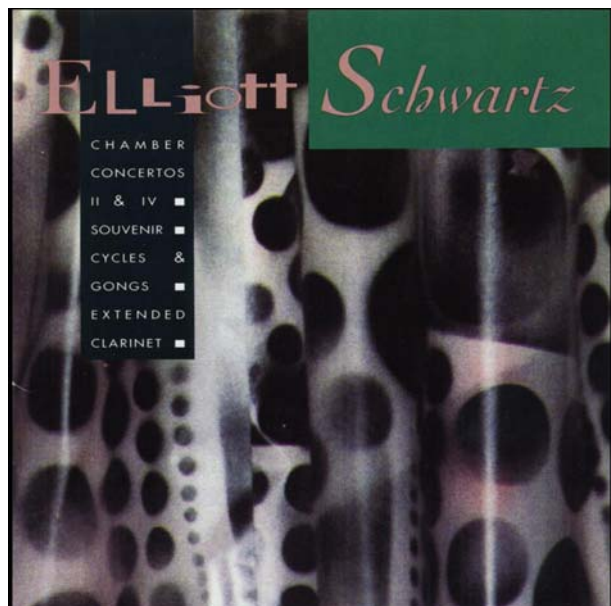


## Elliott Schwartz



1. Chamber Concerto IV (1981) ..... (14:21)  
Ohio State University New Music Ensemble  
Craig Kirchoff, conductor; James Hill, saxophone solo
2. *Souvenir* (1978) ..... (10:06)  
Jerome Bunke, clarinet; Elliott Schwartz, piano
3. *Cycles & Gongs* for Organ,  
Trumpet, and Tape (1975) ..... (14:21)  
Allen Dean, trumpet; Leonard Raver, organ
4. *Extended Clarinet* for  
Clarinet and Tape (1975)..... (14:34)  
Jerome Bunke, clarinet
5. Chamber Concerto II (1977) ..... (7:29)  
University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber  
Players; Edwin London, conductor  
Paul Martin Zonn, clarinet solo

Total playing time: 56:54

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## Notes

The compositions on this disc reflect different aspects of my work since the 1970s, with two emphases in particular: the idea of the “concerto” with all its dramatic and acoustical implications, and the interaction of live acoustical-instrument performance with electronic tape—perhaps a uniquely twentieth-century variety of “concerto.”

On another level, these five works are very similar. Every one of them reveals a concern for performance situations that encourage spontaneity and a degree of improvisation, while controlling and shaping the overall end results. Each piece explores a similar musical language as well: a fusion of tonal, triadic references with clusters and other angular, non-tonal gestures—drawing upon many levels of association and memory (or, in a more objective sense, structure and texture).

—*Elliott Schwartz*

There may be no greater testimony to the power of music than the fact that so many figures have been drawn to careers in composition after first pursuing other options: Schumann and Tchaikovsky originally trained in the law; Berlioz was a medical school dropout, and so on. An example closer to home is **Elliott Schwartz**, who was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. in 1936. The only child of a physician, he graduated from Columbia University in 1957 as a pre-medical student and chemistry major. Music had been an important part of his earliest home life, however. His father had played violin in the University of Maine orchestra—Rudy Vallee was a fellow violinist at the time!—and his mother had been his first music teacher. Schwartz decided to study music in earnest at the graduate level. His composition teachers at that time included Otto Luening, Jack Beeson, and Paul Creston; he was later to spend a number of summers at the Bennington Composers Conference in Vermont, coming into contact with such figures as Edgard Varèse, Morton Feldman, Stefan Wolpe, Ralph Shapey, Chou Wen-Chung, and Henry Brant. He often

refers to those Bennington summers, from 1961 through 1966, as his “post-graduate” education.

After four years teaching at the University of Massachusetts, Schwartz came to Maine in 1964 to accept a position at Bowdoin College. Since that time he has served as Bowdoin’s department chair, and has directed the college electronic music studio and contemporary music festivals. His music has been performed by major orchestras and chamber groups through the United States and Europe. As pianist, he has championed the music of colleagues, most notably, in three BBC programs of American piano music, and shared an album of duo-improvisations with jazz artist Marion Brown. Well known as a writer, his published books include a survey of electronic music, a study of Vaughan Williams’s symphonies, and an introductory music appreciation text. His compositions include, on the one hand, elements of tonality and, on the other, atonal unsynchronized textures. Some of his works are fully notated, while others exist as verbal instruction sheets or graphic cue-charts; many are intended for performance only by skilled professionals, while others have been designed for children, amateurs, or audiences.

Elliott Schwartz sees his musical career, then, as a blending of seemingly contradictory opposites. Though he has been associated with the relatively isolated state of Maine, as a native New Yorker he loves the artistic ferment of large cities. He has spent extended periods, often in teaching posts, in the Netherlands, England, California, and Ohio. Despite his many travels, however, Schwartz continues to regard Bowdoin College, and by extension the state of Maine, as his primary base of operations.

Since the 1970s he has become increasingly active in professional societies concerned with the advancement of American music and the role of music in higher education, and has served as vice-president of

the American Music Center, national chairman of the Society of Composers, Inc. (SCI), and president of the College Music Society. Following the model of his former teacher, Otto Luening, Schwartz believes that it is essential for the composer to be a fully participating musical citizen.

*Chamber concerto IV* for saxophone solo and 10 players was composed in 1981 for soloist John Sampen, and was premiered later that year at the Bowling Green Contemporary Music Festival. Texturally, dramatically, and even visually the work can be perceived as a study in “levels” and juxtapositions. As the ensemble has been subdivided into distinct strings, brass, clarinet, and percussion forces, which are separated antiphonally on stage, the soloist is obliged to interact with these, even to the point of moving about the performance space. Moreover, the soloist, the individual subgroups and *tutti*, each have their own motives. During the course of the concerto’s single movement, the interaction of all these motivic fragments and the fusion of tonal and non-tonal stylistic gestures, provide equally important clues for perceiving “levels.”

*Souvenir* was composed for Jerome Bunke, who premiered it with the composer on a 1978 New York PBS television program on the contemporary clarinet. The telecast may, in fact, have influenced the creation of the piece—since it is highly “visual” in its use of the piano interior, and its requiring the clarinetist to actively resonant sonorities by blowing directly into the inner piano strings. Relatively free performer choices, especially in the area of synchronization, help to create some of the work’s busy, overlapping textures.

*Cycles and Gongs* was composed in 1975 for the Hartt College International Organ Festival. The work is dominated by a rapid electronic figuration, heard at the very opening and then repeated in various timbres and articulations with a frequency that borders on the obsessive; it acts as a sort of ostinato “ground” against which larger-scale musical ideas unfold. Except for a triadic, lyric motive heard twice during the piece, there is virtually no planned synchronization between organ and trumpet. Instead, both soloists respond independently to cues—the most important occurring every sixty seconds—concealed in the tape part. A number of these cues are electronic filter-sweeps that sound very much like large gongs; hence “cycles” (the obsessive figurations) and “gongs.”

*Extended Clarinet* was composed for Allen Blustine (DeVendra) and premiered by him at a Da Capo Chamber Players concert in 1974. It is scored for clarinet, grand piano (but no pianist!) and tape; the piano’s damper pedal is constantly engaged, by a weight or wedge, so that the instrument’s resonances can be activated at any time. The clarinetist is instructed to play “out” at the audience and also at times to play “into” the piano’s inner strings—even to strike or pluck the strings, or shout into them. At the central point of *Extended Clarinet* the soloist turns to the keyboard itself and is transformed into a quasi-pianist for a few moments, while the material on the tape suddenly becomes overwhelmed by distorted, nightmarish piano passages. In concert performance, there is a drastic lighting change at this point, further confirming the transformation. The soloist eventually resumes his/her own instrument and the music gradually fades out on a very quiet quotation from the clarinet literature—chosen by the player—against a hushed tape fabric.

*Chamber Concerto II* for solo clarinet and nine players, like the *Chamber Concerto IV* for saxophone, reflects Schwartz’s great interest in composing concertos during the 1970s; that decade also saw the creation of similar works featuring solo contrabass, saxophone and piano, *Janus* for piano and full orchestra, *The Harmony of Maine* (synthesizer and orchestra) and an antiphonal concerto grosso called *Scatter*. The concerto was written in 1977 for the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players, the performers on this recording. That group’s striking instrumentation (especially the trombone, tuba, and low strings) evoked notions of a village band, which in turn led to associations with other styles—the “multiple exposures” that one finds in Mahler or Ives, but in a late twentieth-century context. The entire one-movement work can be heard as a loose sonata form, with the most traditional sounding passages occupying the role of second theme. There are two cadenzas for the solo clarinetist (in each case, immediately following the Romantic second-theme material), but both are accompanied by fragments from the ensemble, and at the very end, the piano as well. *Chamber Concerto II* has proven to be one of Schwartz’s best-known works and its performances have included New York, London, Tanglewood, Copenhagen, and many universities’ new music ensembles.

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**Craig Kirchhoff**, conductor of the **Ohio State University New Music Ensemble**, is chair of the Performance Division and director of University Bands at OSU. He is vice-president of the College Band Directors National Association and founding editor of the CBDNA Journal. Kirchhoff has appeared as a guest conductor and lecturer throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Japan, frequently programming works by living Americans such as Henry Brant, Michael Colgrass, Karel Husa, Gunther Schuller, and Joseph Schwantner.

**James Hill**, saxophone, is a member of the Ohio State University faculty, has performed several international conferences of the World Saxophone Congress, and has appeared with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

**Leonard Raver**, organ, was for many years official organist of the New York Philharmonic and a faculty member of the Juilliard School. He has premiered many works composed for him by such composers as Vincent Persichetti, Ned Rorem, Ronald Perera, and Richard Felciano.

**Allan Dean**, trumpet, has taught at Hartt College and the Eastman School and performed with such groups as the American Brass Quintet and Speculum Musicae.

**Jerome Bunke**, clarinet, has recorded more than a dozen albums and toured Japan and England, as well as the United States. He has also served in a number of administrative positions, including the directorship of the Concert Artists Guild.

**Paul Martin Zonn**, clarinet, has been a member of the University of Illinois composition faculty since 1970. He has been featured clarinet soloist at festivals in Chicago, Hawaii, Las Vegas, and Tanglewood.

**Edwin London**, conductor of the **University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Ensemble** at the time of this recording (1977), has in recent years been music director of the Cleveland Chamber Symphony. London is also a distinguished composer, with many performances and recordings to his credit.

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## Production Notes

*Chamber Concerto IV* was recorded in concert at Symphony Space, New York City, 1986, by Stephen Cellum.

*Souvenir, Cycles & Gongs*, and *Extended Clarinet* were recorded in New York City, 1979, by David Hancock. *Chamber Concerto II* was recorded in concert at Amherst College, October 1977, by WFCR FM Radio, Amherst, MA, and rerecorded by David Hancock.

All works except *Chamber Concerto IV* originally released on Orion. All music published by Margun Music, Inc. (BMI), Newton Centre, MA., except *Cycles & Gongs* which is published by Hinshaw Music, Inc. (ASCAP).

Digital re-mastering by Joseph R. Dalton and Charles S. Harbutt, Engineer, at Sony Classical Productions, Inc, NYC, using the DCS 900 20-bit a/d converter.

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