

NONE BUT THE LONELY FLUTE

New World Records 80456

The pure, small voice of a solo flute, resounding in the vastness of the surrounding space invokes images from Biblical times, or from the slopes of the sacred Mount Olympus. Composers of past generations, from Telemann to Debussy, have explored the expressive potential of this most portable of all the instruments capable of standing alone. The explorations continue; here is proof.

The very title of Milton Babbitt's solo piece—*None but the Lonely Flute*—celebrates that “alone-ness,” while also playing off on the familiar Tchaikovsky song (for “Flute” read “Heart”). Currently Professor Emeritus at Princeton University, where his teaching (in both music and mathematics) began in 1938, Babbitt also teaches composition at the Juilliard School, co-founded the famous Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center, and is a member of the American Academies of Arts and Letters and Arts and Sciences. Composer, teacher, theorist, mathematician, tireless innovator (and, at one time, a proficient composer of Tin Pan Alley ballads), Babbitt has long functioned as the foremost American avatar of Arnold Schoenberg's twelve-tone compositional principles. In his writings and teachings, in fact, he has taken the spirit of serialism to its ultimate resolution, treating it as a branch of mathematics, working out his compositions as numerical formulas and only at the end turning his calculations into musical notes.

All this is not so formidable as it sounds, however. His 1991 piece for Dorothy Stone plays off the Tchaikovsky ballad (an unlikely source, you must admit!) with subtlety and even wit. Atomized particles of the original theme seem to surface and then subside; without ever actually hearing the song *as such*, we are made aware of its presence in a succession of double-takes. In one of his rare laconic moods, Babbitt contributed only the following as program note: “I do not presume to direct the listener's awareness to other than that which least requires direction, the superb performance which the composition is about to receive.”

Born in New York City in 1926, Morton Feldman began studying piano and composition as a child. In 1949 Feldman met John Cage, whose influence and encouragement aided the development of Feldman's unique voice. Feldman's friends and associates also included the abstract expressionist painters Mark Rothko, Philip Guston, Franz Kline, Jackson Pollock, and Robert Rauschenberg, as well as musicians and composers. Feldman was the Edgard Varèse Professor at the University of New York at Buffalo from 1973 until his death in 1987.

Feldman's *Trio for Flutes* dates from 1982, and was composed in Berlin as a birthday piece for Sonia Botanyi. Aside from its brevity, the piece can be taken as “pure” Feldman: a kind of distant view from a mountaintop, with the fragments of an obsessive, compressed musical idea seeming to scud across the landscape like wisps of cirrus clouds. As with the Babbitt, the music takes its shape almost in retrospect; we know how we got there only after we've arrived.

Feldman's method in the work is a technique he frequently employed: He uses the idea of a chromatic cell, a dense complex of C-sharp, D and E-flat, which seems to build the piece simply by the harmonic clash among these notes—a kind of shimmer, an insistence not all that different from the throb of a toothache (but a lot more rewarding). If you knew Feldman, or ever heard him speak, you'd know that the contrast between the man himself (flamboyant, loud and hearty, with a New York accent you could

walk on) and the exquisite flickerings of his musical style constitutes one of music's most delightful enigmas.

About Stephen Mosko's *for Morton Feldman*, which he completed in 1987 shortly after Feldman's death, the composer writes that "...the piece was not intended as a memorial to nor as an imitation of Feldman, but rather as a reflection on many of the ideas he introduced to me. His structures were generally not planned, but arose from what the material suggested and grew, almost as in a dream...(This) composition is concerned with musical ideas forming and evaporating, re-forming in many ways, and again dissolving. The piece was also very much influenced by my deep respect for the musicians for whom it was written: Dorothy Stone, flute; Erika Duke, cello; and Gaylord Mowrey, piano."

Born in Denver in 1947, Mosko has been active as a conductor (notably as Music Director, since 1987, of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players) as well as a composer. His principal teachers, along with Feldman, have been Mel Powell and Morton Subotnick at the California Institute of the Arts and Donald Martino at Yale. *Indigenous Music II: Flute*, composed in 1985 for Dorothy Stone, exists as a separate composition and also as the flute segment of a larger work, *Indigenous Music II* for chamber orchestra. As its title suggests, the flute work is actually a survey of the many kinds of music-making indigenous to the instrument—not only the usual melodic line but also multiphonics, whistle tones, key clicks, and singing while playing—while also exploring new territory in the use of extended glissandi over the range of the instrument. "The flute utilizes the themes of the larger work," Mosko writes, "of timelessness and transformation—transformation by multiple beatings of multiphonics and singing which inevitably result in splitting apart; and timelessness in that the piece has no direction."

Kathryn Alexander, born in 1955 in Waco, Texas, completed her bachelor's degree at Baylor University as a flutist, and then went to the Cleveland Institute of Music for graduate study. While there she made the acquaintance of composer Donald Erb, who encouraged her to compose. Alexander worked with Erb and Eugene O'Brien at the Institute; studied with Barbara Kolb, Joseph Schwantner, and Samuel Adler while pursuing graduate studies at the Eastman School of Music; and did additional work with Leon Kirchner at the Tanglewood Music Center.

What Morton Feldman accomplished in his *Trio* by overdubbing three separate flute lines, Alexander accomplishes electronically in her 1985 *And the Whole Air is Tremulous*. The tape against which Dorothy Stone gives her live performance is made up entirely of the composer's playing on members of the flute family: piccolo, flute in C, alto flute, and bass flute, their sounds recorded and then manipulated by traditional "musique concrète" techniques—including sound reversal, tape speed manipulation, multi-track recording—and post-processed digitally using flangers, phase shifters, delay and echo units, reverb, and an automated mixing console. "The intent is purely musical," the composer writes. "The live and taped flutists unite to create a greater whole."

The work is not programmatic, but it is associated with a passage from Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*: "So when the wind roams through a forest innumerable twigs stir; hives are brushed; and the whole air is tremulous with breathing..."

John Cage, who was born in Los Angeles in 1912, and died in New York City in 1992, is considered to be one of the central figures in the music history of our century. His impact and the influence of his

thinking have become almost immeasurable. One thing Cage could never accept was the notion of separateness in the arts. A magnificent impurity—whereby the boundaries simply crumble between seeing and hearing, between notated music and speech, between theatrical activity and actual music-making, between the chance of what a certain radio might be playing at a certain time and music-making under a conductor—pervaded his work from the start. Today we would call it “interaction.”

The *Ryoan-ji* garden was built in Kyoto around 1490. Cage visited it in 1962, and wondered at the unexpressed logic that had governed the exact positioning of the stones on the vast expanse of sand. The stones in the garden, and the outline of their collective shape (like the peaks of a miniature mountain range) inspired a series of pencil drawings of these outlines, the intensity of the lines determined by Cage’s readings in the *I Ching*. From these drawings, beautiful in their starkness, Cage then, in 1985, fashioned a musical counterpart, with a live flute solo against a tape of prerecorded flutes and with simple percussion that seems to be filling in around the “rocks” with a sandscape. Writing of the relationship between his drawings and their musical realization, Cage noted that “each two pages are a ‘garden’ of sounds....The score is a ‘still’ photograph of mobile circumstances. That is, where there are two or more parts active at the same time their relationship in time need not be exactly the one delineated. The percussion piece begins and ends a performance, in each case with about two measures. It continues during silences of any length between the flute pieces.”

—Alan Rich

Alan Rich is music critic for L.A. Weekly and author of several books and interactive CD-ROM programs on music.

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DOROTHY STONE (who is married to Stephen Mosko), received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Manhattan School of Music and a Master of Fine Arts degree from the California Institute of the Arts. Her principal flute teachers have been Harold Bennett, Harvey Sollberger, Ann Deiner Giles, Thomas Nyfenger, and Julius Baker. Her principal composition teachers have been Stephen L. Mosko, Mel Powell, Leonard Stein, and Morton Subotnick. Ms. Stone is a founding member and Artistic Director of the California EAR Unit. She has performed as soloist throughout the United States and Europe, including at the Witten Neue Musik Tage sponsored by the WDR (West German Radio), the Ars Musica Festival in Brussels, the Tanglewood Festival, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Ojai Festival, and on National Public Radio. Ms. Stone has recorded for Crystal, New Albion, Newport Classics, and the Nonesuch record labels.

ARTHUR JARVINEN, percussionist, has been an active composer, performer, multi-instrumentalist, and physical poet since 1978, when he co-founded the Antenna Repairmen with fellow percussionists Robert Fernandez and M. B. Gordy. Since then Mr. Jarvinen's musical and theatrical works have been featured at concerts and festivals throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. As a new-music percussionist Mr. Jarvinen has performed with the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group and Steve Reich, on Monday Evening Concerts and at the Ojai Festival, and on special projects with Frank Zappa. He has been a member of the California EAR Unit since 1982. Mr. Jarvinen also performs on the electric bass, chromatic harmonica, and slide guitar. He has received commissions from the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation (with the chamber group XTET), the Minnesota Composers Forum, and *Zeitgeist*, and was the recipient of a 1990 NEA Composer Fellowship and a 1991 California Arts Council Fellowship.

ERIKA DUKE-KIRKPATRICK, cellist, is a founding member of the EAR Unit and has performed in premieres of solo and chamber works throughout the U.S. and Europe. Her performance appearances include with New Music America, the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, the Ravinia Festival, the Computer Music Festival in Zurich, and the San Francisco Symphony "New and Unusual Music" series. Ms. Kirkpatrick has had works written for her by numerous composers including Mel Powell, Elliott Carter, and Morton Subotnick, with whom she has toured and recorded since 1981. She performed in the West Coast premiere of Tod Machover's *Begin Again Again* and was a soloist in the world premiere of Mr. Subotnick's interactive opera *Jacob's Room* in Philadelphia. Ms. Kirkpatrick is principal/solo cellist of the Santa Fe Pro Musica and was principal cellist at the Ernest Bloch Festival at Newport, Oregon. She is on the faculty at the California Institute of the Arts and UC San Diego. Ms. Kirkpatrick has recorded for Nonesuch, Wergo, New Albion, Voyager, and Cold Blue Records.

GAYLORD MOWREY, pianist, is a founding member of the California EAR Unit. He is widely known for his work with extended piano and prepared piano techniques, as well as his repertory of contemporary piano literature. His collection of original works for prepared piano is due to be released on the Pro Sonus label. Mr. Mowrey has been a faculty member of the California Institute of the Arts, and is currently on the faculty of the California Summer School of the Arts.

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NONE BUT THE LONELY FLUTE DOROTHY STONE, flute 80456-2

Milton Babbitt (b. 1916)

None but the Lonely Flute (1991) 8:58

Morton Feldman (1926-1987)

Trio for Flutes (1982) 4:24

Stephen L. Mosko (b. 1947)

for Morton Feldman (1988) 18:58

Erika Duke-Kirkpatrick, cello; Gaylord Mowrey, piano

Kathryn Alexander (b. 1955)

And the Whole Air is Tremulous (1985) 13:10

Stephen L. Mosko

Indigenous Music II: Flute (1985) 7:29

John Cage (1912-1992)

Ryoan-ji (1985) 14:24

Arthur Jarvinen, percussion

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