

DONALD ERB
Sunlit Peak and Dark Valleys

New World Records 80537

Donald Erb was born in 1927 in Youngstown, Ohio, where he played trumpet with a dance band several times a week throughout high school. After serving in the Navy during World War II, Erb continued as a professional jazz trumpeter and attended Kent State University, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in music in 1950. He then studied composition with Marcel Dick at the Cleveland Institute of Music and earned his Master of Music degree in 1953. Erb earned a Doctorate in Music in 1964 at Indiana University, where he studied with Bernard Heiden. In 1971 Indiana University awarded Erb its Distinguished Alumnus Award, and he continued teaching there in the Eighties. In 1984 the Cleveland Institute of Music awarded Erb an honorary doctorate, and in 1993 it added its Distinguished Alumnus Award. He has been composer in residence with the Saint Louis Symphony, under the banner of Meet the Composer. Donald Erb has received grants and fellowships from the Rockefeller, Guggenheim, Ford, Fromm, and Koussevitzky Foundations. He has had commissions from the Cleveland Orchestra and the Chicago, Saint Louis, Baltimore, Dallas, and Boston symphonies, among others.

REMEMBRANCES (1994)

After years of fulfilling commissions, I decided to take most of 1994 just to write music I wanted to write for certain performers whom I liked and admired. *Remembrances*, for two trumpets, is one of four such pieces that I wrote that year. It was written for Ryan Anthony and dedicated to him.

When I was growing up, I was for quite a few years a serious trumpet player and for a period of time made my living as a jazz trumpeter. *Remembrances* has to do with trumpet players who had an influential role in my life. Each of the five movements is dedicated to one of these people. "Twirling Fanfare" is dedicated to Herbert L. Clarke. When I was in high school I studied a number of solo works written by this American bandsman. "Passacaglia (almost) in Praise of A flat" is for Dizzy Gillespie, who influenced my jazz playing. "Scherzo" is dedicated to Howard Roberts, a man whom I met when I was in high school. He was a wonderful trumpet player who went on to make a reputation as a singer. He toured the world as Crown in *Porgy and Bess*. Rex Stewart played his jazz with a plunger, hence the movement "Plungermusic." "Fanfare No. 2" is dedicated to Bunny Berigan. As a boy I listened over and over to "I Can't Get Started."

SONATA FOR SOLO VIOLIN (1994)

I completed the Sonata for Solo Violin in 1994, and it was first performed later that year in Philadelphia by Greg Fulkerson, to whom the work is dedicated. It is in four movements—Vesper, Scherzo, Ceremony, and Gut Bucket Blues.

In his program notes Mr. Fulkerson describes the Sonata: "The first movement is an elegy for Bain Murray, Erb's friend and fellow composer . . . The powerful expressivity is characteristic of his recent work. An Erb scherzo is practically a guarantee of musical sonic effects. In this one, the violinist is asked to hum while playing, and the middle section involves hitting the violin with a chopstick. The Ceremony is very slow and has three voices: slow violin glissandi in harmonics, left-hand pizzicato, and a high chime sounding on A . . . The last movement is a rhythmic and ferociously energetic good time with only a hint of the dark side peeking through in the form of a

chill wind outside the window."

SUNLIT PEAKS AND DARK VALLEYS (1995)

Commissioned by the Verdehr Trio and Michigan State University, *Sunlit Peaks and Dark Valleys* was completed in May 1995. The work is in three movements: two fast movements with a slow one in the middle.

(eighth note) = 144

Children's Song—For the Children of Oklahoma City

(quarter note) = 132

The first and last movements are bright and virtuosic in character. The dark valley in between was my second attempt to deal with one of the most profound events in recent times—the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City and the murder of the children. The sight of firemen removing dead, hurt, and frightened children from the building moved me beyond words, all the more so because I had spent a significant part of my childhood not far from there. This slow movement is based on "Jesus Loves Me," a song which I and many American children learned in Sunday School.

SONATA FOR SOLO HARP (1995)

Sonata for Solo Harp was completed in January 1995. It is in three movements, all of which use similar stylistic material. The motives and figures that are introduced in the first movement are carried over in various ways throughout the succeeding two movements. Some of the unusual harpistic techniques, such as pedal glissandos, are also repeated.

The movements have titles that provide clues to the character of each of them. "Round and Round the Wind" is from the book of Ecclesiastes: "The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continually." In this movement the writing is alternately delicate and powerful—but at all times there is motion, even if the motion is in silence.

The second movement, "Song for Sarah Gooder" has the following source: Some of the casualties were paraded before the Ashley Mines Investigation Commission in England in 1842, among them Sarah Gooder. Here is Sarah's view of a world she never made: "I am Sarah Gooder. I am eight years old. I'm a coal carrier in the Gawber mine. It does not tire me, but I have to trap without a light and I am scared. I go at four and sometimes half past three in the morning, and come out at five and a half past in the evening. I never go to sleep. Sometimes I sing when I've a light, but not in the dark; I dare not sing then. I don't like being in the pit. I am very sleepy when I go in the morning. I go to Sunday School and learn to read. They teach me to pray. I have heard tell of Jesus many times. I don't know why he came on Earth. I don't know why he died, but he had stones for his head to rest on.

The third movement, "Dirty Rotten Scherzo," is somewhat self-explanatory in character. Both stylistically and technically, the harp is used in an earthier context than most listeners might expect. The natural sound made when sliding the harp's pedals from one position to the next plays an important part in setting the tone and creating the framework for this final movement.

The commissioning of the Sonata for Solo Harp was made possible by a grant from the Meet the Composer-Reader's Digest Commission Program, in partnership with the National Endowment for the Arts and the Lila Acheson Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund.

CHANGES (1994)

I wrote *Changes* for pianist Jo Boatright and clarinetist Ross Powell, co-founders of Voices of Change in Dallas. It was premiered by them in October 1994. The work is a relatively virtuosic one, with no particular program except to be a colorful piece for the two players. The title *Changes* has several connections. "Changes" refer to the chord changes in a piece of music and also to the changes in mood reflected in the work. There is also the oblique reference to "Voices of Change." I hope that it is an energetic piece which will hold your attention.

—Donald Erb

THE VERDEHR TRIO has, for more than twenty years, concentrated on molding and defining the personality of the violin-clarinet-piano trio. Through its commissioning efforts, more than eighty new works written by some of the world's most prominent and exciting composers have been added to the chamber music repertory. Appearing in virtually all of the world's music capitals, the Verdehr Trio has also commissioned and performed trio concertos with Vienna's Tonkanstler Orchestra, the Honolulu Symphony, and the Prague Chamber Soloists. To complement its commissioning efforts the Verdehr Trio has begun making CD recordings of the new works created for the Trio. A parallel project is *The Making of a Medium* video series, consisting of half-hour programs with interviews and discussion by both composers and performers as well as a complete performance of each work. The Verdehr Trio is in residence at Michigan State University.

WALTER VERDEHR was born in Gottschee, Yugoslavia, and received his first violin instruction at the Conservatory of Music in Graz, Austria. As a student at The Juilliard School, he was the first violinist to receive the doctorate. He studied further at the Vienna Academy of Music, on a Fulbright Fellowship. He has made numerous appearances as soloist with orchestras and in solo and chamber music recitals in the U.S. and Europe. Mr. Verdehr is a professor at Michigan State University.

ELSA LUDEWIG-VERDEHR studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and at the Eastman School of Music, where she received a Performer's Certificate and Doctor of Musical Arts degree. She has performed and lectured at numerous International Clarinet Congresses, and for several years was a participant in the Marlboro Music Festivals and touring groups. She was awarded the Distinguished Faculty Award at Michigan State University, where she is Professor of Music.

Born in Kansas, **GARY KIRKPATRICK** graduated with high honors from the Eastman School of Music and the Academy of Music in Vienna. Claiming top prizes at the Stepanov Piano Competition in Vienna and the International Piano Competition in Jaén, Spain, he made his New York debut at Carnegie Recital Hall. Mr. Kirkpatrick has given solo tours in Spain, Italy, Greece, Mexico, and Austria, and has recorded for CRI and Musical Heritage. Currently (1997), Mr. Kirkpatrick teaches at the William Paterson College of New Jersey.

ROSS POWELL studied clarinet with Alberto Luconi while at the University of Michigan,

followed by training at the Eastman School of Music with Stanly Hasty. Since 1966, he has been on the faculty at Southern Methodist University, where he is Associate Professor of Clarinet. As co-founder of Voices of Change, Powell served as president and director from 1975 to 1983, and can be heard on several CD's on the CRI, Crystal, Redwood, Odyssey, and New World labels.

Winner of five "Adventurnus" awards from ASCAP, **JO BOATRIGHT** has received accolades worldwide for her collaborative performances and artistic direction. Ms. Boatright has been a soloist with symphony orchestras since the age of twelve, and has performed in the musical capitals of Western and Eastern Europe, Central and South America, and the U.S. In 1974, she co-founded Voices of Change with Ross Powell and has been artistic director since 1985. Currently Ms. Boatright is Adjunct Professor of Chamber Music at Southern Methodist University and Music Director for the First Unitarian Church of Dallas.

DAVID SPENCER, currently Professor of Trumpet at the University of Memphis, has enjoyed a diverse musical career that has spanned three continents and ranges from orchestral and solo appearances to chamber music and jazz performance. His orchestral positions have included principal trumpet with the Seoul Philharmonic, Manhattan Chamber Orchestra, and the Sinfonica de Asturias in Spain. As a jazz artist, he has performed with Freddie Hubbard, Michael Brecker, James Moody, and Marvin Stamm.

RYAN ANTHONY enjoys an active career as both an orchestral musician and soloist. A graduate of The Cleveland Institute of Music, he has performed with the Cleveland Orchestra and the Detroit, San Diego, and Indianapolis symphonies, as well as with the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado. In 1986, he was the recipient of the *Seventeen* Magazine/General Motors National Concerto Competition, leading to his debut performance as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra. Mr. Anthony was heard on National Public Radio in a 1991 performance of J. S. Bach's Second Brandenburg Concerto with Joseph Silverstein.

Harpist **YOLANDA KONDONASSIS** began studying the harp at age nine. She attended the Interlochen Arts Academy and The Cleveland Institute of Music, where she received Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Performance as a student of Alice Chalifoux. Ms. Kondonassis was the first harpist to win first prize in competitions open to all instrumentalists, such as the Ima Hogg National Young Artists Competition and the Naftzger Auditions. Other credits include top prizes in the Affiliate Artists National Auditions and the Maria Korchinska International Harp Competition in Great Britain. Ms. Kondonassis has performed at the Marlboro, Spoleto, and Tanglewood festivals. She is co-founder and co-artistic director of the chamber music ensemble, Myriad and is half of the Kondonassis/Zukerman Duo with flutist Eugenia Zukerman. As an orchestral harpist, Ms. Kondonassis has performed, recorded, and toured with the Cleveland Orchestra, the Saint Louis Symphony, the San Francisco Symphony, and the Atlanta Symphony, among others, and as a concerto soloist and recitalist in major cities throughout the United States and abroad, including engagements with the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Detroit, Houston, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia, and the New World symphonies. Ms. Kondonassis has recorded for the Telarc label.

GREGORY FULKERSON, violin, was the first soloist to win the International American Music Competition (1980) for Violin, sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation and Carnegie Hall. Mr.

Fulkerson gave the world premiere performances of Richard Wernick's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, written especially for him, at Carnegie Hall and the Philadelphia Academy of Music. Mr. Fulkerson has recorded the complete Ives sonatas with pianist Robert Shannon on Bridge Records and the Roy Harris violin concerto with the Louisville Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist with the Grant Park, Cincinnati, Milwaukee, North Carolina, Albany, and American symphony orchestras, among others. Solo recital appearances have taken him to New York, Washington, D.C., Chicago, Cleveland, Milwaukee, Honolulu, and abroad to London, Paris, Rome, Brussels, and throughout Germany. He has been a resident artist at the Grand Teton, Marlboro, and Santa Fe music festivals and has appeared with the New York New Music Ensemble, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Conrad Cumming Ensemble, and Arizona Contemporary Ensemble. Mr. Fulkerson is a member of the faculty at the Oberlin Conservatory.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- ... and then toward the end* Stuart Dempster, trombone. New World 8057-2.
Aura II. Lynn Harrell, cello. Albany Troy 092.
Cenotaph (for E.V.). University Circle Wind Ensemble, Gary Ciepluch, conductor. New World 80457-2.
 Concerto for Brass and Orchestra. Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, conductor. New World 80415-2.
 Concerto for Cello and Orchestra. Lynn Harrell, cello; Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, conductor. New World 80415-2.
 Concerto for Contrabassoon and Orchestra. Gregg Henegar, bassoon; The London Philharmonic, Harold Farberman, conductor. Leonarda LE 331.
Drawing Down the Moon. Jan Gippo, piccolo; Kirk Brundage, percussion. New World 80457-2.
Five Red Hot Duets. Bradford Buckley, Gregg Henegar, bassoons. Albany Troy 092.
Ritual Observances. Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin, conductor. New World 80415-2.
St. Valentine's Day Brass Quintet. Nashville Contemporary Brass Quintet. Pantheon PFN-2241.
 String Quartet No. 2. Cavani Quartet. Albany Troy 092.
 Symphony for Winds. University Circle Wind Ensemble, Gary Ciepluch, conductor. New World 80457-2.
The Watchman Fantasy. Gregory Fulkerson, violin; Audrey Andrist, piano. Albany Troy 092.
Woody. Ross Powell, clarinet. New World 80457-2.

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Note: The complex "difference tones" heard on *Remembrances* are a faithful reproduction of the natural acoustical sounds produced onstage.

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DONALD ERB (b. 1927) 80537-2
SUNLIT PEAKS AND DARK VALLEYS

Remembrances
1 I Twirling Fanfare (3:18)

- 2 II Passacaglia (almost) in Praise of A flat (3:55)
- 3 III Scherzo (4:01)
- 4 IV Plungermusic (2:14)
- 5 V Fanfare No. 2 (1:50)

David Spencer, Ryan Anthony, trumpets

Sonata for Solo Violin

- 6 I Vesper (for Bain Murray) (5:02)
- 7 II Scherzo (2:34)
- 8 III Ceremony (3:36)
- 9 IV Gut Bucket Blues (2:54)

Gregory Fulkerson, violin

Sunlit Peaks and Dark Valleys

- 10 I (eighth note) = 144 (7:21)
- 11 II Children's Song—For the Children of Oklahoma City (6:01)
- 12 III (quarter note) = 132 (3:09)

The Verdehr Trio: Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, clarinet; Walter Verdehr, violin; Gary Kirkpatrick, piano

Sonata for Solo Harp

- 13 I Round and Round the Wind (4:46)
- 14 II Song for Sarah Gooder (6:55)
- 15 III Dirty Rotten Scherzo (3:30)

Yolanda Kondonassis, harp

- 16 *Changes* (10:41)

Ross Powell, clarinet; Jo Boatright, keyboards; Kristen Swanson-Bise, Camilla Boatright, musical assistants

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