

## Steven R. Gerber (b. 1948)

"Steven R. Gerber has one of the most direct and readily accessible voices in contemporary American music...Gerber's urgent, highly charged language arouses graphic emotions, even at first hearing." (Amazon Rough Guides/online)

"...an important addition to music in the late 20th century, its sense of evolution from previous generations welcome at a time when change seems to have become a virtue in itself." (Fanfare)

Steven R. Gerber was born in 1948 in Washington, D.C. and now lives in New York City. He received degrees from Haverford College and from Princeton University, where he received a 4-year fellowship. His composition teachers included Robert Parris, J. K. Randall, Earl Kim, and Milton Babbitt.

Two CDs of Gerber's orchestral works were released on major labels in 2000. Chandos issued his **Symphony No. 1, Dirge and Awakening, Viola Concerto, and Triple Overture**, played by the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra under Thomas Sanderling, with Lars Anders Tomter, viola, and the Bekova Sisters Trio. KOCH International Classics, under a grant from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, released his **Violin Concerto, Cello Concerto, and Serenade for String Orchestra**, played by the National Chamber Orchestra under Piotr Gajewski, with soloists Kurt Nikkanen and Carter Brey. After the American premiere of his **Violin Concerto** at the Concert Hall of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in 1995 by Nikkanen and the National Chamber Orchestra under Gajewski, the Washington Post called it "a major addition to the contemporary violin repertoire: lyrical, passionate, beautifully tailored to the instrument's character and capabilities...Gerber has revived the spirit of romanticism in this work, with a strong sense of tonal melody and of the dramatic effects and surprises still possible in traditional forms...one of the year's most memorable events." And when Carter Brey premiered his **Cello Concerto** with the same orchestra and conductor in 1996, the Washington Post said, "Gerber's concerto seems to have what it takes to establish a foothold.... The music is composed with a fine sense of instrumental color.... Gerber has given his soloist some fine, expressive melodies."

Recent works of Gerber's include a **Viola Concerto** written for Yuri Bashmet and premiered by Bashmet at his summer festival in Tours, France; **String Quartets No. 4 and 5**, written respectively for the Fine Arts and Amernet String Quartets; "**Spirituals**" for clarinet and string quartet, commissioned by Concertante Chamber Players for performances in 2000 at the Library of Congress and Merkin Hall (NYC) and in Harrisburg; a **Clarinet Concerto** for Jon Manasse, premiered by him with the National Philharmonic Orchestra under Maestro Piotr Gajewski, and "**Fanfare for the Voice of A-M-E-R-I-C-A**," commissioned to celebrate VOA's 60th anniversary, and premiered at the VOA auditorium on a 9/11 memorial concert in 2003. The Fanfare has since then

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been performed by the Wheeling Symphony, the Omaha Symphony, the University of Tennessee (Knoxville) Orchestra, and by the National Philharmonic Orchestra at the new Music Center at Strathmore as part of the 2005 ASOL convention.

Gerber's music is well-known also in Russia and Ukraine, where he has had numerous tours with literally dozens of performances of his orchestral works as well as many concerts of his solo and chamber works. Several of his major works were given their world premieres there, including "**Dirge and Awakening**" by the Russian National Orchestra under Mikhail Pletnev at the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory, **Violin Concerto** by the Novosibirsk Philharmonic under Arnold Katz, with soloist Kurt Nikkanen, and **Serenade Concertante** by Chamber Orchestra Kremlin under Misha Rachlevsky at the Small Hall of the Moscow Conservatory. Gerber has written several works for famed Russian violinist Tatyana Grindenko.

In 2007 Arabesque released a CD of three of Gerber's orchestral works, Spirituals for string orchestra, Clarinet Concerto, and Serenade Concertante, featuring the St. Petersburg State Academic Symphony, conducted by Vladimir Lande, and clarinetist Jon Manasse. In 2009 Naxos will release on its American Masters series a CD of nine solo and chamber works of Gerber, all featuring violinist Kurt Nikkanen, and including violinists Cho-Liang Lin and Cyrus Beroukhim, cellist Brinton Smith, and pianist Sara Davis Buechner.

Gerber recently completed a new orchestral work, "Music in Dark Times," commissioned by Vladimir Ashkenazy. The four world premiere performances took place in March, 2009, with Maestro Ashkenazy conducting the San Francisco Symphony.