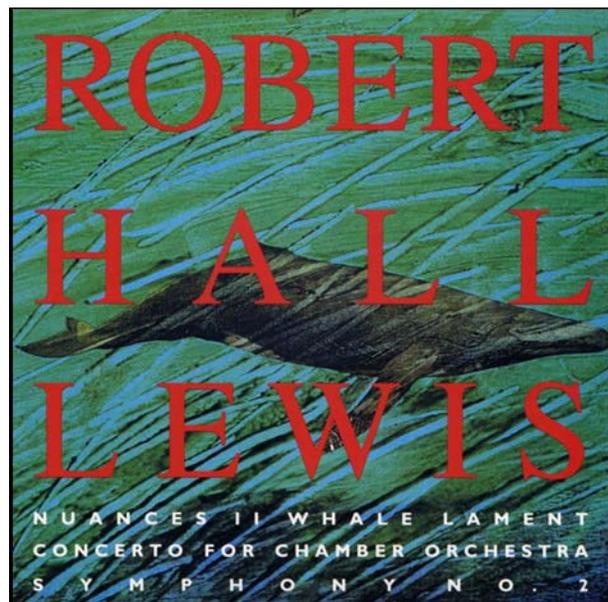


Robert Hall Lewis



- Nuances II "Whale Lament" (1975) (24:01)*
1. I. Adagio; Allegro Moderato (6:53)
 2. II. Andante Espressivo (8:10)
 3. III. Allegro Moderato: Adagio (8:54)
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra;
Robert Hall Lewis, conductor
Whale sounds recorded by the
New York Zoological Society
- Concerto for Chamber Orchestra (1967, rev. 1972) ... (14:40)
4. I. Adagio non tanto (6:46)
 5. II. Allegro moderato (4:11)
 6. III. Adagio grazioso; Allegro non troppo . (3:36)
- London Sinfonietta,
Robert Hall Lewis, conductor
7. Symphony No. 2 (1971) (21:04)
- London Symphony Orchestra,
Robert Hall Lewis, conductor

Total playing time: 59:55

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Notes

Robert Hall Lewis's *Whale Lament* was commissioned by the National Whale Symposium held at the University of Indiana in November 1975. The work was composed in Baltimore, Barcelona, Nice, and Paris during the summer of that year, and was given its first performance by the University of Indiana Symphony Orchestra with the composer conducting. This composition reveals stylistic tendencies which first appeared in my Second Symphony (1971) and were further developed in a series of works entitled *Combinazioni* and *Osservazioni*. In these more recent compositions, melodic material is often integrated with novel sound elements, two or more areas in different tempi may occur simultaneously, and subtle dynamic and textural gradations become essential features of the music.

In the slow second movement, a theme and four variations, humpback whale sounds become an integral part of the variation process. Excerpts of whale songs recorded near Bermuda by Dr. Roger Payne of the New York Zoological Society are presented in the more extended third variation as well as in the final measures of the movement. While the inclusion of whale sounds was not a condition of the commission, during the composition of this piece, I soon became aware of the expressive potential of this material. A variation consisting of quiet masses of strings and wind tremolo figures evolved after considerable thought to create the atmosphere for the taped whale songs. Bowed percussion instruments accompany these sounds in the concluding measures.

The remaining movements are each in two parts, divided by cadenza-like ritornelli which feature solo violin and viola respectively. Movement three begins with dramatic, kaleidoscopic textures leading to sections with aleatoric contrapuntal elements for the full orchestra. A recurrence of material from the first movement may be heard in the final

Adagio, which serves as a culmination and synthesis of earlier events.

My thanks go to the New York Zoological Society for permission to include the humpback whale sounds in this composition.

The Concerto for Chamber Orchestra was completed in July 1967 in London; at that time, I was living there on a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation (to which the work is dedicated), and was revised in 1972 prior to its premiere with the Kol Israel Orchestra with Sergiu Comissiona conducting. I intended my Concerto to be a brilliant showpiece for small orchestra. I later found that I had written a solo for almost every instrument of the orchestra; there may be heard, therefore, a combination of soloistic interjections with full ensemble texture.

A short, slow introduction containing diverse harmonies, solo motives and bright colors sets the general character of the work. The subsequent Allegro moderato contains short thematic statements in the brass, giving rise to more fully developed contrapuntal passages by both brass and woodwinds. The contrasting second section presents thematic material in solo strings, followed by more varied ensemble material.

The second movement begins atmospherically in quiet solo winds, strings and percussion, followed by cadenzas for English horn and flute. A contrasting horn solo concludes with a transitional cadenza (bass clarinet, bassoon, violin, viola) leading to the brilliant climactic conclusion.

Symphony No. 2 was commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and was premiered at the Lyric Theater in that city on October 6, 1971, with Sergiu Comissiona conducting.

Although some basic ideas for my symphony began to take form several weeks earlier, I began the actual composing in November 1970. During the initial germination period, I was very concerned with the nature and potential of a symphonic work in the present era, given the remarkable musical developments of this century. A traditional Classical scheme did not satisfy me, since such features as separate movements, recurrent sections, and conventional thematic processes are no longer compatible with my musical attitude. While certain melodic elements were taking shape, I also was searching for unique textures and timbres to enhance the work's interest and variety. A large-scale musical design of five main sections was finally evolved.

While some sections are separated by brief pauses, the form is essentially continuous, intended to be heard as one single experience. The shorter second and fourth sections may seem remotely comparable to scherzi of the previous century, although their function is to present imaginative, dramatic scenes, first for the percussion, later for the strings. The Adagio is a theme and six variations in which the thematic tones emerge singly from an eight-tone cluster. In the final Allegro new aspects of previous ideas are revealed, achieving a kind of synthesis in which orchestral opulence and climactic statement bring the composition to a close.

—Robert Hall Lewis

Robert Hall Lewis's (*b* Portland, Oregon, 1926; *d* Baltimore, 1996) compositions embrace a wide range of instrumental and vocal combinations ranging from solo pieces to full orchestra. His music has been performed by orchestras both here and abroad, most notably the American Composers, Boston Symphony, CBC Chamber (Vancouver), and the Kol Israel orchestras; London Sinfonietta, London Symphony, New Orleans Symphony, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Royal Philharmonic, and Philharmonia Orchestra. The London Sinfonietta Voices, Gregg Smith Singers and Ariel Vocal Ensemble have presented his choral music.

Chamber groups who have played his works include the Aeolian Chamber Players, Chicago Ensemble, Concord String Quartet, Eastman and Juilliard Percussion ensembles, Los Angeles and American Brass quintets, Group for Contemporary Music, Parnassus, Twentieth Century Consort, Klarinetten Trio (Frankfurt), Gruppe Neue Musik (Berlin), Nuova Consonanza (Rome), Die Reihe (Vienna), Manhattan Wind Quintet, Auriol-Fauchet Duo (Radio France) and many more. Programs of the Zagreb International Festival, the Budapest Spring International Festival, and the Berlin Inventions Festival have included his music. Commissions have been awarded by the Academy of the Arts (Berlin), Baltimore Symphony, Koussevitzky Music Foundation, Indiana University, McKim Fund of the Library of Congress, New York Quintet, Almont Ensemble, the Philharmonic Association of Genoa, Italy, and the American Composers Orchestra, to name a few.

His honors include a Kosciuszko Foundation Chopin Scholarship, Fulbright Scholarship, two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Walter Hinrichsen Award (presented by Columbia University), an American Academy of Arts and Letters award, and two Fellowship-Grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has been composer-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome, the Rockefeller Foundation Study Center in Italy, and the Tidewater and Grand Teton Music Festivals.

Mr. Lewis holds degrees from the University of Rochester and diplomas from the Paris Conservatory and Vienna Academy of Music. He studied composition with Bernard Rogers at Eastman and privately with Nadia Boulanger and Hans Erich Apostel in Vienna. His conducting training was with Eugène Bigot, Pierre Monteux, and Hans Swarowsky. A resident of Baltimore, he is the Elizabeth Conolly Todd Distinguished Professor of Music at Goucher College, professor of composition at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, and artistic director of the Chamber Music Society of Baltimore.

Production Notes

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