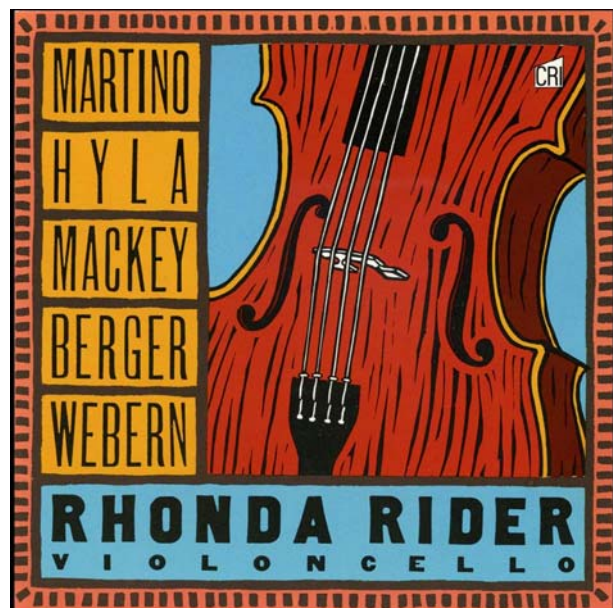


NWCR564

Martino / Hyla / Mackey / Berger / Webern

Rhonda Rider, cello



Donald Martino (1931-2005)
Parisonatina al'dodecafonía (1963) (9:34)
Rhonda Rider, solo cello

Lee Hyla (b1952)
The Dream of Innocent III (1987) (16:20)
Rhonda Rider, cello; Lee Hyla, piano; James
Pugliese, percussion

Steven Mackey (b 1956)
Rhondo Variations (1983) (6:46)
Rhonda Rider, solo cello

Arthur Berger (1912-2003)
Duo for cello and piano (1951)..... (11:45)
1. Movement—One (5:53)
2. Movement—Two (5:49)
Rhonda Rider, cello; David Kapp, piano

Donald Martino
Suite of Variations on Medieval Melodies (1952)..... (13:54)
3. Movement—One (4:16)
4. Movement—Two (2:41)
5. Movement—Three (1:09)
6. Movement—Four (2:46)
7. Movement—Five (2:50)
Rhonda Rider, solo cello

Anton Von Webern (1883-1945)..... (8:15)
8. Two Pieces (1899) (3:56)
9. Cello Sonata (1914) (2:00)
10. Three Little Pieces (1914) (2:12)
Rhonda Rider, cello; David Kopp, piano

Total Playing Time: 65:46

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Notes

The title of **Donald Martino's** *Parisonatina al'dodecafonía* (1963) betrays the identity of its inspiration, the celebrated Brazilian cellist Aldo Parisot. Parisot's name appears directly in the music as a motif or "motto" used by Martino throughout the work, though it is not intended to be heard. The pitches are derived as follows:

Al:	la	(A)
do:	do	(C)
Pa:	prime arrangement	
ri:	re#	(D#)
so:	sol	(G)
t:	ti	(B)

In the first movement, the motto appears near the end, arranged like this:

Al	do		
Pa:	ri	so	t,

thus creating two chords, first "A-D#," then "G-C-B."

The motto recurs in linear form near the beginning of the third movement, and blossoms fully in the final movement, where it is used again and again.

But, the interest of the *Parisonatina* lies less in the manipulation of a pitch collection than in the composer's exploitation of the timbral possibilities of the cello. Martino writes, "The

extremely large number of timbral devices that are used often alternate at super-rapid rates of succession and serve both expressive and technical goals. While it is hoped that the expressive goals will be immediately apparent to the listener, the technical goals are naturally a bit more obscure. For instance, timbre is primary among the resources by which the harmonic base of the chaconne in Movement Four is varied, and it is the primary delimiter of the rondo form of Movement Two.

The *Parisonatina* contains four movements arranged as two pairs. The first movement has an introductory quality; it consists mainly of short, leap-filled outbursts alternating with *glissandi* and brief ruminative passages. The second movement, developing these ideas, features a virtuosic integration of timbral and registral effects, in particular the interweaving of bowed, plucked, and *col legno* (employing the wood part of the bow) articulation into a seamless musical flow. The third movement—slow, lyric, and contemplative—gives way to the final movement, a vigorous, demanding, chord-laden cadenza containing a curious, eye-of-the-storm at the center.

Martino's *Suite of Variations on Medieval Melodies* (1952) is a student work composed during a period in which Martino was writing music based on existing melodies. He revised the piece in 1954, dedicating it to a friend, the now-eminent musicologist Lewis Lockwood, a cellist and scholar of early music. Each of the five movements is based on an ancient melody: a Minnelied

from the early thirteenth century; a Gregorian sequence from the early eleventh century; a troubadour aria from the early thirteenth century; a lauda from the thirteenth century; and a thirteenth-century English estampie.

Lee Hyla's 1987 work *The Dream of Innocent III*, which was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation, matches the cello against the combined, powerful forces of piano and percussion. In order to carry the principal role, the cello is amplified, bringing it into the decibel range of its companions and imparting a leading edge to its tone.

Hyla explains his inspiration: "The title is borrowed from a Giotto fresco that is part of the Scenes from the Life of St. Francis cycle in Assisi. The piece was inspired by the fresco which depicts Pope Innocent III in full papal regalia, dreaming that the Church is being literally upheld by Francis. The tilted dream image of Francis propping up the church of St. John Lateran evolves seamlessly out of the papal bed chambers, and the surreal intensity and simplicity of that image had a deep impact on me while I was working on the piece."

The Dream of Innocent III contains three extended sections separated by two cadenzas for solo cello; the effect is of one long dramatic cycle. In the first section, the cello's music consists of lyric lines in long durational values, with open sonorities and harmonics predominating, while the piano and percussion create a contrasting texture of whaps and thuds. The cello's lyric, inward material is developed in the first cadenza but abruptly abandoned at the beginning of the second section in which the cello joins the other instruments in their wild, rhythmically hearty territory. Roles are briefly reversed at the end of this section; while the cello continues in high gear, piano and percussion turn calm and bell-like. During the second cadenza, the cello, after another violent outburst, regains its opening demeanor. In the final section, piano and percussion become animated once more as the overall texture gradually returns to that of the opening.

Steven Mackey's *Rhondo Variations* (1983) was written for Rhonda Rider. The piece begins with an introductory flourish, leading to the statement of the theme which, beginning in long, even values, exploits the entire range of the cello, interlacing single-note lines with consonant dyads. The first two variations become progressively more introspective, reaching a point by the end of the latter (a sparse, colorful nocturne) at which the music nearly threatens to disappear. Gradually it revives from this state, constantly gaining in momentum and intensity through three more variations. The culmination is a *perpetuum mobile* final variation and coda, where, after spelling out the musical equivalent of R-H-O-N-D-A, the piece, as Mackey puts it, "vanishes in a flash."

Arthur Berger's two-movement Duo for cello and piano (1951) also contains an encoded tribute to its inspiration, a commission by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Doctors' Orchestra, known as LADO. The acronym yields the motto la—do, or A—C. This motto is quite audible; it begins the first movement, figures importantly in the theme of the second movement, and its characteristic intervals of a minor third, major sixth and tenth pervade the piece.

The duo prompted Milton Babbitt to characterize Berger's music of this period as "white-note Webern." Babbitt was doubtless referring to Berger's preference for short, abrupt gestures and wide melodic intervals. But he may have also had in mind the harmonic effect of Berger's music in which familiar chords follow one another often without evoking conventional associations. This is partly due to the way in which Berger presents chords: often note by note, generally spread over a wide range, and disjunct texturally and registrally.

Cello and piano are equal partners in this piece; their material is similar and often highly imitative. The first movement passes through a series of moods but remains essentially unhurried in character. The second movement is a set of several exuberant variations during which the leading role is exchanged freely between the instruments.

Until fairly recently, the only music for cello and piano known to have been composed by **Anton von Webern** was the familiar set of Three Little Pieces, Op. 11. This slight repertory was augmented when, in 1965, the scholar Hans Moldenhauer discovered a trove of manuscripts in the attic of Webern's relatives. Among the manuscripts were two early pieces for cello and piano, composed when Webern was fifteen, and the first movement of a projected sonata for cello and piano, written just prior to the Three Little Pieces. These newfound works receive their first recording here.

The Two Pieces, which date from 1899, are Webern's earliest preserved attempts at composition. There is little in them to suggest the atonal vocabulary Webern was later to develop, but swift rises and falls of emotion, especially in the second piece, hint at the concentration of expression which is a hallmark of his mature work.

The Cello Sonata (1914) was begun by Webern as a gift to his father, who loved the cello and had provided lessons for his young son. The Sonata was also conceived as a first deliberate venture into writing longer phrases and forms after a period in which Webern had focused on distilling musical expression into shorter and shorter packages. Although the Cello Sonata was originally conceived as a two-movement piece, Webern never realized this aim, breaking off work with only the first movement drafted, essentially complete. He went on instead to compose the Three Little Pieces. Two weeks later, the First World War broke out; Webern never returned to finish the Sonata. He may have indeed been prevented from completing the work by the war—or perhaps, despite expressed claims of success, Webern may possibly have become dissatisfied with this first effort in a longer form, turning away from the unfinished piece in order to write music in his accustomed laconic style.

While the three-section format of the piece suggests conventional sonata form, the character and material of each section are quite distinct. After the explosive beginning, the dreamy middle is more contrasting than developmental, while the final section serves not as much to return to the opening premise as to unify all of the preceding music. In Webern's draft, the piece is complete with respect to pitches and durations, but only halfway complete with respect to dynamic and tempo markings. Friedrich Cerha, who prepared the only extant edition of the Cello Sonata, has provided suggestions for the missing dynamics. This recording generally follows his recommendations, although the end of the piece is presented in the tempi the performers consider most plausible.

The Three Little Pieces, Op. 11, are the culmination of a series of compositions in which Webern worked toward ever greater compactness and terseness in the presentation of his musical ideas. Reversing the traditional succession, the Three Pieces have tempi respectively slow, fast, and slow. The first piece, largely a series of languorous fragments, is animated by a brief, early emotional outburst; cello and piano cooperate in the creation of the short, eloquent phrases. The second piece is a short, violent, and less cooperative dialogue between the instruments. In the third piece, three phrases of a diaphanous texture are punctuated and anchored at a different point by a solitary note played by the non-leading partner.

—David Kopp

David Kopp, pianist and music theorist, is currently a member of the faculty of Brandeis University.

Born in Holland, Michigan, **Rhonda Rider** graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory with the Hurlburt Award for Outstanding Instrumentalist; she later earned a master's degree from the Yale School of Music. Her principal teachers have been Aldo Parisot, Richard Kapuscinski, Gabor Rejto, and Robert Koff. A versatile musician, Rider has been principal of the New Haven Symphony, New Hampshire Symphony, and recipient of the

Augusta Symphony Young Artists Prize, the Fischhoff Competition Award, and the 1980 Concert Artist Guild Award through which she made her New York debut in Carnegie Recital Hall. Rider has won prizes internationally at chamber music competitions in France, England, and Canada, culminating in the 1984 Naumburg Award for excellence in chamber music. She is also a founding member of the Lydian String Quartet, formed in 1980, and which is in residence at Brandeis University where Ms. Rider teaches cello and chamber music.

Production Notes

Donald Martino
Parisonatina al'dodecafonica Lone
Press Inc. (BMI)
Engineer: Peter Storkerson
Recorded: October 12, 1985
Producer: Donald Martino

*Suite of Variations on Medieval
Melodies* Dantalian, Inc. (BMI)
Producer: Donald Martino
Engineer: Dean Cappello
Recorded: June 9, 1988

Lee Hyla
The Dream of Innocent III (MS),
(BMI)
Producer: The Country Boys
Engineer: Dean Cappello
Recorded: June 20, 1988
Steven Mackey

Rhondo Variations ACA (BMI)
Producer: Steven Mackey
Engineer: Peter Storkerson
Recorded: October 12, 1985

Arthur Berger
Duo Galaxy Music (APNM)
Producer: Arthur Berger
Engineer: Peter Storkerson
Recorded: June 26, 1987
Anton Von Webern: *Three Little
Pieces, Two Pieces, Cello Sonata*;
Carl Fischer, Inc.
Producer/Engineer: Peter Storkerson
Recorded: June 26, 1987

All pieces recorded at Slosberg Hall, Brandeis University.

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Judith Eissenberg and Ezro Sims for production of *Dream of Innocent III—Rhonda Rider*