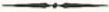


Miklos Rozsa




All Miklos Rozsa's music is informed by the rich heritage of folk song which permeated the soul of the young Miklos when growing up on his father's estate in rural Hungary. The Rhythmic dynamism and chaste purity of Magyar music pervades all Rozsa's compositions, a distinction shared with another of Hungary's most famous sons, Zoltan Kodaly. Studies at the conservatory at Leipzig and a sojourn in the artistic mecca of Paris resulted in the first of Roza's international successes, the *Theme, Variations and Finale*, which was championed by such diverse conductors as Munch, Bohm, Solti, Ormandy, and Bernstein. In 1937 Rozsa began composing film scores, initially for Alexander Korda in England, but after 1940 in Hollywood, where Rozsa rapidly became one of the genre's most expert and prolific exponents, gaining Academy Awards for *Spellbound*, *A Double Life* and *Ben-Hur*. But Rozsa was cautious to divide his muse and pursue both his classical ambitions and sundry film assignments – and few composers have proved so successful in both arenas; despite the composition of ninety film scores Rozsa was still able to create the *Three Hungarian Sketches*, the *Concerto For Strings*, *Kaleidoscope*, the *Overture To A Symphony Concert*, the *Sinfonia Concertante*, the *Tripartita*, the *Notturmo Ungbereses*, and a myriad of chamber works, whilst concertos for Violin and Piano were written for and premiered by Jascha Heifitz and Leonard Pennario respectively. The predominant share of Rozsa's film and concert work has been recorded by such diverse labels as RCA, MGM, Polydor, MCA, Silva Screen, and Koch.

The *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* was first performed by Janos Starker in 1969. Whereas the *Concerto for Piano*, written three years previously, had been extrovert and flamboyant, the Cello Concerto is more introspective, more intimate... more heartfelt. Like Gerard Schurmann's *The Gardens of Exile* this is a profound work; but it is still a virtuoso piece. Girded by a standard three movement structure, the concerto, although personal in tone, is still an immense, densely orchestrated work; the cello part is intricate, exacting, and rigorous – and the general pacing demanding – although there is a respite in the elegiac “Lento,” and in the “misterioso” which precedes the final flourishing of the main theme in the last movement. If folk music, Roza's well-spring of invention, can be equated with song, then surprisingly there is little “cantabile” here; for Roza, this is a spare, austere accomplishment, a sober step aside from the overt lyricism which characterizes most of his orchestral work. Here, perhaps, Roza is permitting a glimpse of his inner world, his interior self; if most of his compositions sing of homeland, of bucolic bliss, of rural radiance, and just occasionally of political chaos, then the Cello Concerto informs of a different dimension – not so much of country and heritage, but of private contemplation and personal endeavor.



Whilst they have pursued somewhat differing musical idioms, there are parallels to be drawn between the achievements of Gerard Schurmann and Miklos Rozsa, most particularly in that the two have enjoyed unqualified success in both the classical and the film music fields. Interestingly, the two were neighbors for fifteen years, living within ten minutes of each other in the Hollywood Hills, but they never met. There is another connection, and one which amplifies the Hungarian flavor of this album, in that Gerard Schurmann's mother, although born in Holland, was the daughter of Hungarian parents, and that Peter Rejto is also of Hungarian lineage – son of the late internationally acclaimed cellist, Gabor Rejto, also a former resident of Los Angeles.



Gerard Schurmann



Gerard Schurmann was born of Dutch parents in the former Dutch East Indies, but lived in England from childhood until 1981, when he settled in the United States. He studied composition with Alan Rawsthorne in England, and conducting with Franco Ferrara in Italy. Whilst still in his early twenties he was appointed resident orchestral conductor at Netherlands Radio in Hilversum. Following his subsequent return to England he quickly established himself as a composer with a growing international reputation. Gerard Schurmann's concert music retains affinities with his part-British heritage, even though it manifests distinct multicultural influences (occasioned, more than anything, by the composer's early upbringing in foreign climes) and defies easy identification with the standard neo-classical tradition; Schurmann's music strikes out for unique ground - always contemporary in idiom, but never slavishly dodecaphonic, his harmonic language is decidedly more astringent and the scoring certainly more exotic than the comfortable mainstream. It is not easy to categorize Schurmann's output precisely; the searing invention of the *Six Studies of Francis Bacon*, and the brilliantly braided invention of *Variants for Orchestra* do suggest similitude with the outlandish expression of contemporaries Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle, but the Magyar echoes of *The Double Heart*, and, more pertinent, the *Nine Slovak Folk Songs*, also suggest a deep regard for more archaic idioms - whilst real cultural divide is typified by the song-cycle *Chuench'i*, a musical celebration of Chinese poetry. Other concert repertoire encompasses a fascinating miscellany of form - from the Opera-Cantata, *Piers Plowman*, to the Choral Cantata *The Double Heart*, to *Concertos for Violin And Piano* written for, and first performed by, Ruggiero Ricci and John Ogden respectively, and

culminating in the wonderfully expressive and colorful new world of the *Concerto for Orchestra*, commissioned for the 100th Anniversary of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra in 1996. Gerard Schurmann has also successfully pursued a parallel career as a composer for the Cinema, Scoring over twenty films from Ealing Classics to Walt Disney adventure romps. His classical Works have been recorded by Chandos, EMI, Silva Screen, Pye, CBS, and Nonesuch, whilst a Compendium of his film music is available on Cloud Nine Records.

Gerard Schurmann completed *The Gardens of Exile* in January of 1991 and the score carries a dedication to Michael Tippett. The work was first performed by the present soloist and conductor with the Bournemouth Symphony orchestra in March 1991, and was simultaneously broadcast by the BBC. Although not ostensibly a cello concerto the piece has an elaborate virtuoso cello part and pursues its own exceptional agenda. The composer contributed the following program note for the initial performances:

The condition of exile referred to in the title of this piece is internal, while the metaphorical gardens in which to dwell contain cultivated memories of the past, back to childhood. That such a place would tend to evoke feelings tinged with wistful nostalgia and occasional sadness should come as no surprise. On the other hand there is also joyful celebration:

...that in our embers
Is something that doth live,
That nature yet remembers
What was so fugitive!"

(William Wordsworth)

Superimposed on this idea were my recollections of a vast expanse of semi-wild tropical gardens of Java, once part of the Dutch East Indies, in which I was allowed to play and roam freely as a child during the holidays.

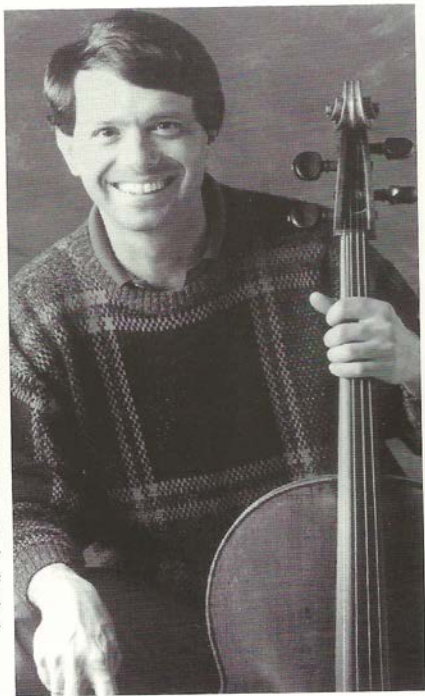
The work is in one continuous movement, sectional in construction, and opens with a substantial Orchestral introduction that sets the scene. A ruminative solo for cor anglais, accompanied by two clarinets, elicits a dramatic response from the full orchestra. This strongly characterized sequence leads to a series of encounters, both lyrical and more sinister, in an atmospheric landscape.

The solo cello, discreetly accompanied by celesta and tuned percussion, enters the environment quietly singing, and proceeds to develop the main material.

Near the center of the piece, a cadenza briefly interrupts an extended fast section, marked Vivace. This is followed by a gradual restatement of earlier material in reverse order, until the opening cor anglais solo finally reappears, rendered by the cello accompanied by violas. The music ends quietly, almost reluctantly, with a dying resolve.

Peter Rejto

One of America's premiere instrumental soloists, in recent years Peter Rejto's concert itinerary has been extensive and expansive; he has played concerti with many leading North American orchestras, and concert tours have taken him to England (to the Cheltenham Festival), Canada, Switzerland, Bulgaria, The Netherlands (to the Concertgebouw), Italy (to Santa Cecilia), Brazil, Venezuela, Hungary, Germany, and Hong Kong. He performs at many summer festivals including Aspen, La Jolla, Round Top, Carmel Bach, Chamber Music Los Angeles, Fairbanks, Sitka, Santa Fe, Grand Canyon, BRAVO! Colorado - and the Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival, of which he is the Artistic Director. As a founding member of the Los Angeles Piano Quartet he has toured throughout the USA and Europe and has recorded for Music Masters and Pickwick. In 1991 he was soloist with the Bournemouth Symphony - conducted by Howard Williams - in the first performance of Gerard Schurmann's *The Gardens of Exile* broadcast live over the BBC. Peter Rejto is Professor of Cello at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. He plays a Dominicus Montagnana, made in Venice in 1721.





The young British conductor Howard Williams has conducted many of the major orchestras of Great Britain, Belgium, Holland, France, Austria, and Sweden. In 1991 he was appointed Principal Conductor of the Pecs Hungarian Symphony Orchestra, and has also established a close and continuing relationship with the Hungarian State Symphony Orchestra. Besides standard classical repertoire, Howard Williams has an impressive background in Opera and Ballet; he was six years on the staff of the English National Opera, and has also conducted extensively for the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden, for the Dutch National Ballet, and Nederlands Dans Theater.

Howard Williams

Executive Producer: Peter Rejto
Recording Producers: Matthew Snyder & Sun Coe
Digital Recording Engineer: Lazlo Dobos
Digital Editing & CD Mastering:
Matthew Snyder, Alpine Records
Recorded in Franz Liszt Hall, Pecs December 1995
Liner Notes: David Wishart
Cello Photos: Dominicus Montagnana 1721
The Gardens of Exile Published by Novello & Co
Miklos Rozsa Concerto for Cello Published by
Breitkopf & Hartel
Special thanks to Oberlin College
Office of Research and Sponsored
programs for a generous 'Grant in Aid'

Miklos Rozsa

Concerto for Cello and Orchestra Op.32

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. <i>Moderato</i> | 13:42 |
| 2. <i>Lento Con Grande Espressione</i> | 9:20 |
| 3. <i>Allegro Vivo</i> | 8:24 |

Gerard Schurmann

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 4. <i>The Gardens of Exile</i> | 28:50 |
|--------------------------------|-------|

Total Time: 59:33

