and comedy of the music. Revueltas's knowledge of the string instruments is evident in his use of open strings, bright registers, and virtuosic passages.

As in most other Latin American countries, for Mexico it was internal political revolution against oppressive regimes, rather than actual independence from European government, that proved to be the turning point in establishing a true artistic identity for the country. The Mexican Revolution broke out in 1910 and lasted for over a decade. The effect of 10 years of political upheaval on the country's artistic life was immense, with patriotic fervor permeating every aspect of daily living, consuming families and long-established communities, and sending artists in all disciplines back to their glorious Indian and Meztizo roots.

Silvestre Revueltas was born on the very last day of 1899 at Santiago Papasquiaro, Durango, and studied violin in Colima, Mexico City, Austin, and then at the Chicago Musical College. He worked as a violinist in the United States during the early 1920s, but in 1929, Carlos Chavez made him assistant conductor of the Orquesta Sinfonica de Mexico. Revueltas conducted with the OSM until 1935, also teaching chamber music at the conservatory in Mexico City. He travelled to Europe in 1938, and upon returning to his country, concentrated exclusively on composition until his death in October 1940.

Nell'ombra, nella luce

Steven Stucky (b. 1949)

Nell'ombra, nella luce (In shadow, in light) is based on simple oppositions between bright and dark music—between music of high register, forceful gesture, clear harmony, optimistic tone on the one hand, and of low register, mysterious manner, and denser, less clear harmony on the other.

These contrasts are exposed almost immediately: the opening idea, *gioioso* (joyous), alternates with another idea, *soave* (gentle), but very soon these musics of the light are suddenly replaced by a shadowy, furtive music marked *oscuro* (dark). Throughout the 17-minute course of the piece, all these ideas—and others like them—will return several times, continually transformed but always in the service of the fundamental opposition between light and dark. At the same time, the rough outlines of a familiar formal layout may be glimpsed, especially something like a slow movement, and something like a scherzo (with trio!).

As often happens in my music, all the ideas are defined as much by factors like register, dynamics, instrumental texture, and expressive character, as by traditional thematic markers such as melody, rhythm, and motive. In this sense, like much of my work, *Nell'ombra, nella luce* is a composition of colors more than a composition of lines.

The work was commissioned by the Institute of American Music at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and composed between August 1999 and January 2000. The first performance was given by the Cuarteto Latinoamericano in Pittsburgh on February 12, 2000.

—Steven Stucky

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Steven Stucky is widely recognized as one of the leading American composers of his generation. He has written commissioned works for the Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Baltimore symphonies; for the Philadelphia and

Minnesota orchestras; for the Los Angeles Philharmonic; and for Chanticleer, the Boston Musica Viva, the Camerata Bern, and the Koussevitzky Foundation. The Carnegie Hall Corporation commissioned his orchestral work *Angelus* to open its 1990 Centennial Season celebration. The 1999-2000 season included the world premieres of *American Muse* (Los Angeles Philharmonic under Esa-Pekka Salonen, with baritone Sanford Sylvan) and his string quartet *Nell'ombra, nella luce* (Cuarteto Latinoamericano). Among Stucky's current projects are a percussion concerto for Evelyn Glennie and a recorder concerto for Michala Petri.

In addition to composing, Stucky is active as a conductor, writer, lecturer, and teacher, and he is a frequent guest composer on college campuses throughout the United States. A well-known expert on the music of the late Polish composer Witold Lutoslawski, Stucky won the ASCAP Deems Taylor Prize for his 1981 book *Lutoslawski and His Music* (Cambridge University Press). Among his other honors are a Guggenheim Fellowship (1986) and a Bogliasco Fellowship (1997).

Stucky has served on the faculty of Cornell University since 1980, chairing the music department there from 1992 to 1997. He has worked with the Los Angeles Philharmonic since 1988 as composer-in-residence and new music advisor.

Piano Quintet

Jorge Liderman (b. 1957)

One of the pleasures of being a composer is to write music for performers who are dedicated and inspired, and genuinely interested in, and committed to, honoring the intentions of the composer. Cuarteto Latinoamericano is a world-leading ensemble that exhibits these qualities.

I have collaborated with Cuarteto Latinoamericano since 1991, when they premiered my *Yzkor* for cantor and string quartet in a Cal Performances series concert. Since 1991, we have had the opportunity to collaborate on other projects. The first of these subsequent collaborations was in 1995, when I composed String Quartet No. 3 for the Cuarteto. The ensemble premiered the new work in Pittsburgh that same year. Piano Quintet, for piano and string quartet (2002), is the next work I composed for Cuarteto Latinoamericano. The piece was written with the virtuosity, expressiveness, and tightness of the ensemble in mind.

Piano Quintet is in three movements: *Con brio*, *Scherzando*, and *Leggero*. The first movement shows an overall continuous process in which the piano keeps time and accompanies the quartet in creating a melodic web that ascends in register as the movement progresses. At the middle of the movement, a contrasting homophonic section in the quartet and very delicate statements in the piano interrupt the melodic flow just described. The melodic web is not only interrupted by the middle section of the movement, but also by brief detours, repetitions, and contrasting statements that reoccur throughout the movement in all the instruments. Without a pause, the piano leads the quartet into the scherzo that opens the second movement of the piece. The relentless stopping and starting in the piano, and the growing commentaries and interruptions in the quartet, lead to the bold introduction of a sustained theme in the strings. The rest of the movement is a series of contrasting variations to the theme presented by the quartet.

While in the first movement, the quartet has a leading role, in the *scherzando* section of the second movement, the piano takes center stage. In the third movement, both piano and string quartet join forces and alternate roles, offering a closure to the duality presented in the first two movements. Like the first two movements, the third movement is characterized by a highly rhythmical and strongly directed continuous musical flow.

Piano Quintet was made possible in part by a UC MEXUS grant and is dedicated to Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

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Jorge Liderman was born in Buenos Aires, and began his musical studies at the Rubin Academy of Music in Jerusalem, under Mark Kopitman. In 1988, he received his doctorate in composition from the University of Chicago, where he worked with Ralph Shapey and Shulamit Ran. A year later, Liderman joined the composition faculty at the University of California Berkeley.

His works have been commissioned and performed by the London Sinfonietta, the American Composers Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Tanglewood Orchestra, Radio France, the Netherlands Wind Ensemble, the Nieuw Ensemble, the Arditti String Quartet, Cuarteto Latinoamericano, Boston Musica Viva, Milan Divertimento Ensemble, Chicago Pro Musica, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, as well as by individual artists including Oliver Knussen, Diego Masson, Esa Pekka Salonen, David Tanenbaum, and Gloria Cheng. Liderman's music has been featured at Darmstadt, Nuova Consonanza, Stuttgart's Neue Musik, Semaines Musicales Internationales d'Orleans, Mexico's International Forum, London's Viva, The International Rostrum of Composers (Paris), and Holland's Proms, among others. Liderman's music has also been recorded by CRI and CAMU.

Liderman's hour-long cantata *Song of Songs* (2001) was described by critics as "marvelous, energetic, gorgeous, and exuberant." His opera *Antigona Furiosa* has been the subject of a television documentary produced by German television (1992). His compositions have also been recorded and broadcast by the RAI, Radio France, Bavarian Radio, Radio Frankfurt, the BBC, Kol Israel, National Public Radio, Dutch Radio, Mexican television, and several Argentine radio stations.

Antigona Furiosa, written at the request of Hans Werner Henze, received the 1992 BMW International Music Theater Prize in conjunction with the 3rd Munich Biennale. That same year, Liderman was awarded the Argentine Tribune of Composers Prize for his chamber work *Yzkor*, which represented his country at the 1992 International Rostrum of Composers in Paris.

In 1988, he was invited to take part in the Gaudeamus International Composers Conference in Amsterdam. In 1987, Liderman was the recipient of a fellowship at the Tanglewood Music Center, which was followed by the second Paul Jacobs commission for an orchestral work. In 1986, his String Quartet No. 1 received a Radio France award. The same year, he was awarded the Argentine Tribune of Composers Prize for his work *Puncti, Belly, Etc., Etc...*, which represented his country at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris. In 1986, he also received a fellowship from the Darmstadt Internationales Musikinstitut. In 1985, his work *Shir Eres* was granted the Argentine Tribune of Composers Prize, and in 1984, Liderman received the ASCAP Raymond Hubell Music Award.

Cinco para Cuatro

Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez (b. 1964)

This collection of five short pieces for string quartet was written on a commission from Mexico's Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, and is dedicated to my friends of the Cuarteto Latinoamericano.

Each of these pieces explores in concentrated manner a unique emotional plateau, as well as distinct musical raw material. "Vocalise" focuses on very tight harmonies that intend nonetheless to create an effect of great amplitude and open space. "Chorale" is a rhythmic study that employs an exclusively monophonic texture. "Waves" creates a labyrinth of intervals in a musical context governed by a relentless ostinato. "Meditation" also explores a variety of intervallic configurations in a texture of extreme, spartan simplicity. Finally, "Ostinato Furioso" combines most of the features found in the previous pieces, in a dance of indomitable frenzy.

The following texts by United States poet Lia Purpura appear as epigraphs in some of the pieces. They were written originally for *Of Gold*, a choral work commissioned by Chanticleer.

Waves

A kindling, a birdcall, ropes of hair
Clean straw, bell-chimes, day's end,
Force through the blood, a body's memory
of flight
Too close, too close

Meditation

It comes in the morning with robes,
white vestments
And as day passes, turns its back,
This wash of gold is
And I am, by nightfall
Dim, and away

Ostinato furioso

I came for gold and found it
All around, by blessing and my curse

ÑCarlos Sanchez-Gutierrez

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The music of **Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez** has been described by the press as òvigorously organized and highly visceral . . . neither eclectic nor post-modern nor owing allegiance to any passing fashion.Ó

Born in Mexico City in 1964, he grew up in Guadalajara, and later studied at the Peabody Conservatory, Yale University, Princeton, and Tanglewood, under Henri Dutilleux, Jacob Druckman, and Martin Bresnick. He is currently associate professor of composition at San Francisco State University as well as visiting professor of composition at the Yale School of Music.

Last year, Sanchez-Gutierrez won First Prize at Mexico's Sinfónica Orchestral Competition, as well as the Lee Ettelson Composition Award. He has also been honored in recent years with fellowships from the Guggenheim, Fromm, Rockefeller, and Camargo foundations; was the 2000-01 American Academy of Arts and Letters Charles Ives Fellow; and received two BMI composition awards, the Mozart Medal from the governments of Mexico and Austria, and a Fulbright Fellowship. Sanchez-Gutierrez is a member of Mexico's prestigious Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte and was named Person of the Year in 2000 by the Mexican daily *Público*. His work is performed and recorded frequently in the United States, Latin America, Europe, and Japan.

Among Sanchez-Gutierrez's recently completed commissioned works are *Cinco para Cuatro* (a National Fine Arts Institute of Mexico commission for the Cuarteto Latinoamericano); *Clyde Beatty is Dead* (a Fromm Foundation at Harvard commission); the *De Kooning Movements* (Kobe Shinbun Arts Foundation for Japanese marimba virtuoso Makoto Nakura); *Of Gold* (Meet the Composer for Chanticleer); *Desde el Son* (National Fund for the Arts); *Afterlight* (ASCAP/the American Symphony Orchestra League for the Boston Modern Orchestra Project); *LuciŽrnagas* (Carnegie Hall Corp. for Eighth Blackbird); *The Ocean Calls* (a scenic work based on Neruda's poetry to be produced by Japan's NHK); *Snapshot: Waves* for New York's Elements Quartet; and *El Mozote*, an evening-long collaborative work with French choreographer Pascal Rioult, Argentinean director Susana Tubert, and the US-based Core Ensemble (Barlow Endowment/Cary Foundation). He is currently working on a commission from Munich's A/Devantgarde Festival (a chamber opera). Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez has written for all media, including film, theater, and multimedia productions.

Twelve Bagatelles

Roberto Sierra (b. 1953)

Each of the 12 miniatures introduces a new note, until all the notes of the

chromatic scales are heard. At the same time, each bagatelle introduces a different compositional technique, such as canons or polyrhythmic structures. Although each one of the bagatelles is extremely brief, my intention was to create very short pieces that, although meant to be played together, could also stand as individual works. In the last one, a passacaglia is heard where the ground motive contains all the notes of the scale. Gradually, a note at a time is eliminated, leaving only the note G, the same note of the first bagatelle.

ÑRoberto Sierra

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In recent years, the music of **Roberto Sierra** has received much attention and has met with particular acclaim both in North America and Europe. In 1987, Sierra came to prominence when his first major orchestral composition, *Jæbilo*, was performed at Carnegie Hall by the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. His works have been performed by the major orchestras of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta, Houston, Minnesota, Detroit, and Phoenix, as well as by the American Composers Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony Orchestra, the Kronos Quartet, Continuum, England's BBC Symphony, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and at Wolf Trap, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and Festival Casals.

Recent commissions include *Con madera, metal y cuero* for Evelyn Glennie, commissioned by the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the Casals Festival; *Cuentos*, commissioned by Camerata de las Américas; *Cuatro Versos*, a cello concerto commissioned by Carlos Prieto; *Fanfarria, aria y movimiento perpetuo* for violin and piano, commissioned by the Library of Congress to celebrate Copland's centennial; Concerto for Orchestra for the centennial celebrations of the Philadelphia Orchestra, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and the Philadelphia Orchestra; and *Fandangos*, for the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC.

Sierra was born in Puerto Rico, where he pursued early studies at the Conservatory of Music and the University of Puerto Rico. After graduation, he went to Europe to further his musical knowledge, studying first at the Royal College of Music and the University of London, and later at the Institute for Sonology in Utrecht. Between 1979 and 1982, he did advanced work in composition at the Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg under the renowned György Ligeti. In 1982, Sierra returned to Puerto Rico to occupy administrative posts in arts administration and higher education, first as director of the cultural activities department at the University of Puerto Rico, and later as chancellor of the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music. Throughout this period, he was regularly engaged as a composer on the international scene.

His *Salsa para vientos* was a prize-winning work at the 1983 Budapest Spring Festival, and his *Suite* won first prize at the Alienor Harpsichord Competition. In 1987, the Almeida Festival in London devoted an entire concert to his chamber works (the event was recorded and broadcast by the BBC). In April 2000, Continuum presented a retrospective of Sierra's chamber works at Merkin Concert Hall in New York. Roberto Sierra's music may be heard on CDs released by New World Records, Newport Classic, New Albion, ADDA, VRAS Productions, Musical Heritage Society, Koss Classics, CRI, BMG, Fleur de Son, and Dorian Records.

In 1989, Roberto Sierra became the composer-in-residence of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. In addition to advising the MSO on American repertoire, Sierra contributed to the musical life of Milwaukee with a number of new works, including pieces for local chamber and choral ensembles, and for individual musicians. The Milwaukee-based Koss Classics released a CD of his orchestral music, featuring the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra. Sierra is currently teaching composition at Cornell University. During the 2000-2001

season, he was composer-in-residence with the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano is an authoritative voice in Latin American classical music. The three Bitran brothers—Saul and Aron (violinists) and Alvaro (cellist)—together with Javier Montiel (violinist) have become international ambassadors of their repertoire, touring extensively in Europe, North, Central, and South America, as well as New Zealand and Israel.

The Cuarteto Latinoamericano performs the classical and contemporary repertoire and specializes in performing the works of composers of the Americas. They premiere many new works each season, for which they have received three CMA/ASCAP Awards for adventurous programming.

Now celebrating its 20th season, this award winning string quartet from Mexico has been in residence at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh since 1987, and at the Centro Nacional de Artes in Mexico City since 1991. To celebrate the group's 20th season, the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes of Mexico commissioned four new works to be created for the Cuarteto. Over 20 seasons, more than 50 works have been written for the musicians, and they have given over 100 world premieres.

Guest artists who have appeared with the Cuarteto have included cellists Janos Starker and Yehuda Hanani; guitarists Narciso Yepes and Sharon Isbin; flutist Julius Baker; clarinetist Joaquin Valdepenas; pianists Santiago Rodriguez, Cyprien Katsaris, and Rudolph Buchbinder; tenor Ramon Vargas; violinist Andres Cardenes; and bandoneonist Cesar Olguin.

Highlights of the group's recent touring have included an appearance at Teatro alla Scala in Milano, Festival New Zealand in Wellington, the Ravinia Festival, the American Composers Orchestra's *Sonidos de las Americas* in New York, Winnipeg's New Music Festival, Israel's New Music Biennale, and a two-concert panorama of Latin American quartet music at the Purcell Room at London's South Bank Festival.

The Cuarteto's current season includes returns to a residency with the Austin Chamber Music Society; their debut at the Ravinia Festival in Chicago; returns to the Maverick Concerts in New York State for two concerts; appearances in Washington (DC) at the Mexican Cultural Institute; concerts in Paris and Berlin; a four-concert series in Pittsburgh; returns to California and Venezuela; and performances at the Cervantino Festival, where they will premiere two new works for quartet and a new work for quartet and orchestra.

Orchestral performances have included the Concerto Grosso by Julian Orbon, conducted by Eduardo Mata with the Simon Bolivar Orchestra of Venezuela, which was recorded for Dorian Records. Subsequent performances were with the Orquesta Filarmonica de la Ciudad de Mexico; Orquesta Filarmonica de la UNAM; the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa; orchestras in Uruguay, El Salvador, and Argentina; and with the Dallas Symphony, San Antonio Symphony, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen, at the Ojai Festival.

Residency activities include lecture demonstrations in English, Spanish, and Portuguese; readings of student compositions; home concerts; school concerts; and coachings. Residencies have included the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Kennedy Center in Washington (DC), Mainly Mozart in San Diego, St. Mary's College in Los Angeles, Dartmouth College, the Ojai Festival in California, the Denver Chamber Music Series, and Cornell University.

The group's innovative residencies at international festivals, universities, and chamber music societies have spanned several continents and developed audiences. The Cuarteto is credited in Mexico with the emergence of an entire generation of string players.

In 1991, the Cuarteto began a residency with the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes in Mexico. Each season, 12 concerts are sponsored by the Instituto and performed at the main venues in Mexico City as well as in the

smallest Mexican communities. A national string quartet competition has also been established in the group's name.

The ensemble's 15-year residency at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh is centered around a series of four concerts and six visits. The group's student composition competition, which was established in 1990, culminated last season with the opening of the Pittsburgh series, which was devoted entirely to works by student composers.

A series of "Underground" videos was started with the premiere of a commissioned new work to accompany a kinetic art piece in a subway station in Mexico City. The work, "Metro Chabacano" by Javier Alvarez, has since been premiered in the subways of Toronto and Los Angeles.

Cuarteto Latinoamericano records for Elan, New Albion, Urtext, and Dorian Records, among others. The group's Villa Lobos anthology of 17 string quartets is recorded on six volumes for Dorian Records (Volume 6 was nominated for a Grammy Award and a Latin Grammy in 2002 in the field of Best Chamber Music Performance). The anthology has been performed in a cycle of five concerts in Mexico City and at the Cervantino Festival in Guanajuato.

The Cuarteto's discography includes more than 30 CDs. Among other composers, the group has recorded the complete works for quartet of Silvestre Revueitas, Alberto Ginastera, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Rodolfo Halffter, and Julian Orbon, together with numerous first recordings of works by Latin American composers.

Sonia Rubinsky (*piano*) exemplifies the great tradition of virtuoso pianists; profound and serious musical commitment combined with an exciting and refined technical gift. Her ongoing drive to learn new repertoire has resulted in an active body of works that includes numerous concertos and countless solo works encompassing all periods of music, from the Baroque to the modern.

Rubinsky began musical studies in her native Campinas, Brazil, at the age of five. She gave her first solo recital at age six, and her first performance as soloist with orchestra at age 12. She then moved to Jerusalem, where she continued studies at the Rubin Academy. In Israel, she was selected to play in a master class taught by Artur Schnabel (her performance is documented in the film *Schnabel in Jerusalem*). Rubinsky holds a doctorate from The Juilliard School, and she has studied with Olga Normanha, Benjamin Oren, Irma Wolpe, Vlado Perlemuter, Beveridge Webster, William Daghljan, and Jacob Lateiner. Rubinsky is a recipient of the prestigious William Petschek Award as well as a "Best Recitalist of the Year" award of the São Paulo Association of Music Critics. She is also the 1984 first prize winner of the Artists International Competition in New York.

Rubinsky has appeared as soloist with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, the Richmond Symphony, the Syracuse Symphony, the Springfield Symphony, and the Phoenix Symphony, among others. As a recitalist, she has performed in New York, Boston, Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Paris, Amsterdam, Rome, Tel-Aviv, and Montevideo. Rubinsky has toured Brazil extensively, appearing with its most notable orchestras, including the Orchestra of the Teatro Municipal of Rio de Janeiro and of São Paulo, the Brazilian Symphony Orchestra, the Campinas Symphony, and the São Paulo State Symphony.

Rubinsky's recording of the complete works of Villa-Lobos for piano for Naxos is under way (total of eight CDs). Together with her widely acclaimed Vol. I ("One of the best five recordings of 1999," said Bryce Morrison of *Gramophone* magazine; also nominated for a 1999 Grammy Award), Vol. II was recently released worldwide and Vol. III is scheduled to be released later this year. Rubinsky has also recorded for Nonesuch/Elektra (music by John Adams) and the Daghljan label (Debussy, Villa-Lobos, and Messiaen).

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