

SMOKE & MIRRORS



VANISH

Tōru Takemitsu Sergei Rachmaninov

Volume 2

SMOKE & MIRRORS VANISH

- 1 *From Me Flows What You Call Time* Tōru Takemitsu 25:56
JOE BERIBAK, EDWARD HONG, KATALIN LA FAVRE, DEREK TYWONIUK, WAI WAH WAN
THE COLBURN ORCHESTRA, GERARD SCHWARZ CONDUCTING
- 2 *Vespers I, Call to Worship* Sergei Rachmaninov 3:06
JOE BERIBAK, EDWARD HONG, KEVIN SCHLOSSMAN, DEREK TYWONIUK, WAI WAH WAN



Gary Koh from Genesis Advanced Technologies and I first met when Elliot Midwood at Acoustic Image asked Genesis and Yarlung to collaborate for a demonstration for Robert Levi and the Los Angeles and Orange County Audio Society. Maestro Levi has built the largest audiophile club in the world, and hosts monthly events at high end listening rooms around Southern California. Working with Gary was a treat. He brought equipment and Yarlung supplied music. People heard fresh recordings for the first time on equipment many of us dream of.

So it makes Yarlung proud that Gary chose to sponsor our fifth quartet of DSD releases from the Yarlung SonoruS series of analog tapes. Dr. David W. Robinson "twisted Yarlung's arm" to release music in 64fs, 128fs and 256fs (single, double and quad) DSD, and our quartets have been enjoyed by music lovers around the world. exaSound sponsored our first quartet, Merging Technologies underwrote the second set (and we used Merging Technologies' Hapi converter and Pyramix software to make these files). International Rectifier (now owned by Infineon in Munich) supported our third quartet, and Elliot Midwood executive produced the fourth quartet in collaboration with PS Audio. So it is only fitting that Gary and I shared the Genesis Quartet with the public for the first time at Elliot's Acoustic Image listening room.

Gary is a friend and we enjoy working together. But projects with him succeed because of the quality of his engineering. Gary was one of a group of pioneers who built the Internet in much of Southeast Asia and invested in Internet companies in the very early days. He "retired" young, and could have spent the rest of his life in luxury and leisure. Instead, he planted a vineyard and started to build the room to house his dream speakers – the flagship reference from Genesis – the G1. When he called to order a pair, he was informed that the company had closed down and couldn't deliver. Gary didn't accept this answer; the mere closing of a company shouldn't keep him from the sound he wanted. He bought assets from the bank that had foreclosed on the company, and resurrected the brand. Not only has Gary run Genesis Advanced Technologies successfully, but has designed

new and successful products. Some years ago, I bought a pair of Gary's Genesis M60 tube monoblocks and fell in love with his solid state amplification as well. Gary has continued to refine the designs of his speakers, both the mind-bendingly expensive and ear-enchancing top of the line G1, but smaller speakers as well, including his G7-series speakers which we demonstrated for the Audio society and the G7 series 2 which Gary shipped to Los Angeles to inaugurate this Genesis Quartet. Gary also showed off his company's new amplifier and music server as well as a recently-designed phonostage. (We offered a sneak preview of Yarlung's two latest vinyl releases: *Ciaramella Dances* and *Sophisticated Lady* jazz quartet, mastered by Steve Hoffman and with lacquers cut by Bernie Grundman).

One might ask, "How does Gary do it? How has he resurrected the company and how has he continued to improve what was already good?" Gary is a meticulous designer with a clear vision for what he wants to build. He does not shy away from tried-and-true engineering when it works but also examines deeply the roots of the science. He is fond of saying "creativity and discovery comes from seeing what everybody has seen, and thinking what nobody has thought." My M60 monoblocks are a good example of this. Gary told me recently that there is no unique technology in these monoblocks. Yet they are only 60 watts each and can drive almost any speaker. Gary explained that within the classic tube power amp design there were countless ways he could improve the interrelation of each component, honing the whole system into a musical and muscular flexibility that was making my ears happy. By contrast, Gary's solid state amplifiers idle using only 6 watts of electricity and utilize many of Gary's from-the-ground-up newly designed circuits in both power supply and amplification.

Despite the sophistication and subtlety of Gary's designs, he keeps them as simple as possible, following his philosophy that "For a recording engineer, an ideal amplifier must not embellish or color a recording. If the source and speaker are close to perfect, the amplifier has to be as transparent as possible. Genesis high-performance audio products are designed to deliver the music to the listener without interference."

Gary initially developed his amplifiers to help him further refine his company's loudspeakers. He wanted an unadulterated lab reference amplifier so he could best judge evolutions in his speaker designs. Successes like this have a way of becoming known, and now Gary's Genesis Reference Amplifier (the GRA) is highly sought. It won "Ultimate Reference" from *Magazine Audio*, "Select Component" at UltraAudio.com and garnered the Blue Moon Award.

Frederic Beudot with *6moons* gave the amplifier its first review. He responded directly to Gary's goals for the design: "I am still at a loss to accurately describe what the GR360 sounds like. I am actually not even sure it has a sound as every time I changed a component in my system, I was exposed to the sonic signature of the component I just introduced more intensively than I had experienced before. If anything, the GR360 reveals the true nature of other components...." Gary succeeded in building an ideal amplifier for his new speakers and for the rest of us who prize transparency.

Ernie Fisher continues in similar vein in *Inner Ear*: "The GRA ... handled the entire musical signal with a touch of refinement, almost as though it wasn't there. That is a rare experience for this listener, who is forever looking for sonic signatures. This amp has one, to be sure, but it is written in almost invisible ink."

Bravo Gary. Bravo Genesis. And thank you for sharing your success with Yarlung.

-- Bob Attiyeh, producer



Genesis Dragon in the Hong Kong listening room of Forthwise Ltd.



Derek Tywoniuk (left) and Wai Wah Wan (right)

The Absolute Sound's Top Hidden Treasures:

Smoke & Mirrors: Vanish

Here's a relatively new label dedicated to recording young and established concert artists with minimalist recording techniques using vacuum tube microphones recorded directly to two tracks. Produced by Bob Attiyeh collaborating with Steve Hoffman on the master, *Vanish* is the engaging and highly innovative follow-up to Yarlung's original and equally compelling *Smoke & Mirrors* release, presenting a wide tapestry of rhythms and harmonics skillfully arrayed across a broad and deep soundstage. There's an immediacy, clarity, and transparency to this modern classical percussion recording that seemingly brings the performers to your living room.¹

By "relatively new label," I mean that Yarlung Records has survived the most challenging period in the history of recording and recently celebrated its seventh anniversary with a remarkable album ***Yarlung Records: The First Seven Years*** (www.yarlungrecords.com). What a sonic treat! The quality of the recordings as well as the performances are first-rate, and this CD has become one of my reference recordings. The playing by Orion Weiss on the Bach selections is perhaps the most exciting performance I've heard of the French Overture. The Ravel performance by the Smoke & Mirrors percussion ensemble was an absolute delight! I could keep going on and on about each of the selections. Keep up the terrific work! Thank you!

--Jim Hannon, Publisher & Senior Writer

The Absolute Sound, November 2013¹



Joe Beribak, Kevin Schlossman, Derek Tywoniuk and executive producer Sandy Pressman

Producer's Notes:

Once people have a chance to hear *Smoke & Mirrors: Vanish* and after they read Jim's review in *The Absolute Sound*, this recording won't be hidden for long! Creating this second album with Smoke & Mirrors percussion ensemble proved a great musical experience and deepened our friendship with these remarkable musicians. Special thanks to Sel Kardan and Richard Beene of The Colburn School and to Maestro Gerard Schwarz for their support and enthusiasm for Smoke & Mirrors. We recorded this album in two concert halls. The live orchestra concert of Takemitsu's ethereal and engaging *From Me Flows What You Call Time* came first in Ambassador Hall on February 4th, 2012, with Gerard Schwarz conducting. Rachmaninov's Vespers followed in Zipper Hall at The Colburn School on June 3-5, 2013.

"Smoke & Mirrors first performed these movements from **Rachmaninov's Vespers**, or the **All-Night Vigil** during the summer of 2012 for a concert in the charming loggia at Huntington Gardens in San Marino, California. We fell in love with the work from our first rehearsals, and we've performed it at every opportunity since. Edward Hong, who in addition to being a founding member of Smoke & Mirrors ensemble is also an orchestra and choral conductor and arranger, adapted these movements for five players on two marimbas and vibraphone solo. From our first rehearsal in 2012 to the week before the recording, we worked hard to make these instruments sing. This is quintessential Smoke & Mirrors, as we transform many individual mallet attacks into one unified sonority. To set an intimate mood at the recording we turned off the overhead lights in Zipper Hall and performed only with lumination from our music stands. This forced us to rely on our magical connection as players more than on a visual connection from watching our sticks. We adjusted our microphone to give the feeling of being in a cathedral. We'd like to extend our gratitude for the blessings of Kevin's and Edward's beautiful marimbas built by Marimba One and the incredible resonating chamber that is Zipper Hall."

--Joe

"The Colburn School has given us great support throughout our time as an ensemble. After we proposed **Tōru Takemitsu's** percussion concerto **From Me Flows What You Call Time** to Yehuda Gilad, music director of The Colburn Orchestra, we were thrilled that he included it on a fabulous orchestra program at Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. We were even more thrilled when we learned that the esteemed conductor Gerard Schwarz would lead the orchestra. Derek took on the monumental task of locating the exotic instruments. Both Los Angeles Percussion Rentals and California Percussion provided many of the colorful instruments we used in this concert. Katalin La Favre made the long colored ribbons that we pulled from the stage to sound our wind chimes in the rafters. These colors are the same as those on Tibetan prayer flags, which represent the five elements: Earth (yellow), Water (green), Fire (red), Air



(white), and Sky (blue). We like to think that an additional element, Time, is provided by the music.

"The greatest challenge in this piece was playing as a unified group while spread across the stage. We needed to hear and feel each other perfectly since we could not always see each other. Derek, Edward and I (Joe) played downstage in front of everyone while Katalin and Ivan were behind the orchestra on the left and right (further from the audience). For the audience to hear us playing at the same time, Katy and Ivan needed to play slightly earlier than the rest of us.

"We gave each other constant feedback in rehearsal. Eddie and I also spent considerable time alone together, improvising freely to get a feel for each other's musical voice in this repertoire. We had to coordinate our improvisation within the framework of the notated music, especially the drum break near the end of the work, to make sure we could leave and return to the music in Takemitsu's score.

"Smoke & Mirrors wants to give special thanks to Mark Fabulich and Victor Pineda for their logistical expertise, and to Greg Forbess who constructed our wind chime hanging rigs."

--Joe

Yarlung Records would also like to thank Mark Fabulich, Colburn Orchestra manager at the time of the Takemitsu concert and recording, not only as a wonderful colleague in the music world but as the person who introduced us to Smoke & Mirrors ensemble before we made their debut recording in 2011. We would also like to thank Victor Pineda and Lisa Palley, who gave so much of their expertise in both Zipper Hall and Ambassador Auditorium, and made the music on this album possible.



Kevin Schlossman, Edward Hong, Joe Beribak and Derek Tywoniuk



Katalin La Favre

Technical notes:

We used two coincident Neumann U47 microphones for the orchestra with two AKG C12 microphones for a small amount of reinforcement for the winds and rear percussion in the Takemitsu concerto. We chose a single stereo AKG C24 microphone for all the other tracks. Jon Fisher from Gearworks Pro Audio lent us these precious microphones. Elliot Midwood designed our microphone preamplification equipment and we recorded directly to RMGI 468 tape using stranded silver Yarlung interconnects and the Yarlung analog tape recorder circuitry designed for us by Len Horowitz. Mastering by Steve Hoffman. Bernie Grundman cut our lacquers for vinyl release.

--Bob Attiyeh, producer

Executive Producer of full-length CD: Sandy Pressman

Layout: Eron Muckleroy



Joe Beribak



11 Edward Hong warms up for Rachmaninov's *Vespers*

The Colburn Orchestra

Yehuda Gilad, music director

Gerard Schwarz, guest conductor

1st Violins

Caitlin Kelley

Concertmaster

Kelsey Blumenthal

Melody Lee

Francesca dePasquale

Elicia Silverstein

Cheryl Kim

Ryan Meehan

Hillary Hempel

Radu Paponiu

Xika Huang

Avi Nagin

Stephen Tavani

Pasha Tseitlin

Sun Joo Park

2nd Violins

Hugh Palmer

Principal

Evin Blomberg

Thomas Huntington

Gregory Cardi

Anna Czerniak

Hanbyul Jang

Sanghee Ji

Kevin Lin

Natalie Yu

Bora Kim

Usha Kapoor

Viola

Jeremy Berry

Principal

Christopher Zack

Matthew Cohen

Arianna Smith

Anna Kolotylina

Born Lau

Ruiqing Tang

Tanner Menees

Justin Almazan

Yi Zhou

Cello

Estelle Choi

Principal

Natalie Helm

Benjamin Lash

Mindy H. Park

Eugene Lifschitz

Allan Steele

Se-Doo Park

Suyeon Kim

Vardan Gasparyan

Yaebon Go

Double Bass

Emily Honeyman

Principal

Paul Aksman

Katherine Munagian

Paul Macres

Marlon Martinez

Matthew Feczko

Mariya Andoniya-Andonova

Sukyung Chun

Flute

Francesco Camuglia *

Jennifer Lee

Mark Teplitsky

Alto Flute

Mark Teplitsky

Piccolo

Jennifer Lee

Oboe

Robyn Smith

Titus Underwood *

Oboe d'amore

John Winstead

English Horn

Robyn Smith

Clarinet

Gabriel Campos Zamora

Natalie Hoe

Sang Yoon Kim *

Emil Khudiyev

E-flat Clarinet

Natalie Hoe

Bass Clarinet

Gabriel Campos Zamora

Contra Clarinet

Emil Khudiyev

Bassoon

Andrew Brady

Jack Peña

Michael Zuber *

Contrabassoon

Andrew Brady

Horn

Anna Spina *

Elizabeth Upton

Jacob Wilder

Julian Zheng

Trumpet

Lauren Ewing

Conrad Jones *

Jonah Levy

Trombone

Paul Radke
Evan Spacht *

Bass Trombone
David Hagee

Percussion

Joe Beribak
Edward Hong
Katalin LaFavre
Derek Tywoniuk
Wai Wah Ivan Wan

Harp

Ruriko Terada
Elisabeth Zosseder *

Celeste

Eloise Kim

Music Director and Principal

Conductor

Yehuda Gilad

Assistant Conductor

Maxim Eshkenazy

Orchestra Manager & Librarian

Mark Fabulich

Senior Stage Manager

Victor Pineda

** Principal*

The Genesis Quartet



Four New Yarlung Records Releases: Summary Notes
by Robert H. Levi, *PFO* May 14th, 2015

Nigel Armstrong, *Nigel Armstrong: Bach, Bartók, Korngold*. Featuring Sir Neville Marriner and the Colburn Orchestra. Native DSD Catalog number YAR65007DSD

This Yarlung Records recording is simply entitled *Nigel Armstrong*. Armstrong is a young and dynamic artist, exactly fitting the rising stars captured by the Yarlung label. With a varied repertoire of Bartók, Bach, and Korngold, I was floored by the diversity and sensitivity of this superb artist. Truly a budding Heifetz stylistically, and with the sweetest violin I have heard in years, Nigel Armstrong is an artist to follow closely. The Bartok is solidly played. The difficult Bach is gorgeously rendered. The Korngold Concerto, conducted by the great Sir Neville Marriner, is exceptional and captivating.

Recorded on analog tape with tube microphones. Bob Attiyeh, the exceptional producer and master recordist of Yarlung Records, shows remarkable taste, as usual, and ultimate sensitivity for the performers and the balance of his recordings. The DSD download is worth every penny and more just for the Korngold. Highest recommendation.

Smoke & Mirrors: *Vanish, Vol. 2, Takemitsu, Rachmaninov*. Featuring the Smoke and Mirrors Percussion Ensemble. Native DSD Catalog Number: YAR15195DSD2

Smoke and Mirror's *Vanish, Vol. 2* is a *tour de force* in elegant, wide-ranging melodic percussion performance. I cannot say I have ever experienced diversity and elegance like this in musical form, but so what? I love it! Truly addictive, it is musically entertaining and original. The six artists sound like sixteen. What an adventure in style and virtuosity. A sonic masterpiece! Recorded to perfection, and great fun! Recommended, for sure.

Petteri: *Art of the Sonata, Vol. II Brahms & Ysaye*. Petteri Iivonen, Violin; Kevin Fitz-Gerald, Piano. Native DSD Catalog Number: YAR76721DSD2

Beautifully played and recorded, you might think these musicians have been playing together for years. When this was recorded in 2011, Petteri was still in his early twenties! Yarlung strikes again. The delicious repertoire between Iivonen and Fitz-Gerald on this album is as good as it gets.

The Brahms *Violin Sonata Number 3* is played with such uncanny feeling and perfection. The difficult Ysaye *Sonata No. 4 in E Minor* is polished off with such ease and skill as to make it a true gem. The recording is truly first-class: very analog in its smoothness and lack of grain. How can Yarlung Records do this and Sony not? Highest recommendation.

Frederic Rosselet: *Bach, Ligeti* Cello solo album. Native DSD Catalog Number: YARo7498DSD

Recorded to perfection, this young cello player Rosselet is a true virtuoso.

His skill and sensitivity to the pieces is astounding for such a young player. With toe-tapping rhythms and inflections, this is one magical cello recording. The Bach is exciting and rich. The Ligeti is mysterious and compelling. The combo makes for an entertaining package.

Once again, Yarlung has produced a truly reference quality recording which is a winner in DSD. YoYo Ma should be looking over his shoulder: Rosselet will be there!
Highest recommendation.

www.yarlungrecords.com

Please call (310) 692-4575 or email support@yarlungartists.org with any questions about Yarlung Artists and programs supporting young concert musicians.

-Robert H. Levi





Michael Fremer

In a surprisingly short period of time, the adventurous GRAMMY® Award winning classical music label Yarlung has produced an eclectic catalog of impeccably recorded performances by a roster of adventurous musicians, including many that are well-known and others soon to be. The varied repertoire, with a refreshingly international flavor, covers everything from modern percussion to solo piano and violin to large scale symphonic works with singers.

The minimally miked “purist” recordings produced and engineered by label founder Bob Attiyeh in some of the world’s great concert spaces, are captured simultaneously on analog tape and high resolution digital and released on vinyl, reel-to-reel tape, CD and as high resolution Studio Master downloads.

Yarlung’s production and sonic model is distilled from the recording industry’s glorious past—one that pessimists were certain could never be successfully resurrected—while its forward-thinking business and distribution model points the way towards a healthy future for a “record business” long given up for dead by trendy “futurists.”

For older lovers of recorded classical repertoire, Yarlung’s catalog represents a return to sonic and musical greatness. For younger ones familiar only with dynamically and spatially compressed low resolution recordings, these from Yarlung are like 3D IMAX but without the glasses.

-Michael Fremer

Editor analogplanet.com

Senior contributing editor, *Stereophile*

Stereo Sound

by Mori Shima

Once upon a time there was a land of hi-fi. And it was gone all too soon. But thank Heavens for Yarlung Records. In the age of compressed digital downloads, it is refreshing to hear real sound and real music again, reminiscent of RCA Living Stereo in its golden age, or Mercury Records at its height. Yarlung's sound is liquid and transparent, just as if you were sitting in the concert halls with superb acoustics, where these recordings are made. Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, Ambassador Hall in Pasadena, and Zipper Hall at The Colburn School, to name a few.

What Mercury did for Howard Hanson and the Eastman-Rochester Orchestra in the fifties, Yarlung Records is now doing for The Colburn Orchestra and Metropolitan Opera mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke. You can hear the evidence on the album *If You Love For Beauty*, released in 2012. Who would have thought that a conservatory orchestra (granted the players are young superstars, soloists all), could capture the world's attention like this. I understand that Yarlung does this by using similar techniques to those in the golden age of recordings. Only one stereo microphone for smaller ensembles, and up to four microphones for full orchestras, recording directly to two track analog tape and high resolution digital.

Don't worry, Yarlung's recordings are all on iTunes, Amazon MP3 and so forth, but you can also order 180 Gram virgin vinyl LPs, exquisitely made CDs mastered by mighty Steve Hoffman, and high resolution downloads, all available worldwide through Naxos Global Logistics in Munich. Most exciting for analog tape enthusiasts might be the SonoruS Series of recordings on ¼ inch master tape. I recently reviewed Yarlung's *Martin Chalifour and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Walt Disney Concert Hall*, another album I recommend highly.¹ Yarlung offers us a true feast for the ears, and this reviewer for one, wants more.

-Mori Shima

Stereo Sound, Japan

SMOKE & MIRRORS VANISH

- 1 Tōru Takemitsu *From Me Flows What You Call Time*
2 Sergei Rachmaninov *Vespers I, Call to Worship*



Smoke & Mirrors Percussion Ensemble
Joseph Beribak & Katalin La Favre, directors

Joseph Beribak Edward Hong
Katalin La Favre Kevin Schlossman
Derek Tywoniuk Wai Wah Wan

Yarlung Records
YAR15195DSD2



Producer and Recording Engineer: Bob Attiyeh
Assistant Producer and Recording Engineer: Jacob Horowitz
AKG Tube Microphones: Gearworks Pro Audio
Microphone amplification: Elliot Midwood
Executive Producer of full-length CD: Sandy Pressman
Mastering Engineers: Steve Hoffman and Bob Attiyeh