

Sheila Silver short bio: January 2025

[Sheila Silver](#) has written in a wide range of mediums, from solo instrumental to large orchestral works, from opera to feature film scores. "Only a few composers in any generation enliven the art form with their musical language and herald new directions in music. Sheila Silver is such a visionary." (*Wetterauer Zeitung, Germany*)

Her recent opera, [A Thousand Splendid Suns](#), based on the international best-selling novel by Khaled Hosseini, was premiered to rave reviews by the Seattle Opera in February, 2023 and short-listed for "Best World Premiere" by the International Opera Awards, 2023. In order to develop a musical vocabulary with which to evoke the color of Afghanistan in the opera, Sheila made several trips to India to study Hindustani music with Pandit Kedar Narayan Bodas. This Hindustani sound world has filtered into many of her recent compositions.

Her honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Sackler Prize in Opera; several Opera America awards; Bunting Institute Fellowship; Rome Prize; Prix de Paris, American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Composer Award and numerous grants and commissions. Her music is performed internationally.

A two CD album of her vocal works, [Beauty Intolerable: Songs of Sheila Silver](#), was recently released on the Albany label and includes performances by Dawn Upshaw, Stephanie Blythe, Lucy Fitz Gibbon, Deanne Meek and Risa Renae Harman. *Resilient Earth*, a set of 7 piano preludes and 4 caprices for solo violin, was premiered in July 2022 at the Dorsky Museum in New Paltz, NY, in celebration of artist Mary Frank's retrospective, *The Observing Heart*, with Emmanuel Vukovich, violin, and Ryan MacEvoy McCullough, piano.

Silver is Professor Emerita of Music at Stony Brook University. Her teachers have included Arthur Berger, Harold Shapero, Erhard Karkoschka, and Gyorgy Ligeti. She was born and raised in Seattle, Washington and began studying piano at the age of 5. Sheila and her husband, film-maker John Feldman, make their home in the Hudson Valley, New York.