

Carson Kievman – Career Narrative

Carson Kievman's work follows an independent course that blends new music with the theatrical, visual and literary arts. His symphonies, operas, chamber music,



David von Tieghem, Ellen Greene & Keith Corrodine. The Public Theater

music-theater and experimental works have been performed internationally in stage, concert, dance, and museum settings, from SoBe Arts to the Berkeley Art Museum; Ysbreker (Amsterdam), the Pennsylvania Ballet (Philadelphia), The Public Theater (New York City), the Rote Fabrik (Zurich), the Tanglewood Music Festival (Lenox), and the Nationaltheater Mannheim (Germany). His works have been broadcast by British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC); Nord Deutsche

Rundfunk, Berlin; Radio France, Paris; National Public Radio (NPR) and other media outlets worldwide.

Kievman's work in opera has been informed by a lifetime working in music and theater. He started composing at age 16 and directing for the stage at the age of 19. Kievman has created 23 multimedia music-theater works, including 7 full length stage works, such as *California Mystery Park*, *Hamlet*, *Tesla* and *Intelligent Systems* (commissioned by a fellowship from The National Endowment for the Arts and the Donaueschingen Music Festival, Germany).

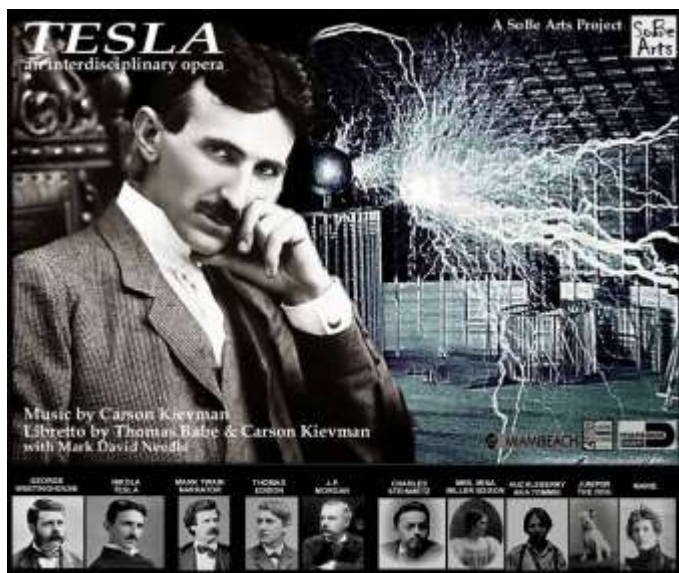


Intelligent Systems, the surrender of self in mystical contemplation, saw its world premiere in June 2015, directed by Jeffrey Marc Buchman. The production sold out its entire run and was universally praised by critics and audiences alike: "*Intelligent Systems is a Smashing Success*";

"This is Kievman's most daring, strikingly original work, and it succeeds through a plethora of musical and theatrical invention" "[A] richly evocative, rhythmically urgent score. The mix of vocal and orchestral timbres is beautifully conceived, with a vast array of colors" (The Miami Herald/South Florida Classical Review).



2014 saw the exhilarating world premiere of his multimedia opera, *Fairy Tales, Songs of the Dandelion Woman*, which was enthusiastically received: “*Fairy Tales*’ is a shattering experience… makes a bold and powerful impact in world premiere… Kievman’s opus is a stunner!” (SF Classical Review/Miami Herald)



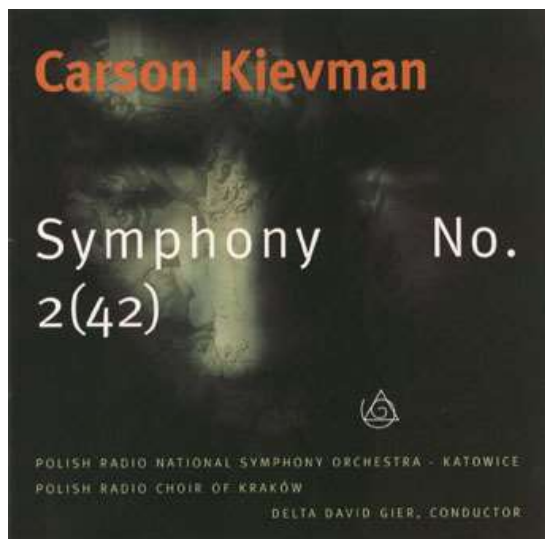
Kievman recently completed *TESLA*, an Interdisciplinary opera about the exceptional life, explorations and brilliant inventions of Nikola Tesla and his legendary battles with Thomas Edison. This compelling story, with its cutting edge multimedia production possibilities, inspired an operatic collaboration with American playwright Thomas Babe. Work began at the Eugene O’Neil Music Theater Conference 1986. The libretto was completed by Babe (and Kievman) prior to his

premature death from cancer on December 6, 2000. Two scenes were previewed in a workshop at the 2004 New York City Opera Vox Festival. The opera is now in pre-production for its premiere in the 2017/18 season.



In 1987, the legendary theatrical producer Joseph Papp commissioned Kievman to compose a music-theater work based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Papp’s final commission for the New York Shakespeare Festival/Public Theater). In 1991, Papp produced a successful closed “industry” reading of selected scenes and was planning to produce the work at the Delacorte Theater for Shakespeare in the Park. Sadly, not long after the reading, Papp was diagnosed with cancer and passed away (which ended plans for the production). However, in 2012, after a 21 year postponement, *Hamlet* received a staged concert premiere at SoBe Arts’ Little Stage Theater: “*Hamlet’s solo monologues are poignantly emotive, the beautiful arioso writing dramatically powerful*” “*A strong theatrical crescendo builds from*

the confrontation of Hamlet and Ophelia through the play within a play and Ophelia's haunting mad scene.” (The Miami Herald)



Kievman has created various large scale orchestral works, including *Symphony No. 2(42)* (1991), *Symphony No. 3 (hurricane)* (1995), *Symphony No. 4 (biodiversity)* (1998), *Symphony No. 5* (2010) and *Symphony No. 6 (no man's land)* (2014). *Symphony No. 2(42)* was commissioned by the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra to honor the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death, recorded in 1996 by the Polish Radio National Symphony Orchestra–Katowice, and the Polish Radio Choir of Krakow, Delta David Gier, conductor, and released on New Albion

Records. The recording was selected by Mark Swed of the Los Angeles Times as one of the Top Classical CDs of the year and received radiant notices including, “*Original in its outrageous flights of fancy*” (Los Angeles Times), “*A truly original and artistically sensitive work*” (All Music Guide) and “*It provides one of the most powerful musical experiences I have had in recent times.*” (Spoleto Today).



Symphony No. 4 (Biodiversity), a four–movement reflection on biodiversity and the plight of our worldwide ecosystems, was first read by The New Jersey Symphony, Lawrence Leighton Smith, conducting. The symphony conveys a vision of the grandeur and fragility of the natural world. Plans are currently underway to record the symphony in the 2017/18 season.



Pianist, David Arden recorded Kievman’s solo piano works, including *The Temporary & Tentative Extended Piano*, *Harpo*, *Introdictus*, *Meditation* and *Nuts & Bolts*, and released on CRI Record's Emergency Music label (now New World Records). “*...astoundingly beautiful and emotionally powerful... imaginative and far reaching*” (John Schaefer, WNYC New Sounds), “*Poignant and provocative*” (Fanfare Magazine)



Kievman's chamber choir works include *Heer Ranjha Prototype* written for Paul Hillier's Theater of Voices (2002), *Sine Nomine (auctore ignoto)*, commissioned by the Princeton University and performed by the Binchois Consort (England) for the International Josquin Conference (1999), and *Henry's Eight Harvest* on a commission from the German Government for a choral work to open the European Expo 2000. In December 2011 his popular choral work *Sine Nomine* was

performed in a string sextet version by classical luminaries Kim Kashkashian, Lara St. John, Anastasia Khitruk and Matt Haimovitz, during the final concert of the American Masterworks String Festival, at the Colony Theater in South Beach; *"The richly resonant string texture shapes a moving setting of an ancient melody which gradually becomes more modern... the lustrous string sound flowing in rising and falling waves"* (The Miami Herald).



Carson Kievman moved to New York City in 1977 and was involved in several European tours of his music in the 1970s and 1980s, and in 1978, the Tanglewood Music Festival, in cooperation with the Fromm Foundation, commissioned *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* Subsequently he was appointed as composer-in-residence by Joseph Papp for the

New York Shakespeare Festival/The Public Theater, and entered the national spotlight in 1979 with over 63 sold out & critically acclaimed performances of his music-theater works *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* & *Multinationals & the Heavens*. *"Enthralling"* (The New York Times). *"Itchily innovative composers still can work in New York's popular musical theater. Exhibit A: Stephen Sondheim's 'Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street at the Uris.' Exhibit B: Carson Kievman's triple bill of 'The Temporary & Tentative Extended Piano,' 'Multinationals & The Heavens,' and 'Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!' at the Public. There may be others. I hope so. Nevertheless, taking into account the recorded*

samplings I've heard from the competition, I have to salute these two shows and none other for fighting the good fight against music-theater solely of, by, and for the tired businessman. " As a builder of music-theater constructions, Kievman is a wizard!" (The Village Voice)

Carson Kievman has been the recipient of numerous awards, fellowships and grants, including the National Endowment for the Arts Grant for American Masterworks Series 2011-12; Mastermind Award by Miami New Times 2010; a Princeton University Research Fellowship 2001-2003; a Naumberg Fellowship at Princeton University 1997-2001; a Janet A. Hooker Charitable Trust Award 1996; MacDowell Colony Fellowships 1977 and 1981; Jury & Participant's Prizes at the 4th International Composer's Festival Zurich, Switzerland 1986; NEA Composer / Librettist Fellowship 1980; Rockefeller and Adolph Foundation awards for a music-theater production at the Public Theater 1979; Fromm Foundation at Harvard Commission for *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!* 1978; Koussevitzky Foundation Composer/Director Residency Tanglewood 1978; a Margaret Grant Composition Prize from the Tanglewood Music Festival 1975; a Leonard Bernstein Fellowship Berkshire Music Center 1975; The Lord Mayor of Darmstadt Fellowship at the Ferienkürse Fur Neue Musik 1974 and 1976; and two BMI Awards 1974/75.



Carson Kievman has counted among his teachers & mentors the composers Earle Brown, Luigi Nono, Olivier Messiaen, Morton Subotnick and James Tenney. Kievman's work was published exclusively from 1974-1990 by Associated Music Publishers/G. Schirmer, Inc. and from 1990 to 2012 by Intelligent Company Publishers (BMI).

Beginning with his earliest compositions Carson Kievman felt that music must be personal to be meaningful. Reviewing the Tanglewood premiere of his music-theater work, *Wake Up, It's Time To Go To Bed!*, Richard Dyer, of the Boston Globe, wrote "*Great art is supposed to be therapeutic for those who make it and for those who respond to it. And it was hard not to respond to this piece. Conflicting and compelling personality emerge from it. I was fascinated and oddly moved.*" In recent years, perhaps influenced by Olivier Messiaen, Kievman has said that his work also attempts to tap into a higher state of illumination, evoking something otherworldly, striving to touch the non-literal and pre-verbal incandescence. While the inspiration for his work is still grounded in personal experience, he now strives for closer contact with the "luminosity of life's intangibles."