

Fred Sherry Reviews for Press Kit

The cellist Fred Sherry has been central to New York music for a half century, and no wonder: a dynamic, ebullient, and magnanimous artist and teacher, Sherry co-founded the ensembles Tashi and Speculum Musicae, served as the artistic director of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and has advocated tirelessly for living composers. For this seventieth-birthday concert, the clarinetist and composer Derek Bermel shows the esteem in which Sherry is held by assembling a constellation of distinguished participants, including Peter Serkin, Jeremy Denk, Ursula Oppens, Richard Stoltzman, Leila Josefowicz, and the JACK Quartet.

-The New Yorker

It's easy to understand why someone would want to honor the cellist Fred Sherry with a celebratory concert. Few musicians have been as devoted to new and difficult music as he has. And he is no slouch in the standard canon. Mr. Sherry's solo turn, in Mr. Babbitt's score, highlighted one of his strengths: namely, his way of using his solid technique and rich tone to make a rhythmically and structurally complex work seem straightforward, comprehensible and even (however fleetingly) lyrical.

-The New York Times

Michael Tilson Thomas and the New World Symphony offered exhilarating American music...There's certainly nothing arid or forbidding about Charles Wuorinen's Five: Concerto for Amplified Cello and Orchestra, particularly in the blazing and eloquent account given by cellist Fred Sherry. The amped string soloist allows Wuorinen to deploy a much larger orchestra than usual for a cello concerto, with thrilling results. Sherry proved a most eloquent advocate, conveying the music's angular lyricism, tackling the cadenzas with fiery bravura and throwing off the sassy Manhattan vitality with full-metal virtuosity. With an inspired Tilson and orchestra as equal partners, Saturday's performance provided as vibrant and compelling a performance of Wuorinen's music as one is ever likely to hear.

-Miami Herald

As well as being an outstanding soloist in his own right, the cellist Fred Sherry is one of the most distinguished of American chamber musicians, and a pioneering member of a number of new music ensembles. The string quartet that bears his name is a group of outstanding younger players recruited by Sherry specifically to play Schoenberg, his Handel-based Concerto for string quartet and orchestra in the first instance. The membership seems to vary – Leila Josefowicz is the first violin on this recording of the Fourth Quartet, for instance – but the sheer confidence and musicality of the playing remains constant. The Third and Fourth Quartets are often regarded as examples of Schoenberg's unwillingness to jettison the outlines of classical form as ruthlessly as he had abandoned traditional tonality, yet here the two works sound fresh and vital, neither four-square in their phrasing nor rhythmically stolid. The Sherry Quartet presents both with total naturalness, giving the music all the space it needs to breathe and express itself.

-The Guardian, UK