The Emerson String Quartet Plays 50 years of American Music 1919-1969:
Works by Arthur Shepherd, Henry Cowell, Roy Harris, Andrew Imbrie, Gunther Schuller

New World 80453-2

CHAMBERWORKS OF HENRY COWELL, ARTHUR SHEPHERD & ROY HARRIS

The visit of Antonin Dvorák to the United States from 1892 to 1895 is famous as a catalyst in the quest for distinctly American qualities in our music. He suggested that the American composer turn to the music of the Negro and the Indian as a basis for a "great and noble school of music." The three composers represented on this record have in common a typical, if superficial, method for being "American": the use of indigenous musical materials, such as folk songs or the early American hymnodic techniques like the fuging tune. Many American composers in the early twentieth century were, as Aaron Copland put it, "anxious to write a work that would immediately be recognized as American in character." All three of these composers wrote several such pieces, but beyond that Henry Cowell and Roy Harris had idiosyncratically American personalities and educations that deeply affected their music.

The oldest of the three, Arthur Shepherd, began his career in a manner typical of his generation. After a rigorous training in the German tradition that dominated nineteenth-century America he encountered the French music that was gradually crossing the ocean and influencing American composers (see 80273-2, Charles Tomlinson Griffes). But in between he met and was influenced—and published—by a native musician, Arthur Farwell, who was vigorously searching out American musical roots. Shepherd's Americana was placed in a European musical framework. Henry Cowell's special American trait was experimentation— he was an explorer continually looking for new musical territories. His native inquisitiveness was greatly enhanced and directed by Charles Seeger, possessor of one of the most exciting musical minds of this century. Seeger, still active in 1977 at ninety-one, is known primarily as a brilliant and versatile musicologist, but in the early decades of this century he was also an inventive experimental composer. Another American characteristic of Cowell's was salesmanship. He traveled the world lecturing and performing his music; he founded in 1927 and edited until 1935 the *New Music* Quarterly, which published primarily American compositions (see 80203-2, *Sound Forms for Piano*); he worked tirelessly to bring the music of Charles Ives and Carl Ruggles to public attention. Roy Harris's American qualities are the deepest and strongest of the three but the most difficult to define. They are found in the very marrow of the man and in the music itself—an earthy, elemental vigor and a broad, open spaciousness.

All three composers are rarely heard today. Shepherd is virtually unknown (see Discography); he was a fine craftsman who, like many of the "academic" composers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, espoused styles that, although stamped with a strongly independent personality, caused his music to be regarded as unadventuresome. Both Cowell and Harris had the personality, but, like Heitor Villá-Lobos, Bohuslav Martinu, and other very prolific contemporary composers, may have become weighted down by the vastness of their oeuvres. Cowell was well known in the twenties and thirties, but largely for one idea—the tone cluster. Harris was famous in the

thirties, but largely for one piece—the Third Symphony. Both men were eclipsed by the composers and idioms that appeared following World War II. In 1967, when Aaron Copland updated his 1941 book *Our New* Music, he wrote of Roy Harris what in part might apply to Cowell as well:

> Harris the composer has remained very much what he was, but the musical scene around him (and us) has radically altered...[and] my prognostication that the California composer was writing music on which "future American composers will build" now strikes me as downright naive. I had completely lost sight of the fact that a new generation of composers, at a distance of thirty years, would have its own ideas about where a usable past might be found.... Today's gods live elsewhere.

However, given the arbitrary nature and mutability of aesthetic values, it is almost impossible to prognosticate what the attitude will be toward these composers within another generation.

Bruce Archibald, composer, pianist, and teacher, is Professor of Music and Chairman of the Theory Department at Temple University. He has appeared as soloist with several American orchestras, and his compositions have been performed on both sides of the Atlantic. Professor Archibald also provided the notes to New World Records 286 (Walter Piston's Sixth Symphony and Leon Kirchner's First Piano Concerto). He has contributed articles to *Opera News, The Musical Quarterly*, and *Perspectives of New Music*, and was the recipient of the 1957 BMI prize in composition.

HENRY COWELL

Henry Dixon Cowell was a very prolific composer, but in addition he was a "champion of new music, impresario, performer, lecturer, critic, editor, teacher and sponsor of the young," to use Hugo Weisgall's words. Cowell is most famous as an experimentalist, but his total output would have to be called eclectic. Much of his music is best described by conductor-musicologist-lexicographer Nicolas Slonimsky as "audaciously conservative." But at the beginning he was an inventor.

Cowell was born in Menlo Park, California, on March 11, 1897, and began his musical career as a violin prodigy but for reasons of health stopped concertizing at the age of eight. He was sensitive to all the sounds around him and felt that all sounds are equally valid as source material for composition, be they sounds of nature or of trains or of the Chinese opera that he could hear free in San Francisco. At fourteen he thought of playing adjacent notes on the piano, either with the fist or the forearm; he called the resulting chords "tone clusters." He did not claim to have invented the device, but the term became permanently attached to his name; the Hungarian composer Béla Bartók even asked his permission to use tone clusters. (For more on Cowell's biography and his experimental use of the piano see 80203-2, *Sound Forms for Piano*.)

At sixteen Cowell, having reached Opus 110 on his own, began his formal education as a composer at the University of California in Berkeley under a special arrangement worked out by Charles Seeger. A more potent electricity between student

and teacher is hard to imagine. Once a week they met to discuss "new ideas in music." In Cowell's words:

> Charles Seeger is the greatest musical explorer in intellectual fields which America has produced, the greatest experimental musicologist. Ever fascinated by intricacies, he has solved more problems of modern musical theory, and suggested more fruitful pathways for musical composition (some of which have proved of great general import), than any other three men.... While Seeger has worked out some of his findings himself, his greatest importance lies in his subtle influence in suggesting to others both a new musical point of view and specific usages in composition.

After listing numerous ways Seeger was a pioneer and a prophet, Cowell goes on:

> Probably his most important standpoint, however, is his open advocacy of the intellectual point of view in approaching music. This he started at a time when such a thing was utterly inconceivable—when it was considered that music had value only if it had nothing to do with the intellect, that the most damning thing that could be said against music was that it is intellectual, and that thinking about music not only has no value but destroys the musical impulse.

These remarks are from an essay that Cowell included in *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium* (1933), a collection of thirty-one essays by various composers, several by Cowell himself. The volume is a valuable first-hand look into the American compositional scene in the early thirties. We shall return to it when discussing Roy Harris, who is one of the contributors and about whom Cowell included an essay.

In their discussions of new musical ideas and devices Seeger suggested to the young explorer that for each new device or technique he came upon he both work out a systematic technique for its employment and also actually use it compositionally. The results of the latter suggestion are Cowell's student compositions beginning in 1914 and continuing beyond his formal education into the twenties. A result of the first suggestion is a book that Cowell wrote between 1916 and 1919, revised ten years later, and published in 1930 as *New Musical Resources*

The book is in three parts: the first deals with tone combinations, "polyharmony," tone quality, dissonant counterpoint (and the influence of overtones); the second part treats rhythm; and the third discusses chord combinations, including tone clusters. The most extensive part is the second, and some of the devices described there were used in composing two quartets from this early period. The first is the *Quartet Romantic* for two flutes, violin, and viola (1915-17), and the second is the *Quartet Euphometric* for string quartet (1916-19). The two works were published together in 1974 by C. F Peters with an extensive introduction by Cowell (1962-64) and another by the editors Stephen Fisher and Don Gillespie.

"The possibility of a demonstrable physical identity between rhythm and harmony occurred to me when I entered the University of California in the fall of 1914 and was faced for the first time with an actual textbook in music theory—the famous *Foote and Spalding"* (Arthur Foote and W. R. Spalding, *Modern Harmony,* 1905). Since both

rhythm and the intervals between pitches are measured by numbers it is possible to correlate the two. The interval of an octave is formed by two sets of vibrations-per-second in a ratio of 1:2; thus if middle C is 270 vibrations-per-second, the next C above would be 540. Transferred into rhythm, an octave would be represented by two notes against one: (insert musical notes here) A perfect fifth would be three notes against two, a perfect fourth four against three, etc. Thus the following triad (three- 2 note chord) with its ratios of 3:4 and 4:5 would be represented by a rhythmic pattern of 3 against 4 against 5 in three-voice counterpoint.

becomes

There is justification for this playful musical game in the physical fact that if you go low enough in terms of pitch, pitch turns into rhythm. The human ear can hear pitches down to about 16 vibrations-per-second (the lowest note on the piano is about 30), but below that the ear no longer hears pitch but only the thump of the beats—in other words, rhythm. The very low pipes for the pedals of a large organ will rattle the building rather than create a clearly perceptible pitch.

Cowell used his method of converting chords into rhythms for the first part of *Quartet Romantic* (see 80285-2). He first wrote a simple four-voice piece, rather like an eighteenth-century chorale, and then converted every sonority into rhythmic relationships among the four voices. As the chords change, the rhythmic relationships change, usually resulting in extremely complex patterns. In fact the rhythms often are so complicated as to defy traditional notation, which led Cowell to use differently shaped note heads, like triangles and squares, to represent different rhythmic durations. Some years later Cowell was to draw inspiration from the shape-note hymns of early nineteenth-century America, which use different shapes for different pitches (see 80205-2 *White Spirituals from The Sacred* Harp)—this was also one of Seeger's many fields of musicological scholarship-but whether he knew of that tradition at this time is open to speculation.

Track 1
QUARTET EUPHOMETRIC

The construction of *Quartet Euphometric* is similar except that the chords are converted into relationships of meters rather than of durations. Thus a triad with the ratio of pitch intervals 2:3:5 would convert to three instrumental lines each in its own meter: one in 2/4, one in 3/4, and one in 5/4. Only occasionally would the bar lines of all voices coincide, creating another kind of rhythmic complexity. The details of this procedure are spelled out on pages 66-80 of *New Musical Resources.*

In both quartets the complex rhythms that are derived are then given new pitches that are not in the tonal style of the original model but are in an atonal relationship to one another. Unlike the frequently disjunct melodies of the Viennese atonalists Schoenberg, Berg, and Webern these lines are primarily conjunct, or stepwise. As Cowell writes, "The musical intention was flowing and lyrical... it was conceived as something human that would sound warm and rich and somewhat *rubato*." And indeed that is the result.

Cowell felt that these works, and others of the same period, were beyond human performance capabilities. He did not envision the "new virtuosos" who perform new

works today. (See 80541-2, *New Music for* Virtuosos.) It is striking how prophetic these explorations were of music after World War II. Cowell's rhythms of 1915-19 are remarkably like passages in Olivier Messiaen's *Turangalila-Symphonie* (1949) or the procedures Elliott Carter developed from the early fifties beginning with the First String Quartet (1951) or the works of Pierre Boulez and Karlheinz Stockhausen around the same time. Feeling the works to be unperformable, Cowell wished to devise an instrument that could play complex rhythms. However, lack of funds forced him to delay until 1929, when he worked in New York with Leon Theremin, the Russian inventor of the electronic instrument that bears his name, on a machine called the Rhythmicon. It was completed in 1931. Theremin later made a second, improved model for Nicolas Slonimsky, who in turn sold it to Joseph Schillinger, the composer and teacher who developed a mathematical method for musical composition. Schillinger later gave this Rhythmicon to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. Again we see Cowell anticipating future trends, this time the electronic music of the fifties.

Quartet Euphometric and the other pieces of the period are essentially student works that systematically explore a particular new musical idea. Beginning in the twenties Cowell's compositions are less single-minded in their problem-solving, but the spirit of exploration continues throughout his career. His specifically American interests focused on various folk traditions but primarily concentrated on the period of William Billings (1746-1800) (see 80276-2, *The Birth of Liberty).* Some seventeen works for various ensembles bear the title *Hymn and Fuguing Tune* (1944-64). Cowell's childhood encounters with Oriental music began a continuing interest in non-Western music. He studied gamelan techniques with a Javanese musician, collected Irish folk songs, and learned to play the *shakuhachi* (a Japanese flute). Cowell wanted to bring together old and new, East and West, to "draw on those materials common to the music of all the peoples of the world, to build a new music particularly related to our own century." His *Madras Symphony* uses three traditional instruments of India within a Western chamber orchestra, and he wrote concertos for the koto (a Japanese stringed instrument). Henry Cowell died on December 10, 1965, having composed, among many other works, nineteen symphonies.

ARTHUR SHEPHERD

Both Cowell and Shepherd have been described as eclectics, but there the comparison ends. Arthur Shepherd is of an older generation than Cowell, and his far more traditional and conservative training molded a firm musical personality that remained consistent no matter what special direction his interests took.

Shepherd was born in Paris, Idaho, near the Utah border, on February 19, 1880.The small town was primarily a colony of English converts to Mormonism. Two of Shepherd's brothers,' Charles and Albert, were also talented professional musicians. Arthur's musicianship was founded on singing English glees, playing the reed organ in his home, and studying the sheet music of the Beethoven piano sonatas that a friend had given him.

One of his teachers, Otto Haenisch, suggested that young Shepherd go to the Leipzig Conservatory, but as the boy was only twelve the New England Conservatory was selected instead. As William S. Newman, one of Shepherd's most illustrious

students, puts it: "During the five years that followed in Boston the formal part of the training was as German as it might have been in Leipzig." Shepherd's principal teachers, Percy Goetschius, Benjamin Cutter, and George W. Chadwick, had all been trained in Germany (see 80280-2, *Fugues, Fantasia, and Variations). A*fter graduating with honors in 1897, Shepherd spent the next eleven years in Salt Lake City teaching privately and conducting both a theater orchestra and the Salt Lake Symphony. His *Overture Joyeuse* won him the thousand-dollar Paderewski Prize in 1902 as well as performances by the Russian Symphony and the New York Symphony under Walter Damrosch.

Shepherd's lifelong friendship with Arthur Farwell (1872-1951) and Henry F. B. Gilbert (1868-1928) opened for him a very important area: indigenous American music. Gilbert, who was Edward MacDowell's first American pupil (for Gilbert's *The Dance in Place* Congo, see New World Records 80228-2), was interested in folk music from all over the world, an attitude that makes him very much a predecessor of Cowell. Farwell's interests were more specifically American. After completing a degree in engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1893 he began studying composition in Boston and continued in Germany under Engelbert Humperdinck and Hans Pfitzner and then in France with Alexandre-Felix Guilmant. He rejected German academicism but noted with interest Debussy's nationalism (Debussy considered his occupation to be *"musicien de France").* Farwell returned to the United States in 1899 and, while a lecturer on music history at Cornell University, began the study of American Indian music. In an assault against the European stranglehold on music in America he decided to "launch a progressive movement for American music, including a definite acceptance of Dvorák's challenge to go after our folk music."

In 1901 Farwell founded the Wa-Wan Press (the name came from an Omaha Indian tribal ceremony). Over eleven years the press published works by thirty-seven American composers, including Farwell himself, Gilbert, Shepherd, Edward Burlingame Hill, and Rubin Goldmark (the teacher of George Gershwin and Aaron Copland). Farwell's announcement of the press reads in part:

> The Wa-Wan Press is a natural outcome of the rapid growth of true musical genius in America, and in proportion to its capacity and growth, will aim to render available hitherto unpublished compositions of the highest order, which because of circumstances which the art-life of America is rapidly outgrowing, have hitherto been denied the daylight of print . . . .We shall ask of the composer, not that he submit to us work which is likely to be in demand, but that he express himself. We shall do our utmost to foster individuality.

(For more on Farwell and his relation to the "Indianist" movement see New World Records 80463- 2, and 80542-2, referred to above.)

Farwell published music "with American folk-material as a basis" as well as abstract works "showing talent or progress along any of the paths of musical tradition." His own pieces were related to his studies of American Indian music. The three Shepherd works published by the Wa-Wan Press were not related to specific American sources: Theme and Variations for Piano (1903), Prelude for Piano (1905), and *Five Songs on Poems of James* Russell Lowell (1909). However, one of Shepherd's major works and one that brought him worldwide attention is solidly American: *Horizons: Four Western*

Pieces for Symphony Orchestra, also known as Symphony No. 1 (he later wished it to be called *Nature* Symphony). It was first performed on December 15,1927, by the Cleveland Orchestra with Shepherd conducting. The four movements are "Westward," "The Lone Prairie," "The Old Chisholm Trail," and "Canyons. " The famous tune "The Dying Cowboy" ("O bury me not on the lone prairee") is played by the tenor saxophone in the second movement, and a chorale derived from a hymn of the western pioneers enhances the majestic grandeur of "Canyons." Another specifically American work is the *Fantasia on Down East Spirituals,* premiered in 1946 by the Indianapolis Symphony.

From 1908 to 1917 Shepherd was again in Boston, where he taught harmony, counterpoint, and piano at his alma mater and conducted various ensembles. During this period new music from France and England was becoming known in this country, and Shepherd found it more to his liking than the German tradition he had known so well as a student. In particular the music of Gabriel Fauré, Vincent d'Indy, and Ralph Vaughan Williams made a strong impression, which can be felt in Shepherd's own compositions.

In 1920 he moved to Cleveland, where he remained until his death in 1958. For six years he was the assistant conductor of the Cleveland Orchestra, and for many years he was on the music faculty of Western Reserve University and was chairman of the music department from 1933 until 1948. His major works date from the Cleveland years: *Triptych, Horizons*, Second Piano Sonata in F minor, Second Symphony in D minor, four string quartets, Quintet for Piano and Strings, Violin Concerto, and numerous songs and piano pieces.

Tracks 2-4

Triptych for Soprano and String Quartet

Reviewing the chamber-music program of the 1950 Festival of Contemporary American Music in New York, Richard Franko Goldman wrote in *Musical Quarterly:*

Arthur Shepherd's *Triptych for Soprano and String* Quartet, on poems of Tagore, came off as the most successful piece from the standpoint of consistent taste and stylistic achievement; it is well made, sensitive and pleasantly vocal, and worth hearing because it is representative of the best music of an older generation of American composers.

Triptych, composed in 1926 and published in 1927 by the Society for the Publication of American Music, is Shepherd's most frequently performed work. It is a beautifully melodic set of songs showing in its vocal line great sensitivity to the inflections of the poetry. The string quartet gives rich, sonorous support to the voice yet is never thick or heavy. The strings perform subtle, unobtrusive countermelodies to the voice while primarily offering a harmonic background. The luminous harmony centers around clear, bright triads decorated with a chromaticism that reveals a strong French influence. The music consistently portrays the text, as at the climax of the first song, "rapture of joy and of sorrow"; or in the second; "the wind is up, the ripples are rampant"; or "ah, the light dances" and "the wind runs wild" and "the light is scattered into gold" in the finale. The songs together are like a three-movement sonata with contrasting tempos from moderate to slow to fast. The musical consistency and the integrity of *Triptych* are the work of a highly skilled craftsman thoroughly trained in the traditions of Western art music.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Many composers throughout the world (such as Alfredo Casella, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Darius Milhaud, Karol Szymanowski, Franco Alfano, Frank Bridge, and Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco) have set the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941); he was himself a composer who blended folk song with classical Indian music. In fact many of his songs have themselves become folk songs. While most famous for his poetry dealing with nature, love, and childhood and his short stories about the poor village folk of the Bengali countryside, he also wrote plays, novels, and essays dealing with religion and politics. He lectured extensively throughout the world, founded a university near Calcutta, and in his later years became one of India's foremost painters. He was an extraordinarily prolific Renaissance man and was deeply revered by his countrymen. In the first four decades of the century Tagore enjoyed tremendous popularity. At present his works are in eclipse, but given the current interest in Eastern philosophies, as well as in symbolism, an upsurge of interest in Tagore is possible.

Tagore made his own English translation from the Bengali original of his *Gitanjali* ("Song Offerings"), which was published in England with an introduction by William Butler Yeats (1913). In his rhapsodic introduction Yeats quotes an Indian medical doctor describing Tagore:

> "We have our poets, but none that are his equal; we call this the epoch of Rabindranath. No poet seems to me as famous in Europe as he is among us. He is as great in music as in poetry, and his songs are sung from the west of India into Burmah wherever Bengali is spoken. He was already famous at nineteen when he wrote his first novel; and plays, written when he was but little older, are still played in Calcutta. I so much admire the completeness of his life; when he was very young he wrote much of natural objects, he would sit all day in his garden; from his twenty-fifth year or so to his thirty-fifth perhaps, when he had a great sorrow [this probably refers to the death of his wife and two children, which actually occurred between 1902 and 1907- B. A.], he wrote the most beautiful love poetry in our language"; and then he said with deep emotion, "words can never express what I owed at seventeen to his love poetry. After that his art grew deeper, it became religious and philosophical; all the aspirations of mankind are in his hymns. He is the first among our saints who has not refused to live, but has spoken out of Life itself, and that is why we give him our love." I may have changed his well-chosen words in my memory but not his thought.

Of the many settings of Tagore's poetry by composers other than himself there is a set of six songs from the *Gitanjali* by John Alden Carpenter (1876- 1951) written in the summer of 1913 (poems 62, 90, 61, 80, 60, and 57) (see 80247-2, *When I Have Sung My* Songs). It is a very expressive, spontaneous cycle. Like the Shepherd, it concludes with "Light, my light" set to joyfully exuberant music. Shepherd's *Triptych* is a setting of poems 72, 74, and 57:

He It Is

He it is, the innermost one, who awakens my being with his deep hidden touches.

He it is who puts his enchantment upon these eyes and joyfully plays on the chords of my heart in varied cadence of pleasure and pain.

He it is who weaves the web of this *maya* in evanescent hues of gold and silver, blue and green, and lets peep out through the folds his feet, at whose touch I forget myself.

Days come and ages pass, and it is ever he who moves my heart in many a name, in many a guise, in many a rapture of joy and of sorrow.

The Day Is No More

The day is no more, the shadow is upon the earth. It is time that I go to the stream to fill my pitcher.

The evening air is eager with the sad music of the water. Ah, it calls me out into the dusk. In the lonely lane there is no passerby, the wind is up, the ripples are rampant in the river.

I know not if I shall come back home. I know not whom I shall chance to meet. There at the fording in 5 the little boat the unknown man plays upon his lute.

Light, My Light

Light, my light, the world-filling light, the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!

Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre of my life; the light strikes, my darling, the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind runs wild, laughter passes over the earth.

The butterflies spread their sails on the sea of light. Lilies and jasmines surge up on the crest of the waves of light.

The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, my darling, and it scatters gems in profusion.

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my darling, and gladness without measure. The heaven's river has drowned its banks and the flood of joy is abroad.

ROY HARRIS

It has often been pointed out that Roy Harris was born (in 1898) on Lincoln's birthday in a log cabin in Lincoln County, Oklahoma. These facts stand as symbols of Harris' distinctly American qualities. His sense of America is vividly expressed in the opening sentences of his 1933 article "Problems of American Composers," one of the longer essays in the previously cited *American Composers on American Music: A* Symposium:

> America is vast and elemental; America is desperately struggling to wrest social balance from her omnivorous industrialism. America is rolling plains, windswept prairies, gaunt deserts, rugged mountains, forests of giant redwoods and pines, lonely rockbound shores, seas of wheat and corn stretching on to the elastic

> horizon, cotton and tobacco fields, fruit orchards, little bare mining towns huddled on the sides of mountains, lumber camps, oil fields, and New England mill towns. America is smoking, jostling, clamorous cities of steel and glass and electricity dominating human destinies....
>
> Wonderful, young, sinewy, timorous, brow-beaten, eager, gullible American society, living in a land of grandeur, dignity, and untold beauty, is slowly kneading consistent racial character from the sifted flour of experience and the sweat of racial destiny.
>
> Harris is aware of uniquely American musical qualities. In the same essay he writes:
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>> Our rhythmic impulses are fundamentally different from the rhythmic impulses of Europeans; and from this unique rhythmic sense are generated different melodic and form values. Our sense of rhythm is less symmetrical than the European rhythmic sense. European musicians are trained to think of rhythm in its largest common denominator, while we are born with a feeling for its smallest units. That is why the jazz boys, chained to an unimaginative commercial routine which serves only crystallized symmetrical dance rhythms, are continually breaking out into superimposed rhythmic variations which were not written in the music. This asymmetrical balancing of rhythmic phrases is in our blood; it is not in the European blood.... American composers have not as yet developed any predominant type of harmonic idiom, but I have noticed two tendencies that are becoming increasingly prevalent both with our commercial jazz writers and with our more serious composers: (1) the avoidance of definite cadence which can be traced to our unsymmetrically balanced melodies (difficult to harmonize with prepared cadences) and our national aversion to anything final, our hope and search for more satisfying conclusions; (2) the use of modal harmony which probably comes from ennui of the worn-out conventions of the major and minor scales and our adventurous love of the exotic.

Harris' parents, of half-Scottish and half-Irish ancestry, came as pioneers in an ox cart to Oklahoma to stake out their claim, clear the land, and build a house. When Roy Harris was about five the family sold the homestead and moved near Los Angeles. Harris took occasional piano lessons and played clarinet in the school band, but his principal activity was farming. Later he spent four years as a truck driver for a dairy company. When he was twenty-four the growing musical forces in him took control; he decided to be a composer He studied with Arthur Farwell in Los Angeles, a tutelage that must have enhanced his inherent American musical tendencies. Harris wrote prodigiously, as if making up for lost time. In 1926 his Andante for Orchestra was played at a Hollywood Bowl concert, repeated in New York, and given a third performance by Howard Hanson and the Rochester Symphony. The farmer from the West attracted wide musical attention.

` Harris managed to find funds to go to Paris and study with Nadia Boulanger at

Aaron Copland's suggestion. There Harris' Concerto for Clarinet, Piano, and String Quartet was performed in 1927. In an accident he broke three vertebrae, necessitating a return to New York and a serious operation (a piece of his shinbone was grafted into his spine). While recuperating he wrote his First String Quartet. Harris was on his way back to Paris when the League of Composers performed his concerto on his thirtieth birthday.

In 1932 Farwell began an article on his former student "Gentlemen, a genius—but keep your hats on!" (a play on Schumann's article on the young Chopin, which begins, "Hats off, gentlemen—a genius!").Two years later Walter Piston began an article, "Roy Harris must, first of all, be applauded and encouraged for surviving the trying experience of having been hailed as a genius." It is a sign of Harris' prominence that so many of his fellow composers wrote essays on his music around this time. In addition to Farwell and Piston, Cowell wrote on Harris in *American Composers on American Music* and Copland devoted a full chapter of *Our New Music* to Harris. Piston's essay continues. "He is now thirty-five, with several important works to his credit, and is probably on the threshold of his most significant achievements." This was prophetic indeed, for Harris' most 6 famous piece, the Third Symphony, was but three years away (1937), and many musicians feel that the 1936 Quintet for Piano and Strings and the 1937 Third String Quartet are his strongest works.

Tracks 5-7

Three Variations on a Theme (String Quartet No. 2)

One of the pieces along this vigorous, rapid ascent to fulfillment and fame was the String Quartet No. 2 (Three Variations on a Theme). By traditional terminology the subtitle would suggest a rather short piece, but instead we have a full three-movement work of classical proportions: a vigorous and rhythmically exciting first movement, a sustained and lyrical slow movement, and a fast but very declamatory finale. The *un*classical aspect of the work is the nature of the slow introduction to the first movement. It is not the anticipatory attention getter (possibly with hints of themes to come) that we find in Haydn or Beethoven; it is a stark, unaccompanied theme from which the entire quartet is built.

Two aspects of Harris' music are found here: the use of traditional formal features but in an imaginative new way, and a powerful sense of melodic growth. Classically a variation on a theme retains the form, the harmonic structure, and sometimes the basic melodic shape of the theme. Nineteenth-century music expanded the concept of variation technique to include freer and larger extensions of the theme. Here we have a relatively short theme as the basis of a complete string quartet.

Harris is primarily a melodic composer; he builds long lines that gradually evolve from basic motives in a kind of continuous variation. This melodic spaciousness was observed by Cowell in 1933:

> Harris' methods of developing form are through melodic extension. He often, in development, interpolates notes between thematic notes; but through dynamic accents of the thematic material, the design is clear. Thus rhythm and accent become an essential feature of the formal development. Rhythmic interpolation, as well as melodic, is employed. Placing different tonalities next to each other he

finds aids the form. His work is bulky in time and lean in space— that is to say, his type of development demands quite a long time to work itself out, but there is often not very much going on at a given moment—many unison passages, and so forth.

Piston observed that "the material for the entire three movements is based on the motive E-flat, C [the first two notes heard], which in German would be Es, C, hence E. S. C., Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, to whom the *Quartet...* is dedicated." Another important aspect of the theme is found in the next notes of the opening unison melody: E *natural,* C. This contrast between the minor third (E flat, C) and the major third (E, C) is basic to the entire work. The rhythmically vigorous first movement is full of the asymmetries that Harris feels are essentially American. Much of the energy comes from the contrasting and combining of 6/8 patterns ( ) with 3/4 patterns ( ), but in addition there are shifting accents and the transplanting of strong-beat figures onto weak beats and vice versa. A long, spacious melodic line dominates the second movement. The finale opens with a stentorian restatement of the original theme from the first-movement introduction. Contrasts of declamatory, fast, and lyrical passages follow, with material from the first movement gradually reappearing. Shortly before the end there is a brief fugue in 5/4.The ending is grand and triumphant.

Harris has been quite articulate about the emotional content of his music, and it is the power of his emotional communication that brought him such broad public acclaim in the thirties. There is the anecdote of the baseball manager who wrote to Harris after hearing the Third Symphony: "If I had pitchers who could pitch as strongly as you do in your symphony, my worries would be over." Harris' description of his *Symphony, 1933* (his First Symphony), performed by Serge Koussevitzky and the Boston Symphony, fits this 1933 quartet remarkably closely: "In the first movement I have tried to capture the mood of adventure and physical exuberance; in the second, of the pathos which seems to underlie all human existence; in the third, the will to power and action." In all his music Harris has tried specifically to portray emotions or psychological forces that he feels are specifically American. He has written:

The moods which seem particularly American to me are the noisy ribaldry, the sadness, a groping earnestness which amounts to suppliance towards those deepest spiritual yearnings within ourselves; there is little grace or mellowness in our midst; that will probably come after we have passed the high noon of our growth as a people.

GUNTHER SCHULLER

Gunther Schuller was born on November 22,1925, in New York and, except for four years at boarding school in Germany, grew up in that city. His grandfather was a bandmaster, conductor, and music teacher in Germany, and his father played violin in his youth under Wilhelm Furtwaengler and as an adult played for over forty years with the New York Philharmonic. Schuller entered New York's St. Thomas Choir School at twelve as a boy soprano. He began to study flute and French horn in his early teens and made his professional debut at fifteen among the extra horns in the American premiere of Shostakovich's Seventh Symphony, with the New York Philharmonic led by Arturo Toscanini. While in high school Schuller simultaneously attended the Manhattan School

of Music, where he studied theory and counterpoint. He left high school in 1942 and never completed his formal education.

Schuller took his first professional job in 1943 with the Ballet Theater Orchestra on tour under Antal Dorati. Later that year he became first horn with the Cincinnati Symphony, and the following year he made his debut as a soloist-composer with that orchestra in his First Horn Concerto. In New York in 1945 he joined the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, where he remained until 1959, 7 when he resigned to devote more time to composing, conducting, and teaching.

Schuller's Symphony for Brass and Percussion, written in 1949, was performed by the New York Philharmonic under Dimitri Mitropoulos, who also recorded the work. *Spectra,* commissioned by Mitropoulos and the Philharmonic, was completed in 1958. Perhaps Schuller's most popular composition is *Seven Studies* on Themes of Paul Klee, commissioned by the Ford Foundation for the Minneapolis Symphony (now the Minnesota Orchestra), completed in 1959, and recorded by Erich Leinsdorf and the Boston Symphony. The Concerto for Orchestra was composed for the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Chicago Symphony and premiered in 1966. *The Visitation* was written for the Hamburg State Opera, received its American premiere by the San Francisco Opera in 1967, and was produced on television by the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1969. Among Schuller's more recent works are *Tre Invenzioni*, for five quintets, written for the twentieth anniversary of the Fromm Music Foundation and premiered at Tanglewood in 1973; the Violin Concerto, written for Zvi Zeitlin on a commission from the Eastman School of Music; the Second Horn Concerto, written for Barry Tuckwell; and *Deai,* for two orchestras, premiered by the Boston Symphony and the Toho School Orchestra in Tokyo in 1978. He is now (1978) writing a concerto for trumpeter Gerard Schwarz on a commission from the Ford Foundation.

Schuller became interested in jazz when he heard Duke Ellington for the first time in Cincinnati. He made transcriptions from Ellington recordings, arranged Ellington compositions for pops concerts by the Cincinnati Symphony, and in 1955 composed the *Symphonic Tribute to Duke Ellington.*

In the late fifties, in a lecture, Schuller coined the term "third stream" for music that combines "the improvisational spontaneity and rhythmic vitality of jazz with the compositional procedures and techniques acquired in Western music during seven hundred years of musical development." Many of Schuller's own compositions have been wholly or in part third-stream music, including *Transformation,* for eleven instruments, premiered at the 1957 Brandeis University Festival of the Arts; *Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee;* and *Variants,* written in 1960 for the New York City Ballet and choreographed by George Balanchine.

In 1963 and 1964 Schuller conducted "Twentieth Century Innovations," a concert series sponsored by the Carnegie Hall Corporation. In North America he has guest conducted orchestras including those of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Minnesota, Cleveland, Rochester, Pittsburgh, Houston, and Vancouver, and in Europe he has conducted the BBC Symphony, the Philharmonia Orchestra of London, the Halle Orchestra of Manchester, the French Radio Orchestra, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchestra of Zurich, and others. Schuller received the Alice M. Ditson Conducting Award from Columbia University in 1970 for his "unselfish championship of fellow composers through the conducting of their orchestral works here and abroad."

In 1972 Schuller presented the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble at the Festival of American Music held at the school. On the program were his orchestrations of long-lost Scott Joplin works, whose subsequent recording won a Grammy Award in 1973 and has been influential in the current ragtime revival. Schuller conducted a suite from Joplin's opera *Treemonisha* at Tanglewood in 1974. The complete opera was premiered by the Houston Grand Opera in 1975 and opened on Broadway later that year with Schuller conducting.

In the sixties, over New York's WBAI, Schuller broadcast a weekly series, Contem*porary Music in* Evolution, of one hundred fifty-three programs analyzing music from 1900 to the early sixties. The series was subsequently heard on seventy-seven stations of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters. In 1973 Schuller wrote and hosted *Changing Music,* a series of six programs on contemporary music that was produced by Boston's WGBH for the Public Television network.

Schuller has also written many articles and two books, *Horn Technique* (1962) and *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (1968). The latter received the ASCAP Deems Taylor Award. Schuller is currently working on a second jazz volume, dealing with later history.

Schuller was acting head of the composition department of the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood from 1963 to 1965, when he succeeded Aaron Copland as head of the department and became responsible for directing contemporary-music activities. At the time of writing he is the artistic director of the Center as well. He also taught composition at Yale, which he left in 1967 to become president of the New England Conservatory, where he remained until 1977.

Besides the Ditson and Taylor awards and others, Schuller received a National Institute of Arts and Letters Award and the Brandeis Creative Arts Award in 1960; Guggenheim Fellowships in 1962 and 1963; the Darius Milhaud Award for the Best Film Score of 1964 for his music for the Polish film *Yesterday in Fact,* which he composed while on a State Department-sponsored trip to Poland; and the Rodgers and Hammerstein Award in 1971. He is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the National Council on the Arts.

Tracks 8-1O
String Quartet No.2
COMMENTS BY THE COMPOSER

Gunther Schuller's Second String Quartet was composed in 1965 on commission of the Iowa University String Quartet. The work was started in Tanglewood, continued on board the Nieuw Amsterdam, and finished in Berlin, where Schuller spent a year as composer-in-residence on a grant from the Ford Foundation.

The work is in three movements, the first of which contrasts clusterish, densely harmonic ensemble passages with brief lyric or quieter melodic sections, usually featuring just one of the four instruments, lightly accompanied by the others.

In the second movement the textural and characterological contrasts of the first movement are further exploited and expanded. The five elements used to provide a constantly varied continuity and texture are: (1) fortissimo triple- and quadruple-stop

chords; (2) short cadenzalike declamatory phrases by individual members of the quartet; (3) accompanimental sustained sounds, usually muted; (4) sustained cluster sounds, usually played ponticello; (5) various short pointillistic interjections in the form of quick glissandos, various swoops, blurps, twists, yelps, whinnyings, wails, and so on. An attempt is made to integrate these "unorthodox" string effects and sonorities into the total fabric of the movement.

The form and texture of the third movement are based on the systematic use of the six basic intervallic categories in our Western chromatic scale. Each of the five subdivisions of the movement emphasizes certain of these intervallic characteristics, both harmonically and melodically. The movement's five subdivisions are broken down further into twenty-one smaller subsections, exploiting the various ensemble combinations possible in a string quartet. Thus there are four solo sections, six different duos, four different trios, and, of course, one full quartet. The quartet section returns several times as a kind of rondo repetition or refrain. The subsections are brief, on the average six measures (or about twenty seconds). An unbroken chain of solos, duos, trios, and quartets result, each in turn exploiting the above-mentioned varied intervallic characteristics.

Quite beyond these technical considerations, the work hopes to exploit the inexhaustibly rich sonoric and expressive capacities of the string quartet. The issuance of this recording of my Second String Quartet has focused in me some reflections—and concerns —that I should like to share with the listener. These thoughts came to me, pincerlike, from two directions, converging at that point where the musical substance (or content) of this work and the demands placed on the performers meet. In endless hours of rehearsing I witnessed the struggle as four greatly gifted young musicians conquered note by note, bar by bar, the challenges and requirements of this particular work.

I mentioned "concerns. " There were many, accumulating over the months during which we worked together to bring those curious black dots and lines on my manuscript paper to life, to a (hopefully) meaningful acoustical reality. Concerns about the quality, even the validity, of the composition; concerns about its practicality, its realizability, its possible relationships to the string-quartet repertory—and deeper concerns yet: was all this extraordinary effort commensurate to the final result, the conclusive experience for the four musicians and for the audience?

We each will have our own and perhaps differing verdict-at least in the meanwhile—until some "ultimate" verdict is delivered by posterity. The interim verdicts concern me only insofar as they are the outcome of an exchange between a work, its composer, and the four performers who, through it, were induced to explore what was for them at first totally new and strange territory.

As a relatively successful composer, the experience of having my music misinterpreted, rejected, laughed at, or, for that matter, beautifully interpreted, praised—even sometimes overpraised—is by no means new. And generally a composer learns to live with all manner of verdicts and reactions. But what impressed me with this particular experience of preparing my Second Quartet for recording was the *process* by which we all evolved to a deeper comprehension of the substance—the essence, if you will—of this piece.

A few things happened, things that in the normal "professional" course of events never happen, are never even touched on, because usually there isn't enough time to

learn, to penetrate a work, to digest. I believe that the players were eventually convinced of the merits of the piece. I know that they convinced *me* of it merits, which I had begun to question when we first started working. Another thing: the rehearsals proved once again how inadequate our notation is in dealing with the subtleties of performance; how important it is for the composer to be present to interpret those minute nuances and feelings that cannot be represented in notation; and how virtually every note can require elaborate verbal exegeses to clarify the myriad performance questions that arise. The whole process of our prolonged rehearsal period reminded me of peeling an apple in circular fashion, round and round, until we had arrived at the core.

I was, of course, aware of the formidable difficulties of this work. Perhaps at first I was the only one. For the players the first encounter with the quartet must have Keen akin to that of a mountain climber, standing at the foothills of an unclimbed peak shrouded in clouds, not knowing what's actually up there, nor exactly how to get there. The "process" I mentioned earlier brought us from that groping beginning to a point where, months later at the recording session, the group played the 'work as if they had performed it all their lives. They really *heard* and *felt* it.

Along the way there were many discouraging moments—for them and for me. At times I almost lost conviction in the work. At one rehearsal I remember being unable even to recall *precisely* the reasons for what I had written, to conjure up even for myself the image, the feeling, the motivations, the essence of what I had written thirteen years earlier. The distance between what I was hearing at rehearsals and what I *thought* I had written was at times so great that the former seemed completely to mask out the latter.

If this was tough for me, one can imagine how frustrating it must have been for the players, who, of course, did not have the advantage of knowing the work, the luxury of not being able to remember something.

But in the rehearsals, including the many the quartet held without me (woodshedding sessions, we call them) notes, passages, phrases, ideas that were at first meaningless abstractions, technically (seemingly) insurmountable obstacles, hasty annoyances, gradually became meaningful, became tangible, became recognizable music—perhaps became for the players even beautiful. For example, a passage would at first elude the players because its intent was obscure to them and, in addition, made great technical demands. No *music* yet at all. I would now try to supply the rationale, the intended feeling of the passage. That helped. Now the musicians at least knew what the goal was. But technically it could not yet be realized, until some hard hours of practicing, both individual and collective, took place.

As the technical difficulties were gradually resolved, the shape, the meaning, the "feeling" of the music began little by little to reveal itself. And as that occurred, in turn the technical problems gradually dropped away like so much unnecessary ballast. This moment in learning a piece of music has always been the most exciting for me: when the understanding of the content (and intent) beneficently influences the technical progress, which in turn reveals more of the content, this again in turn informing the technical realization, and so forth in a fascinating dialogue in which both aspects successively and alternately inform each other, until content and technical realization have moved fully into phase, have in fact become one.

Then there were moments in the rehearsals when the rhythms, pitches, and dynamics may have been accurate but the harmonic relationships, let us say, were not yet

heard. That fine line had not yet been crossed between merely playing the correct pitches and calibrating their subtle relationships to one another. And then having to do that in virtually *every* measure of the piece. A composer, if such harmonic nuances are part of his language, could probably write pages of verbal explication about every measure. How then does one get this into the score? Mostly one doesn't. And since the atonal and/or twelve-tone language is still foreign to the vast majority of musicians, only very few talented and *very* experienced musicians can infer all that from the score, let alone from their individual parts.

Since I am a strongly pitch-oriented composer for whom harmonic relationships are a primary motivation in composing, it was very exciting to see how the four players began gradually to *hear* the harmonies. By the time the recording sessions rolled around, the musicians were doing more than playing in tune; they felt aurally at home in my language.

There were other fascinating discoveries. In highly complex rhythmic contrapuntal passages, as in the last movement, we learned that the natural and seemingly logical impulse to "listen to each other" didn't work. The time differentials between adjacent notes were so minuscule—measured in partials of seconds—that they were of no use in the normal process of hearing, reacting, and playing accordingly. We found instead that if everyone played absolutely correctly and with the right feeling in his own rhythmic trajectory, the result would not only be accurate regarding the desired composite rhythm (heard vertically) but would also be audible as a multilayered rhythmic polyphony (heard horizontally).

With such performing difficulties to overcome, I often wondered, especially in the early stages of rehearsal, if it was all worth it. Would the final result warrant all that agonizing effort? Was it really necessary to conceive such difficulties? Could there not be easier ways to achieve the same or similar results? These are all good questions composers should continually ask themselves —and I fear often don't—questions, I dare say, audiences of new music ask all the time.

I now know that the answer to these and similar questions can only come from the performer—not any performer, but the one who has truly struggled to conquer the performance problems of a work. That is to say, had we been forced to produce a verdict, to answer those questions in regard to my Second String Quartet early in the rehearsal process, we would all—maybe myself included—undoubtedly have, answered in the negative. Perhaps for some listeners the result will still be questionable, but we felt that only after struggling with the problems to that point where we felt at ease in their realization did we have a right to an opinion. Only when the performing technique and the content have become one can you have an *informed* opinion.

Alas, contemporary music is a field in which everyone is immediately an expert, even when knowing nothing about the music and operating only on the flimsiest likes and dislikes. What is mere opinion— often not well-informed—is stated as if it were fact and law. The history of music should have taught us how wrong we can be, how often the world's verdicts have been mistaken. But it was in the crucible of this particular experience that I learned how deeply we must penetrate beneath the surface of a work before we are entitled to any kind of a judgment.

The Second String Quartet began with a blank piece of manuscript paper thirteen years ago. Some months later, as a result of that mostly inexplicable and mysterious

phenomenon we call the "creative process," those blank pages were filled with little dots and lines, symbols, and a few words—untested, untried, unheard except by myself in my inner ear.

The miracle of birth is always wonderful and astonishing. But the realization and translation of those black dots into an audible reality are just as miraculous. For the composer, when the performance is poor, the experience is torturous; when it is beautiful, it is like a rebirth. To my four young colleagues I owe the fact that they made me love my creative child again by carrying the struggle to "realize" the work—I reject the word "interpret"—to the ultimate of their talents and energies. And in that instant they helped to restore and maintain my faith in myself. No composer can receive a greater compliment.

ANDREW IMBRIE

Andrew Imbrie was born on April 6,1921, in New York City. He studied piano from the age of four, first with Ann Abajian and then with Pauline and Leo Ornstein from 1930 to 1942 and Robert Casadesus in the summer of 1941. Although Imbrie had begun to 10 compose when very young, he did not study composition until he was in his teens. Abajian had encouraged him to write music, and in 1937 the boy began work with Roger Sessions, who was to have a great impact on his developing style. (Years later Sessions would refer to his former pupil as "one of the leading composers of his generation.") According to Sessions, when Imbrie came to him he had already had "some elementary training in harmony" and had spent the summer of 1937 studying with Nadia Boulanger in France. Reminded of this recently, Imbrie observed, "I wouldn't say that Boulanger's influence on me has been very important."

Initially Imbrie's studies with Sessions were private; after 1939 they were continued at Princeton University, where Imbrie had enrolled. After graduating from Princeton in 1942, he did a four-year tour of duty in the Army Signal Corps before returning in 1946 to work with Sessions at the University of California in Berkeley. In a 1962 article written to mark Sessions' sixty-fifth birthday, Imbrie pinpointed what was perhaps Sessions' greatest influence on his music:

In an era fascinated either by the motive or by "sonority," Sessions speaks most often about line. Those of us who have studied with him will remember with affection his tone of voice in speaking of "the large gesture," "the long line." Music which is deficient in this quality becomes monotonous or static...

In 1977 Imbrie told me, "I have no objection to my name being linked with Sessions. On the contrary, it's an honor. But naturally I prefer to be judged on my own rather than in comparison with my teacher."

In 1947 Imbrie received his M.A. degree from the University of California, in addition to an offer of a faculty position. However, as he had also received a Prix de Rome, he decided to postpone teaching in order to take advantage of the award. Imbrie has been on the faculty of the University of California since 1949; at present professor of music, he teaches composition, harmony, counterpoint, and analysis. Besides the Prix de Rome, Imbrie's honors include the New York Music Critics Circle Award, an Alice

Ditson Fellowship, a National Institute of Arts and Letters grant, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Boston Symphony Orchestra Merit Award, the Walter W. Naumburg Recording Prize, and the first Walter Hinricksen Award.

Among the composer's works are: Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1946); Piano Sonata (1947); *Ballad in D*, for orchestra (1947); *On the Beach at Night,* for mixed chorus and string orchestra (1948); Serenade for Flute, Viola, and Piano (1952); Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1954); *Little Concerto,* for piano four hands and orchestra (1956); *Legend,* for orchestra *(1959);* Sonata for Cello and Piano (1966); *Dandelion Wine,* for chamber ensemble (1967); Three Sketches for Trombone and Piano (1967—available on New World Records 80541-2, *New Music For Virtuosos*); Chamber Symphony (1968); Concerto for Cello and Orchestra (1973); four string quartets (1942, 1953,1957, 1969); two piano concertos (1973, 1974); three symphonies (1965, 1969, 1970); and two operas *(Christmas in Peebles Town* [1960], *Angle of Repose'* [1976]). Imbrie's most recent composition is the Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (1977), written for the New York Philharmonic. A*ngle of Repose,* commissioned by the San Francisco Opera to mark the United States Bicentennial, was premiered in November, 1976. *Time* magazine, citing the opera for its "diverse and energetic music [without] a lazy measure in the score... but with] a variety of rhythms [and] an interplay of colors," concluded: "Dissonance may dominate Imbrie's style, but he has a powerful gift for direct expression." Imbrie characterizes *Angle of Repose* as "my biggest work so far—two years of hard work."

Describing his own music is, Imbrie feels, "a little like describing one's voice and manner. It is easier to say what it is not than to say what it is." His style "does not strive to be American like my nationality, nor Scottish like my ancestry. It is neither experimental nor conventional." As for his method of composing: "I always start at the beginning and let the ideas shape themselves as they must; the direction they will pursue and the changes in character they will undergo become increasingly clear as I go on."

Imbrie's avoidance of predetermined forms can be traced to Sessions, as can the stress on counterpoint and the wealth of detail that is inevitably one of the memorable aspects of any Imbrie score. Bartók was another serious influence early in his career (the Second Quartet demonstrates this clearly), and Imbrie's polyphony, like both Bartók's and Sessions', tends to be underpinned with rhythmic energy. His linear juxtapositioning is lithe, highly polished, and versatile—more so, in fact; than Sessions'.

Imbrie's music is nontonal and intensely linear, harmony most often determined by counterpoint. Because of this, and because of his use—albeit unsystematic—of serial techniques (for example, the Third Quartet, in which, as Sessions has written, employment of the twelve-tone method is "always in the service of a basic musical conception"), Imbrie has on occasion been rather unfairly labeled a post-Schoenbergian with the unfortunate aura of academe generated by that term. Admittedly, with his background, his technical accomplishment, the complexity and essential nontheatricality of his style, and a resultant expression that can tend toward the terse and austere (Virgil Thomson once described it as "a shade hermetic"), Imbrie might seem a good example of an "academic" composer, as he is occasionally characterized.

But "academic" implies technique without content, which is a situation of no relevance to Imbrie. The expressive motoric surges of his Second Quartet, the lyric flights and dramatic outbursts of the Third, the impassioned rhetoric of the Violin

Concerto, the bell sounds of the Third Symphony, and the brilliant, often sensuous colors of the Flute Concerto are the products of a poet, not a pedant. Although a university composer 11 by background and temperament, Imbrie obviously thinks of music as an expressive, communicative art, certainly a welcome attitude at a time when much of the new music that emanates from campuses seems aimed at small, select audiences of peers.

At his best, Imbrie combines generative spontaneity and a restrained but often telling lyricism (which can sometimes blossom into cadenzalike melisma) with rhythmic liveliness and an acute sense of instrumental color; That these qualities should be joined to structural clarity, fluid motivic development, and complex but masterfully controlled contrapuntal textures is a considerable achievement.

by Phillip Ramey

Tracks 11-13
String Quartet No.4
COMMENTS BY THE COMPOSER

The Fourth String Quartet was commissioned by the Pro Arte Quartet and is dedicated to the members of that group. I had worked with them closely as they prepared performances of my other three quartets and was also able to benefit from their advice while composing this one. The premiere took place in Madison, Wisconsin; on November 17, 1969.

Composing for me is a process of drawing out the consequences (as I perceive them) of an initial idea. This idea may present itself as contour, resonance, rhythm, gesture, or some combination of these; and the first step for me is to pin it down, to give it more definitive shape and character. Once the idea has become specific enough, it begins to generate its own continuation. This is possible because every idea worthy of the name is fraught with potential energy: its components interact so as to create an expectation of forward movement. If this does not happen, it is always because the idea has been imperfectly realized and must be tinkered with until its various aspects are brought into effective cooperation.

The energies released by the first forward impulse eventually expend themselves to a point where they create a demand for contrast; yet the character of the new material is very much conditioned by that of the old. Thus the original idea generates not only its own continuation but the nature of its own opposite as well. In composing, I must ultimately reconcile the various opposing forces by finding a dramatically convincing resolution of their conflicts. The sense of the larger structure becomes increasingly clear as the work progresses.

I am not one of those composers who work by scenario, though I often sketch ahead for considerable distances before filling in details. The Fourth Quartet is not a serial composition, nor does it adhere to any other formal, precompositional rules. Choices were determined by my sense of the rightness of events in context. Yet "contextual" does not seem a satisfying description. For me, no piece of music, however internally consistent, can be a law unto itself. Comprehensibility presupposes certain assumptions common to composer and listener—assumptions not stated but shared through much listening to music of all kinds. The composer relies on some of these,

stretches others, defies still others. His style is the result of a fusion of countless predilections and habits, choices both conscious and unconscious.

These shared assumptions ensure not only comprehensibility but confidence. The listener must be somehow able to recognize the exercise of craft on the composer's part—to sense that the musical ideas, through the toughness of their own identity, create a resistance to the will of the composer who thought them up. The composer exerts his will on the material, but in terms not contradictory to the nature of that material. The listener's confidence is bestowed only if he can follow the trail of that process.

It is evident, then, that the unfolding of the musical drama is important to me: I do not regard my compositions as spatial or static. They move through time, and on a human scale. The energies just rescribed—the contrasts, the proportions and resolutions—are deployed in time in such a way as to attempt to meet the listener's requirements as he reacts to what is happening, and to engage him in the drama. The listener's requirements are assessed by a composer in the following way: he must, while composing, try to hear his own piece as if he were someone else. His critical faculty must always be ruthlessly active, for without it creativity turns to mere narcissism.

The opening movement of the Fourth Quartet begins *allegro con moto* with a brief upward surge of melody to a high point. Each note of the short ascending series is harmonized by a big chord. The melody then falls off and plunges. This whole element is immediately followed by another, in which the forward impetus is pinched off by overlapping semitones. This process is then repeated in much expanded form. By apposing two such elements—the first arching forward, the second checking the first—an effect of dynamic compression is created, which provides the necessary energy for what follows. The whole first section of the movement is, in fact, developed out of this thrust and counterthrust, whose interrelations become more complex as the two elements become subordinated to an overriding continuity of line. The agitation of this first part of the movement leads to a collapse, a slowing down, and a fading out. A lyrical *andantino* passage follows, in which the viola takes the solo part, quietly accompanied by a countermelody in the muted violins and pizzicato in the cello. The return of the first tempo brings renewed agitation, rising to a peak of intensity in which the original ascending melody appears as climax. But at its highest point, instead of being pinched off, it continues, rising still higher and suddenly becoming merged with the lyrical idea, thus bringing about a fusion of the two sections, which had so far been separated. The effect should be a kind of breakthrough in communication between contrasting emotional states, resulting in a not altogether untroubled serenity.

The second movement *(Quasi scherzando)* explores the possibilities of simultaneous as well as successive 12 contrast. A light, staccato, highly syncopated idea is first played off against a thematically related one that is quieter and simpler. A little later comes a passage in which four separate modes of attack are in play at the game time. This diversity is sometimes abandoned in favor of brief homophonic points of emphasis or arrival. Interplay between simultaneous and successive contrast is brought about also by chordal passages featuring rapid shifts in register and dynamics, which then break down into overlappings and, again, polyphony. On one occasion a vigorous and steady sixteenth-note motion is established, only to go underground as it is invaded by increasing stretches of silence, after which it again comes to the surface. In attempting to

combine such varied details into a single movement, I had to find ways to maintain, however precariously, a thread of line and thematic syntax throughout.

The last movement *(Aria)* features solo cello in the main sections, with alternating solos by the first violin and the viola, and it attempts to restore the primacy of melody and to effect the reconciliation of conflict.

THE ARTISTS

THE EMERSON STRING QUARTET, winner of the 1978 Naumburg Award in Chamber Music, has performed at New York's Pierpont Morgan Library and Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Cleveland Art Museum, the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and at numerous colleges and universities throughout the country. In February, 1978, the Quartet, whose members are all Juilliard graduates, was featured in Walter Piston's Concerto for String Quartet,Wind Instruments, and Percussion with the National Orchestral Association in Carnegie Hall. Beginning in the summer of 1977, the Quartet has been in residence at the Vermont Mozart Festival in Burlington, Vermont. Unlike most quartets, the Emerson alternates its violinists on the first and second parts. Its members are listed below:

EUGENE DRUCKER (violin) is a graduate of Columbia University and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Oscar Shumsky. Mr. Drucker has been a participant at the Tanglewood and Marlboro Music Festivals, and has made two tours of the United States on the "Music for Marlboro" series. He was the top American prizewinner in both the International Violin Competition in Montreal in 1975 and the Queen Elisabeth Competition in Brussels in 1976. Formerly with Speculum Musicae, Mr. Drucker is currently a member of the New York Chamber Soloists.

PHILIP SETZER (violin) began studying the violin at the age of five with his parents, both members of the Cleveland Orchestra. At seven he was accepted as a pupil of Josef Gingold, and later studied with Rafael Druian at the Cleveland Institute of Music and Oscar Shumsky at The Juilliard School. In 1976, Mr. Setzer won a bronze medal in the International Queen Elisabeth Violin Competition in Belgium. He has appeared as a soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra and the National Symphony and has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival.

LAWRENCE DUTTON (viola), born in New York in 1954, studied violin and viola with Margaret Pardee while at The Juilliard pre-college division, and studied viola with Francis Tursi at the Eastman School. He later studied viola with Lillian Fuchs at The Juilliard School, from which he received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music. Mr. Dutton has been a soloist with the Juilliard Philharmonia and the Virtuosi Ensemble, and has performed with the New York Chamber Soloists, the Orpheus Ensemble, and the New York Philomusical.

ERIC WILSON (cello) studied with Leonard Rose and Harvey Shapiro at The Juilliard School, from which he received both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music. He has appeared as soloist with the Toronto C.B.C. Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonia

Orchestra, the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra and the Cecilian Chamber Orchestra, as well as with orchestras in Norwalk, Connecticut and Plainfield, New Jersey. Mr. Wilson presented the New York premiere of Ligeti's cello concerto.

MASAO KAWASAKI (viola) studied at the Toho School in his native Tokyo and at The Juilliard School in New York; his teachers have included Josef Gingold, William Primrose, and Dorothy DeLay. In 1971 he won the competition sponsored by Japan's NHK Broadcasting System, and subsequently performed on the NHK networks. Mr. Kawasaki has performed throughout the New York area with the Orpheus Ensemble.

BETSY NORDEN (soprano) is a member of the Metropolitan Opera. In February 1977 she won acclaim for her Sister Constance in the company's new production of Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites.* She made her European debut that summer at the Spoleto Festival as Despina in *Cosí fan tutte;* and has also appeared with the Central City Opera and the Miami Symphony. Miss Norden makes her recording debut on this disc.

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1 (1:54)

ARTHUR SHEPHERD
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3 The Day Is No More (4:27)
4 Light, My Light (3:53)

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5 Variation I (5:45)
6 Variation II (5:09)
7 Variation III (7:22)

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10 III (5:50)

ANDREW IMBRIE
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11 I (7:23)
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13 III (6:13)

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