Laurence Sherr

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BIOGRAPHY

Laurence Sherr's compositions have been performed on five continents and appear on European and American albums. His music "neatly captured moments of meditation, discovery and despair" (*Prague Culture*) and communicates a "fascinating coloristic world" with "an arresting array of subtle shades of light and darkness" (*Atlanta Journal-Constitution*). He has been awarded grants by the American Music Center, American Composers Forum, Meet the Composer, and the Illinois and Georgia arts councils. Commissions for new works have come from the DeKalb Symphony Orchestra, the new music ensemble Thamyris, the Atlanta Chamber Players, and from organizations such as the [Jimmy] Carter Center and Georgia Music Teachers Association. Soloists who have commissioned Sherr include Atlanta Symphony Orchestra flutist Paul Brittan and flutist Christina Guenther. Among his fellowship awards are those from the MacDowell Colony, Virginia Center for the Creative Arts, Seaside Institute, American Dance Festival, and Banff Festival of the Arts. The U.S. Department of the Interior choose him to be an Artist-in-Residence at Hot Springs National Park. His compositional and pedagogical contributions are examined in several studies, including the doctoral treatise *Laurence Sherr: Chamber Music for Flute*. His numerous awards include top prizes in the Delius Composition Contest and the Association for the Promotion of New Music competition.

As a performer, Sherr founded and served for more than two decades as the clarinetist in the Atlanta klezmer band *Oy Klezmer!*.

Dr. Sherr is recognized for his uniquely interconnected work on music related to the Holocaust, uniting his activities as composer of remembrance music, researcher, lecturer, producer of remembrance events, author, and educator. He has presented this work in the Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, England, Norway, San Marino, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Brazil, and across the U.S. Displaying "lamenting and profound beauty," "mastery of counterpoint" and delivering a "powerful impact" (*Fanfare*), Sherr's album – *Fugitive Footsteps: Remembrance Music* – was awarded a Global Music Awards Gold Medal (Album Composer, Album Concept). Two works on the album, *Fugitive Footsteps* for baritone and chorus and *Flame Language* for mezzo-soprano or baritone with chamber orchestra or chamber ensemble, feature the poetry of Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Nelly Sachs. Sherr designs events that feature remembrance music enriched by stories of Holocaust-era creators and concurrent musical and historical developments. A prime example is his Music of Resistance and Survival Project, which features his cello sonata, Holocaust songs of resistance and survival woven into his sonata, his presentation about the originators of these source songs, age-appropriate student educational performances, and online pedagogical resources. His chapter on the genesis, development, and impact of this project – "Music of Resistance and Survival: Composition, Performances, and Education for Understanding and Healing" – appears in the 2025 publication *Stories of the Holocaust: Art for Healing and Renewal*. Another chapter, on his research on music in the Auschwitz concentration camp, is slated for an upcoming publication. Through all this work, his purpose is to provide remembrance and healing, and to foster greater understanding, mutual respect, and tolerance.

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