

Joel Feigin

Full Bio

Joel Feigin is an internationally performed composer, whose operas, chamber, orchestral, and piano 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 first opera, *Mysteries of Eleusis*, written on a Guggenheim Fellowship, commissioned and premiered by Theatre Cornell, was later featured at the Moscow Conservatory (Russia), and a year later repeated at the Russian American Operatic Festival. A second opera, *Twelfth Night*, commissioned by Long Leaf Opera, has been seen in three productions, in North Carolina, Chicago, and southern California. It has been praised for "many striking passages, hushed and shimmering for lovers, sparkling and cheeky for the comic figures." The recent California production "brought the audience spontaneously to their feet. Feigin's magical score is key to that exuberant response.... It's a sleeper that deserves to be in the repertory of major opera houses." (Bravo California). Excerpts from *Twelfth Night* have also been presented in the New Works Sampler at the Opera America Conference, 2006, and on New York City Opera's VOX 2003 Showcase.

Feigin's current opera-in-progress, *Outcast at the Gate*, has had two highly successful workshops, at the Colburn School in Los Angles, featuring the Brightwork Ensemble and the vocal ensemble HEX, and in New York by The Center for Contemporary Opera. After seeing the New York workshop, critic James Grant termed it a "wonderful new opera... contemporary, but with echoes of the distant past...a closely observed mirror of our time".

Instrumental commissions include orchestral, chamber and piano works such as *Aviv: Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra*, written for Yael Weiss on a Fromm Commission, and heard on Feigin's widely praised, latest CD, *Music for Chamber Orchestra* (Toccata Classics)., David DeBoor Canfield writes that "regardless of the style in which he is writing, Feigin retains his unique compositional voice. This music demands to be heard", and Ken Meltzer finds it "an immensely gratifying experience.... It's wonderful to hear a contemporary composer who embraces varying styles and modes of expression without a hint of pastiche, and in a totally convincing and communicative fashion." (Fanfare Magazine)

The CD *Lament Amid Silence* (MSR) presents a large-scale work for solo viola, a consort of six violas, and solo piano, written for violist Helen Callus and her studio at the University of California, and which Ms. Callus has termed "one of the most beautiful and dramatic pieces in the literature for the viola". The recording contains two piano pieces played by Feigin, one of which, *Meditation I*, has been termed "an as yet unrecognized masterpiece of contemporary piano literature...Feigin is an excellent and most sensitive

pianist"(Mark Greenfest, SoundWord Sight). Feigin's work is also heard on the two-CD set, *Transience* (Albany), which has been termed as a "comprehensive survey of Feigin's sincere, communicative, and deeply felt music" by critic Hubert Culot. Pianist Margaret Mills commissioned Feigin's *Variations on Empty Space*, and included it, in addition to Feigin's *Four Meditations from Dogen*, on her Cambria CD, *Meditations and Overtones*. Concerts devoted solely to Feigin's music have been given in Russia and Armenia, and in New York at Merkin Hall and Lincoln Center's Bruno Walter Auditorium. Two all-Feigin concerts were presented in Moscow during Feigin's year on a Senior Fulbright Fellowship at Moscow Conservatory, at the Conservatory, and at the Scriabin Museum.

Dr. Feigin studied with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau and with Roger Sessions at The Juilliard School. His many honors include a Mellon Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, Senior Fulbright Fellowship, and the Edward A. Dickson Emeriti Professorship of the University of California, Santa Barbara.

The Joel Feigin Collection at the New York Public Library of the Performing Arts at Lincoln Center opened in 2011. Feigin is Professor Emeritus of Composition at the University of California, Santa Barbara. A long-time student of Zen Buddhist, Feigin studied for many years with the late Sojun Mel Weitsman Roshi.

His website is JoelFeigin.com

March 2024 – 653 words