

Henri Lazarof



- Spectrum* for Solo Trumpet, Orchestra and Tape (1972-73) (13:53)
1. Scene I (6:52)
 2. Scene II (6:58)
- Thomas Stevens, trumpet; Utah Symphony, Henri Lazarof, conductor
- Concerto for Flute and Orchestra (1973) (18:32)
3. I. Il più lento possibile. (9:40)
 4. II. $\downarrow = 108-120$ (8:53)
- James Galway, flute; New Philharmonia Orchestra of London, Henri Lazarof, conductor
5. *Canti* (1971) (16:24)
- Roger Wagner Chorale, Roger Wagner, conductor
- Concerto for Orchestra (1977) (20:33)
6. I. $\downarrow = 54-60$ (7:41)
 7. II. $\downarrow = 50-60$ (con libertà) (5:06)
 8. III. (sempre) $\downarrow = 160$ (7:29)
- Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; Henri Lazarof, conductor

Total playing time: 69:00

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Notes

Henri Lazarof was born in 1932 in Sofia, Bulgaria. He received his musical training in Europe at the Music Academy Santa Cecilia in Rome and the United States at Brandeis University. In 1959, he joined the faculty of the University of California, Los Angeles, where he is currently a professor emeritus of music. Lazarof has been awarded numerous prizes for his compositions including First Prize, International Competition of Monaco (1962), First International Prize, City of Milan, La Scala Award (1966) and several grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. He is the recipient of commissions from the Berlin Philharmonic, the Baltimore, Houston, Seattle and Utah Symphonies, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and the London Sinfonietta, among others.

In October, 1989, the Chamber Music/LA Festival Ensemble toured the United States with a complete program of recent chamber works by Henri Lazarof and during the same month, the 20th Century Consort presented his *Concertante II* in its world premiere at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C.

In addition to his numerous recordings for CRI, his music appears on the Delos label in a recent compact disc, and on the Everest, Laurel, Vanguard, Vox, and Crystal labels.

Lazarof has been drawn to compositions of the concerto type, and his catalogue includes several works for piano and orchestra as well as concertos for both the viola and the cello. *Spectrum* for solo trumpet, orchestra and tape was written in 1973 and first performed in January 1975 in Salt Lake City by the Utah Symphony Orchestra with Thomas Stevens as soloist, and the composer conducting. The work is in two movements and the soloist uses both the regular trumpet and

the flugelhorn. The orchestra is comprised of a group of six instrumentalists surrounding the soloist, eight string basses, and woodwinds, brass and percussion. The tape consists of pre-recorded trumpet on 4 channels prepared by Thomas Stevens, to whom the work is dedicated.

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra was written in 1973 and is dedicated to James Galway and the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, who gave the first performance in March 1975. The work is as symmetrical as possible; it consists of two movements separated by an interlude for the soloist alone.

The solo part begins on the alto flute, but switches to the normal instrument near the halfway mark of the first movement and does not change again. His part incorporates quarter-tones, which are largely confined to the opening stages and to the final unaccompanied passage.

The work begins with a series of short sessions separated by pauses. While they have an introductory character, they also contain the cells out of which much that follows is built. Although there are several "free" passages during the course of the work, and individual instrumentalists (notably the two percussion players, the cellos and the basses) are allowed to improvise, the bulk of the composition is precisely fixed.

The Concerto for Orchestra was commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony and received its premiere performance under Sergiu Comissiona, to whom it is dedicated, on April 19, 1978. It is divided into three movements of approximately equal duration. Each movement defines a particular structural space, aided by an outsized orchestra that includes quadrupled winds, six horns, three batteries of percussion (with their castanets, tam-tam, tom-toms, marimbas, and tubular bells,

the latter held in reserve for some awesome moments), two harps, celesta, and piano.

In many respects the vehement tutti chord with which the concerto commences contains the seeds of the remainder. Not only is this sonority the goal of the finale but it also is the basis of motivic material (particularly for the contrabasses, so important in the slow movement) and an endlessly varied series of pedal points and piled-up vertical simultaneities. The first movement alternates between these slow-moving, floating *tuttis* and more individualized episodes of greater rhythmic articulation. Lazarof has always had an unerring ear for clarity, and even where the part-writing is complex (whether percussion ensemble or six horns and four trombones) each voice reflects a seemingly spontaneous equilibrium with its neighbors. The result of these two contrasting forces is a contemporary transformation of the venerable Baroque concerto grosso.

One day in 1971, while vacationing with his family in the Swiss resort town of Winterthur, Henri Lazarof was startled to awake in the early morning hours with a series of poetic lines waiting to be written down. He was further surprised at their character, overflowing with the soft sensuality of onomatopoeia, yet shaped by the rigor of palindrome.

Having been conceived in a dream, as it were, the text of *Canti* is first and foremost a series of sound images. Each of

them—eight in all—revolves around a particular sound. The literal message of the individual words and phrases is supported by, but in some senses subservient to, the individual sounds. This leads to what may be the most difficult characteristic for listeners, especially for those familiar with the euphonious sounds of centuries of *a cappella* vocal music.

The pure vision of a dream culminating in a call for new songs led Lazarof quite naturally to a four-part unaccompanied chorus as the most appropriate vehicle. But his goal was not the kind of homogeneous blend sought by composers from Palestrina to Brahms; the range of moods and meaning evoked by this text demanded a more variegated and individual treatment. The ensemble (ideally about one hundred and twenty singers, divided into as many as sixteen different parts) is treated more like a Mahlerian orchestra than a traditional chorus. Each singer is asked to perform with a host of unconventional expressive techniques: lines with the pitches notated only approximately (to be declaimed somewhere between speech and singing); lines to be spoken in a metrical pattern; lines to be spoken or whispered freely (sometimes *pp* and as fast as possible); and, passages involving energetic foot-stomping, and those involving rapid glissandi from one pitch to the next.

Adapted from original notes by Robert Winter.

Production Notes

Spectrum

Producers: Henri Lazarof, Carter Harmon. Recording engineer: David Hancock; recorded in Salt Lake City, January 1975.
Published by Merion Music (Presser) (BMI).

Concerto for Flute and Orchestra

Producers: Henri Lazarof, Carter Harman; recording engineer: David Hancock; recorded in London, March 1975.
Published by Bote and Bock (BMI)

Canti

Producer: Carter Harman; recording engineer: Lester Remsen. Recorded in Los Angeles, 1981.
Published by Associated (BMI)

Concerto for Orchestra

Producer: Carter Harman; recording engineer: David Hancock. Recorded in Baltimore, November 1979.
Published by Merion Music (BMI).

Digitally remastered by Joseph R. Dalton with Charles Harbutt, engineer and Francis X. Pierce, assistant engineer at Sony Classical productions, Inc., NYC.