Milestones
Philippe Quint

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ROYAL SCOTTISH NATIONAL ORCHESTRA · ANDREW LITTON

It's a great pleasure for me to introduce Milestones, a recording that marks significant moments in my life and career.

This album showcases three remarkable works that span different periods of my career, with over 20 years between the first and the most recent: Errollyn Wallen's Violin Concerto, Lera Auerbach's Concerto no.1, and my mother Lora Kvint's Odyssey Rhapsody. All three works have been written for me during pivotal moments of my artistic journey. These compositions reflect not only my own artistic evolution but also a shared exploration with composers whose voices are both unique and inspiring. The bonus track includes a beautiful Adoration by Florence Price

The title, Milestones, perfectly captures the essence of this recording—a celebration of 30 years since my professional debut, 40 years of life in music, and the joy of bringing new compositions into the world. It gives this album an important personal perspective, one that reflects both the beginnings of my career and to the present day.

But these milestone moments aren't mine alone. They're shared by the three composers as well. For Errollyn, it's her first Violin Concerto; for Lera, it's her first large symphonic work commercially recorded; and for my mom, it's her first major composition for violin.

I look forward to sharing these works with audiences, confident in the belief that they embody not only musical milestones but very personal ones as well.

This album is a reflection of the past, but more importantly, it looks toward the future—an exploration of what's next in my musical journey. Each piece is a celebration of creativity, bravery, and the commitment to pushing the boundaries of the violin repertoire.

I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to my dear friends and family who made this recording possible: Michelle Horowitz, Irina and Alexander Knaster, and my American parents, Carol and Fred Hochberg.

Philippe Quint

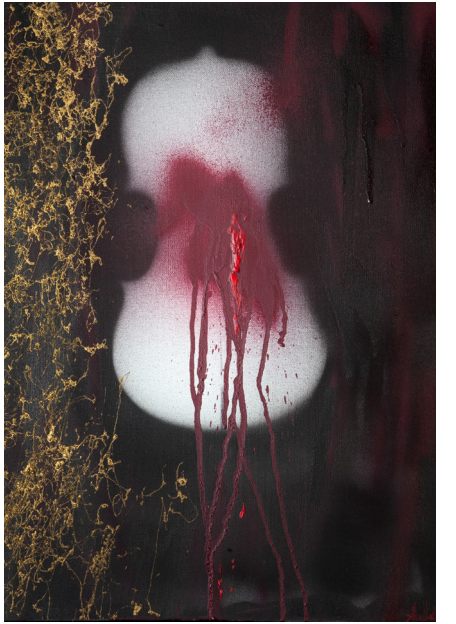
Philippe with his mother, Lora Kvint, ca. 1979

Sometimes, it is fascinating to observe a journey from an initial idea to its final form, and how a piece takes on a life and fate of its own—very much like a human being. A character in a novel may influence a real flesh-and-blood person, just as a real person may become the prototype for a fictional character. Similarly, a musical composition, although bound by birthright to its creator, becomes a creator in its own right, with its own angels and demons, struggles and hungers, losses and triumphs.

A world premiere is always frightening. For a composer, it is the ultimate goodbye to a child who is graduating into the world. The child, vulnerable yet ambitious, is now on its own, and the composer is no longer its creator, but merely an observer, a listener, almost a stranger—never fully satisfied, always somewhat guilty.

This violin concerto had a long prehistory that led to its premiere at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Back in 2000, my friend, violinist Philippe Quint, asked me to write a violin concerto. I began writing it while in residency at Johannes Brahms' home in Baden-Baden. When I was about halfway through the score, Philippe contacted me and asked if I could write a sonata for violin and piano instead of a concerto, so I had to change direction. However, the sonata was so orchestral in nature that it was clear one day I would need to return to the original idea of a concerto for violin and orchestra. The *Violin Concerto No. 1* was completed in December 2003 at the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts.

The First Movement begins with an overwhelming apocalyptic orchestral tutti—'Deathclusters'. One might say the concerto starts with the end—everything that happens afterwards occurs *after* the end. When the solo violin enters, it feels dreamy and unreal in the context of the shocking orchestral introduction. There is a nostalgic sense of memories, but memories are always multilayered and distorted by future experiences. This is often reflected in my music—different realities blur into each other; sometimes what appears very simple may be highly complex (and vice versa), and things are often not what they seem at first glance.These paradoxical qualities are especially apparent in the Second Movement—a creepy scherzo, humorous, grotesque, attractive, and repulsive at the same time, all too familiar yet foreign. Is it a waltz? Is it a melody we may have



Lera Auerbach (b.1973)
Heart of the Violin (2010)
Acrylic on canvas
25 x 21 in
Printed with permission of auerbach.studio

Philippe Quint, Lera Auerbach & Andrew Litton

heard before? Is it a cheerful tune or the remnants of a nightmare? Is it humorous or frightening? Is there something terrifying about the banality of everyday life? Or, perhaps, is it a memory of a perfect, simple moment forever lost to catastrophe and war? Is it a crooked mirror—or is the listener's perception being questioned?

The Third Movement, *Adagio religioso*, is a prayer in the form of a passacaglia based on the E-flat major scale. Despite the promise of the major key, it is deeply tragic. The obsessive inescapability of the chord progression in the orchestra can be frightening; its simplicity may carry false premises, and the solo violin cannot break free from the hypnotic repetition of the orchestral columns.

The Fourth Movement is a fiery dance of life and death, a rondo, an inescapable circle where end and beginning are one and the same, and the dance of life continues, even if no one is left to dance.

I want to express my gratitude to Philippe Quint for premiering and championing this work, to Herbert and Beverly Gelfand, and to the AYS Orchestra and its patrons for commissioning it. I also extend my thanks to the Brahms Society in Baden-Baden and the Virginia Centre for the Creative Arts (VCCA) for creating the inspiring environments where this piece was written.

Lera Auerbach

It has been a fascinating journey creating my first violin concerto.

When one composes for a virtuoso such as Philippe Quint, a world of possibilities opens up when the combination of expressivity, character and technical prowess is in one musician's hands and available to explore. This has been a great inspiration to my musical thinking in this work.

A notable feature of the violin concerto is the inclusion of material which is biographical.

The listener will hear in the first movement music which triggered the memory of the sound of church bells heard by Philippe as a child in the Soviet Union and, in the second movement, a lullaby, 'Shlof Mayn Fegele' sung to the young Philippe by his grandfather. The third and final movement is playful and optimistic — evoking the welcome of a new life in America.

Though each movement is strikingly different in mood and character, material reappears throughout the work in often surprising ways, and is usually transformed in some way.

I take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to Philippe Quint for discovering and championing my music and for the opportunity to collaborate with him and with all the orchestras involved in this commission, in such a fruitful and joyful way.

Errollyn Wallen

Everett Porter, Andrew Litton, Philippe Quint & Errollyn Wallen

Lora Kvint is one of the most celebrated Soviet-born composers, known for her significant contributions to symphonic repertoire, musical theater, opera, film and TV. Her works, such as the polystylist opera "Giordano", musical " The Count of Monte Cristo" and the musical drama "Pomegranate Bracelet," have received critical acclaim for their innovative approaches and emotional depth. One of her most notable recent compositions is the oratorio "La Corrida" (Bullfight Passions), inspired by the poetry of Yevgeny Yevtushenko, a celebrated Russian poet and dissident who resided in Tulsa, Oklahoma up until his death in 2017.

When Lora turned six, her parents took her to the Hermitage Museum for the first time, where she immediately fell in love with the many halls filled with ancient sculptures.

She even dreamt of becoming an archaeologist. Her favorite book was "Myths of Ancient Greece," that captivated Lora's attention. The music is so vivid that it effortlessly conjures images of the proud King Odysseus deciding to go to war with the Trojans. His devoted wife Penelope begging him to stay.

The sea, the storm that led the Greeks to accidentally land on the island of the sweet-voiced but treacherous sirens, and how they managed to escape and celebrate their salvation. All this, thanks to the cunning and proud King Odysseus.

Written especially for Lora's son, violinist Philippe Quint, the first performance of the 'Odyssey' Rhapsody took place at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in August 2024.

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Lera Auerbach's and Errollyn Wallen's Concertos were recorded in Glasgow, Scotland on May 13-15, 2024. The recording of Lora Kvint's 'Odyssey' and Florence Price's 'Adoration' was made on October 31, 2024 at Skillman Music Studio in New York City.

Philippe Quint plays the magnificent 1708 "Ruby" Antonio Stradivari violin, on loan to him through the generous efforts of The Stradivari Society ®

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Digisleeve photo: Philippe Quint's orchestral debut with Leningrad School Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rida Talan, ca. 1983.

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