



JOEL PHILLIP FRIEDMAN

composer collaborator curator

Traditional Biography

Joel Friedman (b. 1960) has always had the spirit of collaboration at the core of his diverse musical activities, whether serving as co-composer for the award-winning Off-Broadway and London West End hit musical *Personals*, or working directly with a soloist, like former New York Philharmonic principal violist Paul Neubauer for the ASCAP Young Composer Award-winning Concerto in the Form of Variations premiered at Carnegie Hall which Andrew Porter described in *The New Yorker* as "beautiful and intelligent" and James Oestreich described in *The New York Times* as "brilliant."

www.joelfriedman.com

Musical theater has been one of Joel's ongoing passions. In addition to his work on *Personals* (1985), which is regularly performed throughout the United States and abroad (most notably on London's West End), and which has received awards from the American College Theatre Festival and the New England Theatre Communications Group, as well as numerous nominations from the Outer Critics Circle Awards and the Drama Desk Awards, Joel also composed music for the musical revue *Let Freedom Sing* (1988), a commission from the American Music Theater Festival created in collaboration with his lyricist brother Seth Friedman, and *A Vindictive Poem for a Hot Summer's Evening - A Malevolent Comic Opera* (1989), commissioned by American Opera Projects and created in collaboration with his sister Bela-Lisa Friedman. He has also written the book, music and lyrics for *Stew!* (1992), a children's musical theater piece. A cast album from the London production of *Personals* has been released on Jay/Ter Records.

But the musical theater is not Friedman's only musical passion. His chamber and orchestral works have been heard in venues ranging from Carnegie Hall to the Kathryn Bache Miller Theatre and the 92nd Street Y; the Monadnock Festival, Willamette University and Princeton; and such 'non-traditional' venues as Roulette and Theatre 22. He has received fellowships and awards from the American Music Center, ASCAP, the MacDowell Colony, Meet The Composer, the National Orchestral Association, and the Society of Composers, Inc. Commissioners and performers have included artists such as soprano Susan Narucki, flutist Margaret Lancaster and violist Paul Neubauer; conductors Jorge Mester, George Rothman, and Paul Hostetter; ensembles such as the Atlantic Brass Quintet, the Boston Wind Quintet, and *Speculum Musicae*; and organizations including American Opera Projects, the New Jersey Chamber Music Society, Seton Hall University, National Orchestral Association, Riverside Symphony, and TheatreWorks USA.



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Upcoming projects include *Fallings*, a chamber music theater piece commissioned by the Contrasts Quartet written with librettist Seth Friedman and featuring Susan Narucki, who also sings Friedman's music accompanied by pianist Alan Feinberg on a soon-to-be released Americus Records CD, *Extraordinary Vistas: The MacDowell Colony Project*. Another forthcoming CD will feature Friedman's *Pas de Deux* in a performance by cellist Fred Sherry and pianist Stephen Gosling. Compositions for wind band and chorus are also in the works.

A committed educator, Joel is currently Visiting Assistant Professor of Music at Swarthmore College where he teaches music theory and an assortment of music history courses (including courses devoted to Broadway Musical Theater, and Jazz). Previously, Joel was Assistant Professor of Music at Seton Hall University where he originated a highly-successful course on The Beatles; in addition, he taught at Columbia University while completing his doctorate at the same time serving as a Consulting Editor for the Library of Congress's restored critical (piano-vocal) editions of two important George and Ira Gershwin musicals: *Strike Up The Band!* and *Pardon My English*. Joel holds Composition degrees from Boston University and Columbia University.

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The prelude to this formal education included years performing in jazz and rock bands (*Mantis*, *5 Stories High*, among others) on trumpet, electric bass and guitar, and vocals, experiences that have helped to inform Joel's collaborative approach to composing and shape his diverse musical aesthetic.

Joel lives in Brooklyn, NY with his wife Jennifer Bilfield, a music publishing executive, their daughter Hallie, and parrots Percy and Heathcliff.

—Frank J. Oteri (August 2003)

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