

## Svara-Yantra

**Svara-Yantra** is a violin concerto in three movements, written for violin, tabla, and symphony orchestra. **Svara-Yantra** was inspired by the brilliant and passionate playing of the violinist Joanna Kurkowicz. Svara refers to pitches or notes in Indian music theory, but in this piece it means audible sound or "shruti." Yantra is a term for geometric diagrams, usually consisting of intersecting triangles and circles, which are used to harness the mind in meditation. **Svara-Yantra** represents three sonic meditations on Raga and Tala. It is based on the Alap-Jor-Jhalla-Gat structure of North Indian classical music. Like an Indian Raga performance, the three movements in my piece form a continuum of tempos, from very slow in the first movement to extremely fast in the third movement.

The first movement, *Alap Rag Misra Pilu*, is dedicated to Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasria. *Raga Pilu* unfolds gradually with the violin playing a long ornamental arch-like melody against a drone-like harmonic mosaic, which forms the orchestral backdrop to the violin line. The orchestral harmonies represent a transformation of the drone into harmonic fields and a vertical spatialization

of the Raga into several spectral layers.

The second movement, *Rag Kerwani*, is inspired by the great South Indian violin master L. Subramaniam, and is based on a chaconne-like structure. The 5/4 theme, made essentially of a three note motif (A, G, F#) is repeated 3 times, each time in rhythmic diminution (dotted quarters, quarters, and eights). The theme forms a point of reference for variations of increasing complexity which follow, and culminate in a tabla solo. A final restatement and elaboration of the theme concludes this movement.

After an improvised cadenza which draws on themes from the first two movements, and composed by Joanna Kurkowicz, materials for the third movement are introduced. *Joy*, the final movement is based on a composition by the jazz guitarist John McLaughlin and consists of an orchestral tutti in unison, followed by a violin-tabla duet cadenza and a return of the orchestral tutti. The third movement is dedicated to the violinist Joanna Kurkowicz, Samir Chatterjee, and John McLaughlin.

**Svara-Yantra** was commissioned by Joanna Kurkowicz, and the National Polish

## Shirish Korde

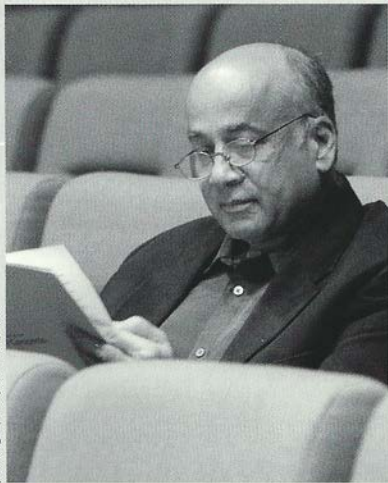
Radio Symphony Orchestra and was premiered on November 27, 2005 in Katowice, Poland under the direction of Rubén Silva.

*Cranes Dancing* is part of a series of pieces based on a crane motif. The first piece in the series, *Tenderness of Cranes* (1990), was based on a Japanese shakuhachi [end-blown bamboo flute] composition called *Tsuru no Sugomori*, and is influenced by techniques of the Japanese shakuhachi and notions of breath, rhythm, and elastic time. *Cranes Dancing* expands the ideas of *Tenderness of Cranes* and is scored for solo violin and string orchestra. The work is in several sections, with a string orchestra shadowing the solo violin line, sometimes refracting it or commenting on it. The string orchestra colors used in the piece are drawn from and elaborate the shakuhachi flute colors in the original *Tenderness*, and also draw on the colors of Japanese Gagaku orchestral music. *Cranes Dancing* is dedicated to violinist Joanna Kurkovicz, who gave the first performance of this work at Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts on March 11, 2005.

Composer Shirish Korde is celebrated for “integrating and synthesizing music of diverse cultures into breathtaking works of complex expressive layers” *Musical America*. He is among “a few contemporary composers who have been deeply touched by music of non-Western cultures, Jazz, and computer technology and who has created a powerful and communicative compositional language” *Computer Music Journal*. His distinctive music has been performed throughout the U.S. and Europe.

He has composed five large-scale music/theatre works including *Chitra* and *Rasa*, which are characterized by strong influences of Asian dramatic and musical forms. *Rasa* was awarded a NEA opera grant and was presented in 1999 by the Da Capo Chamber Players and the New York Virtuoso Singers at the Sonic Boom Festival at the Miller Theatre in New York. His most recent opera/dance drama, *Chitra*, was presented by the Fleet *Boston Celebrity Series* in the spring of 2003 also at the Tsai Performance Center.

Shirish Korde's grants and awards include: The National Flute Association, Composer's Inc., The Fuller Foundation,



The Lef Foundation, The Fromm Foundation, The Massachusetts Council for the Arts, The National Endowment for the Arts, New England Foundation for the Arts, The Mellon Foundation, The Artists Foundation, Meet the Composer, and the Saint Botolph Club Foundation Award. His works are recorded on Spectrum, Centaur, and Neuma.

Shirish Korde's most recent compositions include *Blue Topeng*, co-commissioned by the Fleet Boston Celebrity Series and Boston Musica Viva, which features the Balinese

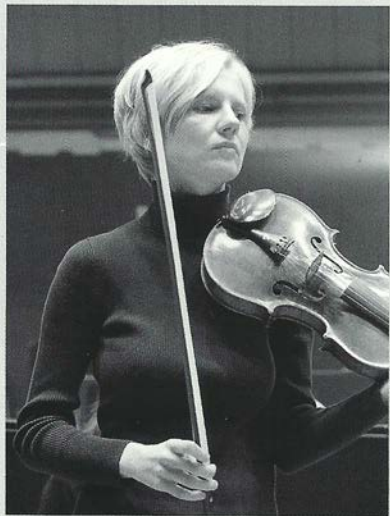
artist Desak Made Suarti Laksmi and ethnomusicologist Bethany Collier. They perform on specially designed Balinese gamelan instruments in combination with the soloists of the Boston Musica Viva. In the fall of 2004, several of his works were featured at the Exchange Festival of contemporary music at the House of World Cultures in Berlin featuring The Ensemble Modern. His violin concerto, *Svara-Yantra* was premiered by Joanna Kurkowicz and the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra in Poland. A song cycle based on the life of *Phoolan Devi*, India's Bandit Queen, will be premiered by Da Capo Chamber Players in June 2006.

Shirish Korde is a composer of Indian descent who spent his early years in East Africa. He arrived in the United States in 1965, already well versed in the traditions of Indian and African music. He studied Jazz at Berklee College of Music, composition and theory with Robert Cogan at New England Conservatory, and Ethnomusicology, especially Asian Music (including Indian drumming with Sharda Sahai), at Brown University. Currently, he is Professor of Music at the College of the Holy Cross.

## Joanna Kurkowicz

Praised by the Boston Globe as “a very cultivated artist indeed,” violinist Joanna Kurkowicz enjoys an active and versatile career as an award-winning soloist, recitalist, chamber musician and concertmistress. She has performed on many of the great concert stages of the world, including Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Jordan Hall, Boston and the Grosse Saal, Salzburg, and has appeared as a soloist with the Metamorphosen Chamber Orchestra, the Jefferson Symphony, the San Luis Obispo Symphony, the New England String Ensemble, the Berkshire Symphony, the Poznan Philharmonic, the Polish National Radio Orchestra in Katowice and others. She has received awards from the Samuel Chester, Presser, Kosciuszko, and Olevsky Foundations, the Harvard Musical Association, the Irving Kleinfelder International Competition, the Carmel and Coleman Chamber Music Competitions, and, in Poland, the Henryk Wieniawski and Tadeusz Wronski International Competitions.

Ms. Kurkowicz currently serves as concertmistress of the Boston Philharmonic and the Berkshire Symphony. Her previous positions as concertmistress include the Boston



Modern Orchestra Project (1999–2004) and the Vermont Symphony (1999–2001). She was a member of the acclaimed Metamorphosen and Orpheus Chamber Orchestras (1997–2003). Since fall 2002, she holds the position of “Artist in Residence” at the prestigious Williams College in Williamstown, Massachusetts. An avid and sought-after chamber musician, she has collaborated with such eminent artists as Jaime Laredo, Charles

Treger, Laurence Lesser and James Buswell. She is a founding member and Artistic Advisor of the Chameleon Arts Ensemble of Boston and the Plymouth Chamber Music Festival. As a guest artist, she has participated in the Mozarteum Festival in Salzburg, the Ravinia Festival, the Rockport Chamber Music Festival, and the Martha's Vineyard Chamber Music Society. Ms. Kurkowicz is a strong advocate of contemporary music; she has premiered works by G. Schuller, R. Shapey, P. Ruders, D. Kechley and G. Bacewicz, and performs frequently with Boston Musica Viva.

Her recent solo CD featuring music of Grazyna Bacewicz released on Chandos Records has been praised in *Gramophone Magazine* for "...disciplined virtuosity..." and in *International Record Review* for "...passion, authority and sheer élan..." and received fantastic reviews in numerous magazines including *Strad*, *American Record Guide* and *Muzyka 21*. Her Bridge Records release featuring music of Alfred Schnittke has been noted in the *Strad Magazine* for "strong impact... her playing holds one enthralled, demonstrating strong personality

and assured technique." The CD was chosen by Boston Herald as "Best of Year 2001." Ms. Kurkowicz can also be heard on the Centaur, CRI, Capstone, Albany, New World Records and Archetype labels. Her Boston premiere of sonatas by Rebecca Clarke was listed in the *Boston Globe* "Best Concerts of 2000."

A native of Lublin, Poland, Joanna Kurkowicz began to study violin under a tutelage of Franciszek Falger. She earned a Master of Music Degree with distinction from the Paderewski Conservatory of Music in Poznan, Poland, in the studio of Jadwiga Kalliszewska. She came to the United States in 1992 to complete a second Master of Music degree as a student and teaching assistant of Charles Treger at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ms. Kurkowicz completed the prestigious Artist Diploma program at the New England Conservatory of Music where she studied with Masuko Ushioda.

Joanna Kurkowicz plays on a Petrus Guarnerius violin dated from 1699.

## Pandit Samir Chatterjee

Pandit Samir Chatterjee is a virtuoso Tabla player of India and was trained in the Farukhabad Gharana school of playing. He travels across the world performing in numerous festivals as a soloist and with musicians from both Indian and western traditions. In concert, Pandit Chatterjee has accompanied many of India's greatest musicians. All India Radio maintains Pandit Chatterjee as an A-rated artist. He can be heard on numerous recordings, featured as a soloist, accompanying many of India's greatest musicians and in collaboration with Western musicians.

Pandit Samir Chatterjee lives in New York, where he has become a catalyst in the fusion of Indian and Western music, performing with many jazz and avant guard musicians. He is a member of jazz trios, *Sync* with Ned Rothenberg and Jerome Harris and *Manodharma* with Rudresh Mahanthappa and Vijay Iyer. He is the composer and director of *Nacho Nacho - Gypsy Storyteller* and *Chhand-Anand*, World percussion Ensemble. He performs with Sanjay Mishra on his CD



photograph by Mitch Gurowitz

"Blue Incantation" featuring Jerry Garcia as guest artist. Pandit Samir Chatterjee is the Founder-Director of *Chhandayan*, an organization dedicated to promoting and preserving Indian music and culture. He has collaborated with the composer Shirish Korde on several large-scale projects including the operas *Chitra* and *Rasa*, and his violin concerto *Svara-Yantra*.

## Rubén Silva

Rubén Silva, conductor, studied conducting and composition at the Catholic University in Bolivia. In 1978, he was granted a scholarship by the Polish Government for conducting at the F. Chopin Academy of Music in Warsaw. In 1983 he was prize-winner in the Third International G. Fitelberg Competition in Katowice, as the youngest among the finalists of the event. In the same year he was among the finalists of the International RTV Competition in Budapest. In 1983 Rubén Silva became a conductor of the Warsaw Chamber Opera. During that period he conducted Mozart's *Magic Flute*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *Così fan tutte* and *Halka* by S. Moniuszko. Apart from his numerous appearances with the Warsaw Chamber Opera abroad on tours and festivals throughout Europe, Mr. Silva's individual career has been particularly extensive in Spain, where he has con-



ducted operas at Teatro de la Zarzuela and other venues. Since 1998 he has collaborated with the Chamber Opera in Belgrade. His repertoire encompasses 35 operas as well as a very versatile set of concert music, ranging in style from the Baroque to contemporary music. Since 2005 Ruben Silva has been the Artistic Director of The Koszalin Philharmonic Orchestra.

## Lukasz Borowicz

Lukasz Borowicz was born in 1977 in Warsaw. He is currently an assistant conductor to Kazimierz Kord—Music Director of the Polish National Opera at Wielki Theatre. He earned a diploma with distinction in orchestral and opera conducting with Prof. Boguslaw Madey at the Fryderyk Chopin Music Academy in Warsaw. Even before graduation, he was assistant conductor to Iván Fischer at the Budapest Festival Orchestra. He received a grant to study at the Accademia Musicale Chigiana with maestro Gianluigi Gelmetti in 1999 and 2000. He had the honour to assist Prof. Krzysztof Penderecki. He has been awarded several prizes, including the 1<sup>st</sup> Gustav Mahler International Competition in Bamberg (Special Prize of the Alice Rosner Foundation, Montreaux, 2004). In addition to many of Poland's symphony orchestras, he has conducted Bamberger Symphoniker,



photograph by Marcin Kuran

Russian National Orchestra, the Festival Orchestra of Sofia, the Danish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and other European orchestras. His three CD recordings were nominated for the “Fryderyk 2000” Award in Warsaw. The CD recording of Polish and Hungarian music was awarded Critic’s Prize by Hungarian magazine *Gramofon*. In December 2004 he was nominated to the “Paszport Polityki” Prize.



## National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra

Hailed as the leading Polish orchestra, the National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra (NPRSO) in Katowice, fulfills the role of a cultural ambassador representing Poland on the international arts scene. The orchestra has worked with some of the most important composers of the second half of the 20th century: Lutoslawski, Penderecki and Gorecki. The NPRSO was founded in 1935 in Warsaw by the Polish conductor Grzegorz Fitelberg. From 1983 and for the next seventeen years Antoni Wit was the orchestra's artistic director. In September 2000 Joanna Wnuk-Nazarowa became the general and programme director. Gabriel Chmura became music di-

rector of the orchestra at the beginning the 2001/2002 season. The orchestra has made numerous recordings for Polish Radio, among them many world premiere recordings, as a result of cooperation with many Polish and foreign contemporary composers. The orchestra has recorded nearly 160 CDs, among them several have been awarded prizes for their performances and recordings. Their recording of Messiaen's *Turangilila* Symphony under Antoni Wit for Naxos was awarded the 2002 Cannes Classical Award. The orchestra has collaborated with leading conductors and soloists and has toured in Europe, Asia, United States, and Latin America.

Recorded at the Grzegorz Fitelberg Concert Hall,  
Katowice, Poland, on November 28 and 29, 2005.

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Recording Engineer: Beata Jankowska

Master Engineer: Joel Gordon

Editing: Joel Gordon and Joanna Kurkowicz

Producer: Shirish Korde

Designer: Jan Kubasiewicz

Cover: *The Goddess Sakti taking the form of a triangle  
brings forth the three worlds.*

Rajasthan, c. 17th century



**Shirish Korde** *svara-yantra*

Svara-Yantra

1. I Alap Rag Mishra Pilu 7' 25"
2. II Rag Kerwani 10' 15"
3. Cadenza 3' 44"
4. III Joy 3' 11"

**Joanna Kurkowicz**, violin

**Samir Chatterjee**, tabla

National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra

**Rubén Silva**, Conductor

*World premiere recording*

5. Cranes Dancing 12' 50"

**Joanna Kurkowicz**, violin

National Polish Radio Symphony Orchestra

**Lukasz Borowicz**, Conductor

*World premiere recording*