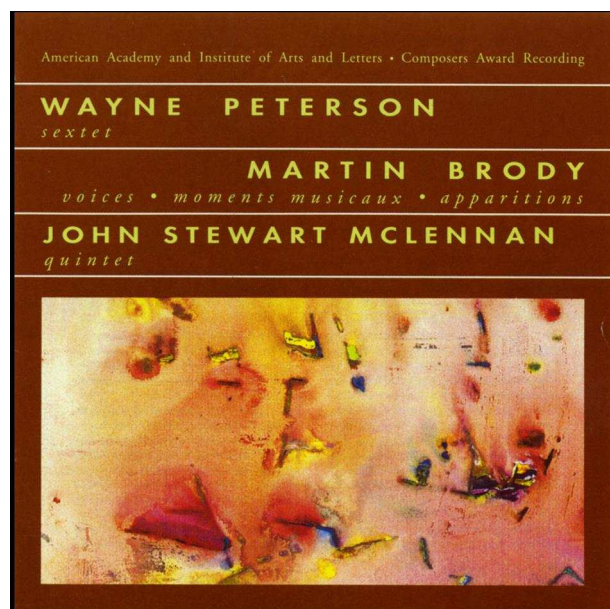


NWCR594

Wayne Peterson, Martin Brody, John Stewart McLennan

American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters
Composers Award Recording



- Wayne Peterson
1. Sextet (1982) (16:11)
San Francisco Contemporary Music Players;
Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor
- Martin Brody
2. *Voices* for solo Violin (1983) (8:52)
Joel Smirnoff, violin
 3. *Moments Musicaux* (1980) (5:39)
David Evans, piano
 4. 4-8 *Apparitions* for Piano (1981) (11:50)
Charles Fisk, piano
- John Stewart McLennan
- 9-11 Quintet (1988) (28:52)
 5. Amnon Levy, violin; Burton Fine, viola; Andres Diaz,
cello; Peter Hancock, clarinet;
Randall Hodgkinson, piano.
- Total playing time: 71:24
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Notes

This recording was made possible by grants from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Four awards, which include a CRI recording, are given annually to honor and encourage composers and to help them continue their creative work. The composers Wayne Peterson, Martin Brody, and John Stewart McLennan were recipients of awards in 1986, 1986, and 1985 respectively.

Sextet (June-September, 1982) was commissioned by the San Francisco Contemporary Players as part of the National Endowment for the Arts Consortium Commissioning Project. It is dedicated to Marcella De Cray and Jean-Louis LeRoux, co-directors of that ensemble. The scoring is for flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, percussion, harp, violin and cello. My intention was to write a dramatic piece that drew from the complete technical, coloristic and textural resources of this combination.

There are six large sections, played without interruption, in which the treatment is both developmental and kaleidoscopic. Although each section has its intrinsic design, the source of material is provided mainly by the first section whose melodic-rhythmic gestures, sonorities and textures are generic to the remaining five.

From a macrocosmic point of view, the initial three sections combine to form the first half of the piece. With all their differences they have certain characteristics in common: a highly agitated, irregular and intense form of expression; a disjunct melodic line; a constant striving for increased tension that is frequently aborted; and a series of fluctuating tempi.

The remainder of the Sextet most closely resembles a scherzo in spirit. The rhythmic flow throughout is now quite regular. Starting with a long pizzicato passage, the movement leads directly into a metrical modulation and then into an extended Allegro. Here darting lines, kaleidoscopic textures, and sforzando chords develop into a furious climax bordering on chaos. A transitional phrase, led by the harp, serves to dissipate the remaining tensions. An epilogue, reflecting briefly upon events from the earlier sections, brings the piece to a tranquil conclusion.

—Wayne Peterson

Wayne Peterson has been professor of music at San Francisco State University since 1960. Born in Albert Lea, Minnesota in 1927, he was educated at the University of Minnesota and the Royal Academy of Music (as a Fulbright Scholar). He is the recipient of many awards and commissions. His numerous works have been performed by the San Francisco, Oakland, and Minnesota orchestras, the Group for Contemporary Music, Speculum Musicae, the Washington Square Players, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, the Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Recent commissions have been for the American Composers Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony. He currently is writing a piece for the Alexander String Quartet, commissioned by the Gerbode Foundation, as well as a work for the Earplay Ensemble of San Francisco, commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation. In addition to this disc, recent honors include a Guggenheim Fellowship (1989-90). He is published by

Boosey & Hawkes, Lawson-Gould, and Seesaw Music.

My three pieces presented here were written early in the eighties and show variant aspects of a compositional technique and expressive world that had been fermenting for a number of years. Like many composers of my generation and background, my own musical experiences and sensibilities have been diverse, perhaps contradictory, and the solo pieces on this record demonstrate a synthesis of the artistic impulses and technical concerns that had preoccupied me over the preceding decade. Perhaps the simplest way to indicate these is to list a few influences and reference points: on the “high art” end, the music and musical thought of composers such as Babbitt and Wolpe, Martino and Davidovsky; from oral tradition American music, rhythmic and phrasing effects in the performances of, say, Charlie Parker, Aretha Franklin, or Thelonious Monk. The urge to bring these, and of course many other things together, has informed my efforts to develop pitch and phrasing structures, large-scale continuities, and so forth, that will sustain spontaneous nuances as much as global coherence.

Voices (1983), written for Joel Smirnoff is the most expressively heated of this set of three. A one-movement work, it projects a set of interlocking structural continuities articulated by the overwhelmingly rich timbral possibilities of the violin.

Moments Musicaux was written for David Evans in 1980. The electronic part was realized in the Experimental Music Studio at MIT, using the Music-11 programming language. The odd coupling of tape and piano in this piece is intentionally comic, and the various attempts at conciliation, domination, annihilation, and so forth, provide something of a brief narrative, however indeterminate in its details or resolution, for the piece.

Apparitions, written in 1981 for Charles Fisk, consists of five brief movements, symmetrically organized so that the first and fifth and second and fourth are paired. Movements four and five answer and complete movements two and one, respectively, while the middle movement presents undeveloping music that culminates with a frank statement of the tune that provides the basis for the entire work: Berg’s setting in *Lulu* of Dr. Schön’s ominous pronouncement “Jetzt kommt die Heinrichtung.”

—Martin Brody

Born in Chicago in 1949, **Martin Brody** was raised in Elgin, Illinois, where he studied cello and piano as a child. He received his undergraduate education at Amherst College and master’s and doctorate degrees at the Yale School of Music, where he studied composition with Yehudi Wyner and Robert Morris. Brody is associate professor of music at Wellesley College. He has been an active advocate of contemporary music and currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Composers Conference, the Stefan Wolpe Society, and the Boston-ISCM. He has received awards and honors from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Artists Foundation, and the Massachusetts Council for the Arts and Humanities. As a writer, he has contributed to such journals as *Perspectives of New Music*, *The Journal of Music Theory*, and *The Computer Music Journal*. Brody is currently completing an opera based on Mikhail Bulgakov’s novella, *Heart of a Dog*.

John Stewart McLennan’s *Quintet*, for clarinet, string trio, and piano, demonstrates the elegance and facility of his scoring, and his gift for melodic invention within an essentially atonal harmonic idiom. The work has both the

tension of an unanswered question, and the austere peace of a New England snowscape.

It was composed during the winter of 1987–88. Some small portions of the score were based on a work for clarinet and piano, which McLennan set aside years before, because, he says, “I liked the idea more than the preliminary sketches.” The present work is not a rethinking of the earlier piece. It is virtually all newly composed.

Quintet is divided into three movements, with the last movement in two sections. The four parts correspond to the traditional four movements of a chamber work in the Romantic era: there is a serious and fully developed first movement, and lyrical slower second movement, a rhythmic “scherzo,” and a resolution. Emotionally, however, this is a very different musical world from that inhabited by Brahms or Schubert.

Each movement places one of the three parts of the ensemble in relative prominence over the others. From the clarinet’s entry in the first movement, McLennan scores it above the other voices or in dialogue with them, working through an extensive development of stress and repose. The clarinet’s tone softens and it recedes into the ensemble only near the movement’s end; even so, and very quietly, the clarinet still has the last word.

The second movement gives prominence to the strings. Each is heard in a short solo passage as the movement begins, followed by a procession of pealing piano chords. The center of the movement contains a unison section for the strings, a conversation between the clarinet and the other individual instruments, and a somber waltz. Finally the bell-chords reappear, played by the entire ensemble; they die away, first in the piano and then in the strings and clarinet, mimicking the sounds of bells and clappers coming to rest.

The third movement begins with a jazzy bounce, driven strongly by the piano. This rhythm is broken, returns, and finally slows with stabbing figures from the strings. The second part of the movement begins with the strings in unison, and leads to a conversational section, in which the piano still has a prominent position. Turbulent, seesawing chords from the strings and block chords from the piano give way to an unexpected, almost heroic moment of clear harmony. Then the movement dissolves into a mist, with four notes carefully and quietly passed from hand to hand.

John Stewart McLennan (d 1996) was born in 1915 in Tyringham, a village in western Massachusetts. He has lived all his life there on property his family has owned for generations. He received his musical education at the Peabody Conservatory and studied piano with Alexander Siloti. His composition teachers were Karol Rathaus and Erich Itor Kahn. In large part, however, he has provided his own musical context, remaining independent of movements, styles, or camps.

His music has the beauties of eloquent American speech—simplicity, precision, and strength. Nonetheless, McLennan has great respect for the formal structures and the atmosphere of the Classical-Romantic tradition, and this respect is especially evident in his chamber music. In addition to works in that idiom, he has written piano and organ music, songs, symphonic works, ballet scores, and incidental music. Several songs, a number of organ works, and one of his chamber pieces have been recorded and released within the last decade.

—Steve Elman

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players has commissioned over fifty new works in its sixteen-year history, including the Wayne Peterson Sextet on this disc. As the oldest new music ensemble in Northern California, it is comprised of skilled professionals, most members of the San Francisco Symphony, Ballet, or Opera Orchestras, who share an interest and commitment to contemporary music.

Jean-Louis LeRoux, conductor, studied at the Paris Conservatoire National in his native France and then came to the United States in 1960 as an oboist. In 1974, LeRoux, harpist Marcella DeCray, and composer Charles Boone founded the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, of which he has served as music director for twelve years. He is also conductor of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and founder of the Chamber Symphony of San Francisco.

David Evans, piano, studied performance at the New England Conservatory and composition at Harvard and Brandeis Universities. In addition to composing and performing concert works, he has written and arranged extensively for the theater.

Joel Smirnoff, violin, has performed the world premieres of many works by contemporary composers as a member of the Chicago Ensemble, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Collage, Boston's New Music group and the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago. Today, he is best known as a member of the renowned Juilliard String Quartet, which recently recorded string quartets by Sessions, Wolpe, and Babbitt for CRI (CD 587).

Charles Fisk, piano, was the only American prizewinner in the 1980 J.S. Bach International Competition. In addition to his recitals throughout the U.S. and Western Europe, he is also active in scholarship and teaches at Wellesley College.

Amnon Levy, violin, began his musical career in his birthplace, Tel Aviv, in 1950, when Jascha Heifetz advised advanced studies in the United States. Levy subsequently attended the Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute of Music and worked under Rudolf Serkin at Marlboro. Recently embarking on a conducting career, he is in his first season as assistant conductor of the Longwood Symphony Orchestra.

Burton Fine, viola, has been the principal violist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra since 1964. He appears frequently as soloist on viola and viola d'amore with the BSO, the Boston Pops, and other musical organizations in the Northeast. He teaches viola and chamber music at the New England Conservatory and in the summer at Tanglewood Music Center and Boston University Tanglewood Institute.

Andres Diaz, cello, won the First Prize in the 1986 Naumburg International Cello Competition. He has performed with many of America's foremost orchestras as well as ensembles in New Zealand and Chile. He is an active teacher and has recorded for the Musical Heritage Society label.

Peter Hadcock, clarinet, is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Stanley Hasty. He joined the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1965 as assistant principal clarinet and E-flat clarinetist. He has presented master classes in the People's Republic of China and is currently on the faculties of the New England Conservatory of Music and the Tanglewood Music Center.

Randall Hodgkinson, piano, won the International American Music Competition sponsored by Carnegie Hall and the Rockefeller Foundation. He made his first major New York appearance as soloist with the American Symphony Orchestra at Carnegie Hall in 1983; and in October 1986, his formal New York recital debut at Alice Tully Hall.

Production Notes

Sextet Produced and edited by Wayne Peterson. Recorded in San Francisco, California on October 6, 1987. Engineer: Robert Shumaker. Publisher: C.F. Peters (ASCAP)

Voices, Moments Musicaux, Apparitions

Produced by Amelia Rogers and recorded at Houghton Chapel, Wellesley College.

Engineers: Voices, October 15, 1990, and Moments Musicaux, June 1985, by John Newton; Apparitions, August 28, 1990, by Everett Porter.

Publishers: Apparitions by Margun Music, Inc. (BMI); other selections, rights held by composer.

Quintet

Produced and edited by Gunther Schuller. Recorded on January 2, 1988.

Engineer: John Newton. Publisher: Margun Music, Inc. (BMI)

Mastered by Francis X. Pierce at Sony Classical Productions, Inc., NYC.