

## Short Biography

**JOEL FEIGIN** (b: New York City, 1951) is a composer whose works have been widely praised for their "very strong impact, as logical in musical design as they are charged with emotion and drama." (Opera Magazine). His opera, **Twelfth Night**, based on the play by William Shakespeare, was chosen for New York City Opera's VOX Showcase series. His opera **Mysteries of Eleusis** was performed at the Moscow Conservatory and the Russian-American Operatic Festival. Commissions include a Fromm Commission for **Aviv: Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra**, written for Yael Weiss, as well as piano works for Margaret Mills and Leonard Stein, two orchestral works for the Santa Barbara Youth Symphony, and many chamber works. His CDs include the North/South Recordings 2-CD set, **Transience**, as well as two major piano works performed by Margaret Mills in **Meditations and Overtones** on Cambria Master Recordings. Feigin's **Lament Amid Silence** CD is on the MSR label (MS1413), and features violist Helen Callus. A Professor of Composition at the University of California Santa Barbara, Dr. Feigin studied with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau and with Roger Sessions at The Juilliard School. His website is [www.joelfeigin.com](http://www.joelfeigin.com).

*191 words*

## Full Biography

**JOEL FEIGIN** (b. New York City, 1951) is a composer whose music has been heard across the U.S. and abroad, from France and Germany to Taiwan and Korea. His works have been widely praised for their "very strong impact, as logical in musical design as they are charged with emotion and drama." (Opera Magazine)

Feigin's many honors include a Senior Fulbright Fellowship at the Moscow State Conservatory in Russia (1998-1999) and a Guggenheim Fellowship to write his first opera, **Mysteries of Eleusis**, commissioned for Theatre Cornell and produced there in 1986. The complete opera was presented again in 1999 at the Moscow Conservatory, which requested a chamber version that it produced in 2000 as part of the Russian-American Festival of Operatic Art. Feigin's opera, **Twelfth Night**, based on the play by William Shakespeare, was chosen by New York City Opera for its VOX 2003 series of readings: Showcasing American Composers. A chamber orchestra version of **Twelfth Night**, commissioned by Long Leaf Opera in North Carolina, was premiered by them in October 2005.

Feigin's chamber and orchestral music has been performed and commissioned by such groups as Parnassus, Currents Ensemble, Voices of Change, the Santa Barbara Youth Symphony, and by pianist Leonard Stein for Piano-Spheres. Speculum Musicae and the Auros Group for New Music have both presented **Veranderungen** for violin and piano as

the winner of their 1998 composition competitions. Among other highlights of Feigin's career, a 2-CD set on North/South Recordings followed a full evening of his chamber and vocal works performed by Musicians Accord at Merkin Concert Hall in New York City. Concerts devoted solely to Feigin's music have also been given in Armenia and Russia.

Two of Feigin's orchestral works have been premiered in Russia: Festive Overture by the Nijnij Novgorod Symphony Orchestra under Vladimir Ziva, and Mosaic in Two Panels for String Orchestra by the Chamber Orchestra Kremlin under Mikhail Rachlevsky. In America, the Santa Barbara Symphony has performed Elegy for Orchestra, in Memoriam Otto Luening, under Gisèle Ben-Dor, and the American premiere of Festive Overture, under Edwin Outwater.

Joel Feigin studied composition with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau and with Roger Sessions at The Juilliard School, where he received his DMA degree. The recipient of a post-graduate Mellon Fellowship at Cornell University, he also holds an undergraduate degree from Columbia University. Early in his career, as an Aaron Copland-ASCAP fellow at the Tanglewood Music Center, Feigin received the Dimitri Mitropoulos Prize in Composition. Over the years he has been granted residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo and the Millay Colony.

An accomplished pianist and accompanist, Feigin was also a student of Rosina Lhevine, worked with Nico Castel at the Metropolitan Opera and Antonia Lavanne at the Mannes College of Music, and is often called upon to participate in performances of his own works. Among them have been **Veranderungen** with Juilliard Quartet violinist Ronald Copes in Santa Barbara, CA and **Echoes From the Holocaust** with members of the Czech Philharmonic in Prague.

His CDs include the North/South Recordings 2-CD set, **Transience**, as well as two major piano works performed by Margaret Mills in **Meditations and Overtones** on Cambria Master Recordings. Feigin's **Lament Amid Silence** CD is on the MSR label (MS1413), and features violist Helen Callus.

A student of Zen Buddhism, Feigin is professor of composition at the University of California, Santa Barbara. His website is <http://www.joelfeigin.com>.

*560 words*

## Press Questions

The following questions are intended for print and broadcast journalists in connection with interviews with composer Joel Feigin. These topics are designed to facilitate conversation with him and will make for a fascinating interview:

1. When did you first realize you were a composer?
2. Tell me about studying with Nadia Boulanger. How did your study with Roger Sessions complement this – or was it entirely different?
3. Who were some of your early influences? Who are some of your current influences?
4. How has your music evolved over the past few years?
5. What is your favorite type of ensemble to compose for?
6. When you decide on a project like your opera **Twelfth Night**, what draws you to such an idea? Do the literary images suggest the music or vice versa? How important is narrative in your music?
7. Is there a sort of dream project that you would like to be able to create?
8. Tell me about your travels in Russia with the Fulbright program.
9. How does your study of Zen Buddhism affect your music and your creative process?
10. What does the future hold for Joel Feigin?