



AUERBACH
CELLOQUY

24 Preludes
Sonata
Postlude

Ani Aznavoorian cello
Lera Auerbach piano

CEDILLE

Producer and Engineer Adam Abeshouse

Recorded August 7–9, 2012, at The Performing Arts Center, Purchase College, State University of New York

Front Cover Image (Un)Tangled by Lera Auerbach

Front Cover Titles Sue Cottrill

Booklet & Inlay Card Design Nancy Bieschke

Funded in part by a grant from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc.

PUBLISHERS

24 Preludes for violoncello and piano ©1999 Sikorski (SIK 8508)

Sonata for violoncello and piano ©2002 Sikorski (SIK 8509)

Postlude for violoncello and piano ©2006 Sikorski (SIK 8508)

Cedille Records is a trademark of The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation, a not-for-profit foundation devoted to promoting the finest musicians and ensembles in the Chicago area. The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation's activities are supported in part by contributions and grants from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies including the Irving Harris Foundation, Kirkland & Ellis Foundation, Negaunee Foundation, Sage Foundation, and the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency. This project is partially supported by a CityArts grant from the City of Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events.

**CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CHICAGO CLASSICAL RECORDING FOUNDATION
MAY BE MADE AT WWW.CEDILLERECORDS.ORG OR 773-989-2515.**

CEDILLE RECORDS® trademark of
The Chicago Classical Recording Foundation
1205 W Balmoral Ave., Chicago IL 60640, USA
773.989.2515 tel • 773.989.2517 fax
CEDILLERECORDS.ORG
CDR 90000 137 © & © 2013 Cedille Records
All Rights Reserved. Made in U.S.A



CEDILLE
;



AUERBACH CELLOQUY

Ani Aznavoorian cello
Lera Auerbach piano

24 Preludes for violoncello and piano (50:00)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 1. Andante (3:02) | 18. Andantino (1:27) |
| 2. Allegro (0:47) | 19. Allegro appassionato (1:07) |
| 3. Andante misterioso (1:59) | 20. Giocoso (1:14) |
| 4. Allegro ossessivo (0:43) | 21. Dialogo (2:49) |
| 5. Moderato (1:48) | 22. Andante nostalgico (3:29) |
| 6. Andante tragico (2:17) | 23. Adagio sognando (2:40) |
| 7. Vivo ma non troppo e agitato (1:13) | 24. Vivo (4:29) |
| 8. Grave (1:52) | |
| 9. Vivace (0:58) | |
| 10. Adagio sognando (1:37) | |
| 11. Allegro (0:51) | |
| 12. Adagio (4:59) | |
| 13. Andantino grazioso (2:08) | |
| 14. Allegretto scherzando (1:18) | |
| 15. Allegro con brio (1:00) | |
| 16. Tempo di valzer (3:18) | |
| 17. Allegro ritmico (2:44) | |

Sonata for violoncello and piano (21:51)

- | |
|----------------------------------|
| I. (Allegro moderato) (7:01) |
| II. Lament (Adagio) (5:52) |
| III. (Allegro assai) (3:00) |
| IV. Con estrema intensità (5:54) |

Postlude for violoncello and piano (3:08)

TT: (75:12)

POEMS BY LERA AUERBACH

FUGUE

I am choreographing
my own discontent.

The days pile up
in dried and frugal vanity,
busying maneuvers
of ever-moving hands,
swinging pendulum
from suicide to sacrifice,
from ecstasy to gratitude
within all shades of gray.

The fugue winds tighter;
I still remember its theme,
but its countersubject leaves me
gasping for air.

This counterpoint is poisonous
in any larger quantities,
and I don't have an antidote
to this infectious music.

My fever is running higher.
The hot fingertips touch
the untouchable body of the
fugue —
it can't be captured fully
in the nets of notes and measures,

it runs away wildly,
through the untamable laughter
of gods and daemons, whoever
is guarding the gates of sound,
the wailing chimeras
of heaven and hell.

I look into the black flame.
Soon it will consume my days,
it already freezes my heart,
and takes all I still call "my own,"
turning it into dry harvest
which burns — oh, so brightly —
until it's no longer, until it's only
ashes;

Until it returns to dust,
becomes that silent note
after the end, but just
before the applause
while the conductor's hands
are still holding the wings
of a musical phrase
and the audience holds its breath
as not to disturb the magic...

Except no one is waiting
for me at the other end,
there is no applause nor greeting,
no bravi, but only

that moment of infinite
loneliness
when sound dies.

ABYSS

It is always there, waiting.
As I wake, as I jog in the morning
or re-read my favorite poem —
the one which struck me as true in
adolescence —
the Abyss is always just a step away.

If you stare at anything with burning
intensity —
you can see the edge of its
bottomless mouth.
Keep looking at it through your tears
and sweat,
without turning your gaze even
once —
soon you will notice nothing else.

The Abyss will tempt you to lean
even closer.
Others may think you must have
gone blind,
but you know — now you see ever
clearer.
You start distinguishing black on
black,

you start seeing the distant valleys.
Once you manage to really focus,
so that the outside noisy light
can't disturb your full concentration,
then finally you see deep within the
Abyss —
another Sun, and stars of another
Universe,
calling to you with their flickering
dance.

Now you may take this final step,
one step that still keeps you away.
As you stand on the edge, leaning
ever closer
to the great expanse — this empty
wow of nothing-ness —
you see how the Abyss, with its
wrinkled topography
of a world alien to comprehension,
rearranges its valleys and
mountains —
to form your own face.

Celloquy

Music for Cello and Piano
by Lera Auerbach

The 24 Preludes for violoncello and piano were co-commissioned by Thomas and Vivian Waldeck in association with the Caramoor International Music Festival in New York. This work is dedicated to John Neumeier and is published by Hans Sikorski International Music Publishers in Hamburg.

Written in 1999, Auerbach's *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano*, continue a long line of musical tradition, from the *Well-Tempered Clavier* of Bach through the prelude cycles for solo piano of Chopin, Scriabin, and Shostakovich. The choice of cello and piano for a complete cycle of 24 preludes diverges from the standard piano solo cycles.

Ms. Auerbach writes:

Re-establishing the value and expressive possibilities of all major and minor tonalities is as valid at the beginning of the 21st century as it was during Bach's time, especially if we consider the aesthetics of Western music in its regard — or disregard — to tonality during the last century. In writing this work I wished to create a continuum that would allow these short pieces to be united as one single composition. The challenge was not only to write a meaningful and complete prelude that may be only a minute long, but also for this short piece to be an organic part of a larger composition with its own form. Looking at something familiar yet from an unexpected perspective is one of the peculiar characteristics of these pieces — they are often not what they appear to be at first glance.

Combining intense lyricism with fierce sonic clashes, the *Preludes* demand extreme virtuosity from the performers and explore both instruments' extreme ranges. The score contains an abundance of unusual sonorities and extended techniques: for the pianist, tone clusters, prolonged pedaling, and complex layering of passages. The cellist is constantly changing from *arco* (bowed) to *pizzicato* (plucked) motives and often playing harmonics: faint, whistling tones produced by a finger only partially depressing the string. There are constant *glissando* passages (sliding through a quick succession of notes) for the cello and frequent directions to play *sul ponticello*, on the bridge, the small piece of wood that separates the bottom of the strings from the resonating body of the instrument. Drawing the bow close to the bridge creates

a harsh and unreal sound that dramatically contrasts with the smooth tone we're accustomed to hearing from this instrument. Many of the preludes end quietly, echoing the line from Auerbach's poem, *Fugue*: "that moment of infinite loneliness when sound dies."

The tempo markings are the guide to the individual character of the preludes: No. 3 in G major, marked *Andante misterioso*, ends with haunting microtonal quarter-tone trills in the cello part; the following No. 4 in E minor, marked *Allegro ossessivo*, is frightening and inescapable in its obsessive drive. The tempo marking for No. 10 in C-sharp minor contains the word *Sognando* (dreaming). Prelude No. 12 in G-sharp minor, *Adagio*, starts with an achingly beautiful cello theme, but when this theme is repeated in the second half of the prelude, it's played "with

a disturbing sound.” The string player seems to be mocking her own voice, punctuated by increasingly disquieting undertones from the chromatic piano part, thus questioning the listener’s perception of beauty.

The piano starts off No. 14 in E-flat minor with the marking *un poco grottesco*; this *Allegretto scherzando* (joking) turns out to be a sardonic variation on Mozart’s overture to *The Magic Flute*. Although No. 16 in B-flat minor is labeled *Tempo di Valse*, it’s a grotesque rondo unlike anything from the Viennese waltz kings. Its ending might remind opera-lovers of Olympia’s aria from *The Tales of Hoffmann*, where the mechanical doll sings continually until her mainspring winds down. This prelude is the emotional climax of the cycle.

With its insistent rhythms, No. 17 in A-flat major seems to lie somewhere between Bartók and the rock band Queen, with the cello sometimes imitating an electric guitar. Prelude No. 18 in F minor suggests a neo-baroque dance. The surging piano passages of No. 19 in E-flat major reflect its *Allegro Appassionato* indication. For No. 21 in B-flat major, titled *Dialogo*, we find the cello in conversation with itself: the “dialogue” between the higher and lower registers of the instrument suggest a pantomime between male and female actors. The key of D minor has often been associated with requiems, and the final prelude No. 24 in D minor quotes the themes of all 24 preludes, as in a final stream of memories.

Sonata for violoncello and piano was co-commissioned by the Hancher Auditorium/The University of Iowa and the Music in the Park Series, St. Paul, Minnesota. This work, dating from 2002, is dedicated to cellist David Finckel and pianist Wu Han. Sonata is published by Hans Sikorski International Music Publishers.

Auerbach writes:

In this sonata, the piano and violoncello are equal partners. In the dramatic sense, each often plays contrasting roles and expresses different characters. At times, this co-existence is a dialogue, at times a struggle, at times an attempt to resolve inner questions. The piano starts alone with a dark and inescapable statement, full of inner tension. The cello follows — more human, desperate and questioning. The first calling statement of the cello becomes a leitmotif throughout

the sonata. The introduction leads to a strange waltz in 5/4 meter — as if from the depth of the past, shadows have emerged. The second theme is both dreamy and passionate, and leads to fugal development with its dry twists.

In the first movement, the rather neutral tempo marking of *Allegro moderato* belies the emotional intensity of the music. After the short but emphatic opening piano statement and its brief cello reply, a longer piano solo leads us to the main motive, presented by cello alone, followed by an odd waltz in which both instruments participate. Warm and lyrical cello passages are suddenly interrupted with playing *sul ponticello*. There’s a cadenza-like passage for cello alone before both instruments eventually play glissandos up to their top registers to bring about a stratospheric conclusion marked *ppp* (soft-soft-soft).

The second movement, titled *Lament*, is more lyrical. Auerbach says, "The juxtaposition of the instruments is also presented in the *Adagio* of the second movement, where the piano carries a column-like, steady chord progression, while the cello engages in a lamenting monologue, free and deeply human." The lyricism contains deep emotions, and the melodic, quasi-D minor tonality is disrupted by sudden dissonances. Once again, the ending is very quiet. The third movement is marked "with obsessive energy." It features a fast-moving cello part with aggressive piano chords. Ms. Auerbach describes this movement as a toccata "with fiery syncopations." The final movement is another lament, marked "with extreme intensity." The composer says:

This is perhaps one of the most intense and tragic pieces I have written. It starts on a high emotional point — with the cello playing microtonal trills to evoke the most intense claustrophobic vibrato. The image I had in mind is that of standing at the edge of an abyss, where nothing is left of the past or the future. But, through the darkness of a tragedy, inner light emerges. At times, through pain, one may find lost beauty and meaning. At the end, both instruments rise to the height of their registers, as if entering a different kind of existence.

Perhaps, the music of this finale is related to the images in the poem *Abyss*. The microtonal trills, emphasizing quarter-tones, give way to a melody based on half-tones: minor-second intervals. The cello rises to its highest register over cluster-like piano chords; heavy piano octaves then support another passage of

microtonal trills. The cello rises and leads to an eerie ending marked *Morendo* (Dying away) — to the abyss.

The *Postlude* was recorded with prepared piano: altering the instrument's sound to a distorted, edgy sonority. The *Postlude* is a transformation of the Prelude No. 12, but it sounds very different now with the changed piano sonority and the long downward glissandi from the cello. It suggests an ancient ruin — whatever civilization Prelude No. 12 originally came from having long since collapsed.

Notes by Andrea Lamoreaux, Program Director for 98.7 WFMT, Chicago's Classical Experience.

ANI AZNAVOORIAN

Hailed by the *Los Angeles Times* as a "cellist who shows great sensitivity and great virtuosity at all moments," Ani Aznavoorian is in demand as a soloist and chamber musician with some of the world's most recognized ensembles. She has appeared with leading orchestras including the Chicago Symphony, Boston Pops, Tokyo Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Finnish Radio Symphony, International Sejong Soloists, Indianapolis Philharmonic, San Jose Symphony, Concertante di Chicago, and Edmonton Symphony, and has also appeared as recitalist and chamber musician in over twenty countries spanning five continents.

Aznavoorian's awards include the Bunkamura Orchard Hall Award, first prizes in the Illinois Young Performers Competition (televised live on PBS with the Chicago Symphony), the International Paulo

Cello Competition, the Union League Civic and Arts Foundation Music Scholarship Competition, the Chicago Cello Society National Competition, the Julius Stulberg Competition, the American String Teachers Association Competition, and the National Foundation for the Arts Recognition and Talent Search. She was also named a Presidential Scholar in the Arts.

Ms. Aznavoorian enjoys performing new music. In 2013–2014, she will premiere Lera Auerbach's *Concerto for Cello and Chamber Orchestra*, which was commissioned by Camerata Pacifica for Ms. Aznavoorian. She has given the world premieres of two other important pieces in the cello repertoire: Ezra Laderman's *Concerto No. 2*, with the Colorado Springs Philharmonic conducted by Lawrence Leighton Smith, and Lera Auerbach's *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* on stage at the Hamburg Staatsoper

with the Hamburg State Ballet. An avid chamber musician, Aznavoorian is principal cellist of Camerata Pacifica, one of the country's finest chamber music organizations. She has performed chamber music with Gil Shaham, Cho-Liang Lin, Sarah Chang, Eugenia Zukerman, Edgar Meyer, Ruth Laredo, Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg, and the Pacifica and Shanghai Quartets. She was a member of the renowned string ensemble, International Sejong Soloists and was a founding member of the Corinthian Trio with pianist Adam Neiman and violinist Stefan Milenkovich. Aznavoorian also performs frequently on the Jupiter Chamber Music series in New York.

Ani Aznavoorian received her Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from the Juilliard School, where she studied with Aldo Parisot. She has been on the faculty at the University of Illinois in Champaign/Urbana and, during the summers,

has served on the faculty of the Great Mountains Music Festival and School in South Korea. She proudly performs on a cello made by her father, Peter Aznavoorian, in Chicago.

LERA AUERBACH

Virtuoso pianist and composer Lera Auerbach is one of today's most sought after and exciting creative voices. Her boldly imaginative and evocative compositions are championed by today's leading musicians, conductors, choreographers, and opera houses. Ms. Auerbach's uniquely personal interpretations of the standard keyboard repertoire are making her a favorite of audiences worldwide. She regularly appears as soloist in the world's great halls, and her published oeuvre includes more than 90 works of opera, ballet, symphonic and chamber music. Her creative output is interdisciplinary and encompasses music, literature,

and visual art. She has published three volumes of poetry and prose in Russian, contributes regularly to the Best American Poetry blog, writes her own librettos, and has recently been working on a series of *gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) installations.

Recent theater performances have included *Préludes CV*, a full-length ballet based on Lera Auerbach's *24 Preludes for violoncello and piano* and *24 Preludes for violin and piano* (Hamburg State Ballet) and the world premieres of *Faust* (Staatstheater Nürnberg, with choreography by Goyo Montero, featuring Lera Auerbach as pianist on stage). In April 2013, her ballet *Heroes* (Bavarian State Ballet) receives its world premiere. Her full-length ballet *The Little Mermaid*, winner of the 2012 ECHO Klassik award, has already received over 150 performances worldwide including at the National Ballet of China in Beijing, the

Hamburg Ballet, and the Stanislavsky Theatre in Moscow. Auerbach has also recently collaborated with the Netherlands Dance Theatre, National Ballet of Canada, and Nuremberg State Ballet, as well as the Chinese, Flanders, and Finnish National Ballets. Other recent premieres and commissions include works for violist Kim Kashkashian, New Century Chamber Orchestra, Raschér Saxophone Quartet, and for the Tokyo, Borromeo, and Ying String Quartets.

Auerbach's other career highlights include the critically acclaimed premiere full-scale opera, *Gogol*, based on her original stage play, commissioned by Vienna's Theater an der Wien and premiered in November 2011. Her residency with the Staatskapelle Dresden in 2011–2012 featured world premieres of *Requiem—Ode to Peace* (Vladimir Jurowski, conductor), and *Post Silentium* (Sakari Oramo, conductor).

Auerbach's groundbreaking a-cappella opera *The Blind* received its world premiere in October 2011 at the Konzerthaus Berlin with the Berliner Kammeroper and Vocalconsort Berlin as well as a 2012 performance with Stanislavsky Theatre in Moscow.

Lera Auerbach's music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra, Tokyo Philharmonic, Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa, Staatskapelle Dresden, Dresdner Philharmoniker, NDR Radiophilharmonie Hannover, Bamberger Symphoniker, and Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart, among others, and by such choruses as St. Thomas Boys Choir in New York, St. Paul's Cathedral Boys Choir, Estonian Opera Boys Choir, the Latvian National Choir, and Vienna's Arnold Schoenberg Choir. She regularly collaborates with violinists Gidon Kremer, Leonidas Kavakos, Hilary Hahn, Vadim Gluzman, and Julian Rachlin;

cellists Alisa Weilerstein, David Finckel, Gautier Capuçon, and Ani Aznavoorian; violist Kim Kashkashian; and the Tokyo, Borromeo, Artemis, and Jasper string quartets.

Auerbach has been Composer-in-Residence at various international music festivals, including the Marlboro Music Festival, Verbier Festival, Musikfest Bremen, the Pacific Music Festival, Kammermusikfest Lockenhaus, and Les Muséiques Festival. She has also written works for the Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, Caramoor Music Festival, Tucson Winter Chamber Music Festival, Lucerne Festival, Lincoln Center's White Light Festival, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Auerbach has also served as Artist-in-Residence with the Deutschlandfunk Radio.

Lera Auerbach was born in the city of Chelyabinsk at the gateway to Siberia. After writing her first opera at

the age of twelve, she was invited for a concert tour to the United States in 1991, where she stayed to continue her studies in piano and composition at the Juilliard School. Auerbach has been awarded the prestigious Hindemith Prize by the Schleswig-Holstein Musik Festival in Germany, and Deutschlandfunk's Förderpreis. She received a Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship and was recently selected as a Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Bidding a fond farewell to her tenure as Composer-in-Residence of the Staatskapelle Dresden, Ms. Auerbach is currently Artist-in-Residence for BASF's highly regarded "Kunst und Kultur" program, now in its 91st season, as well as resident composer of the New Century Chamber Orchestra, the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra, the Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont, and the International Verbier Festival.