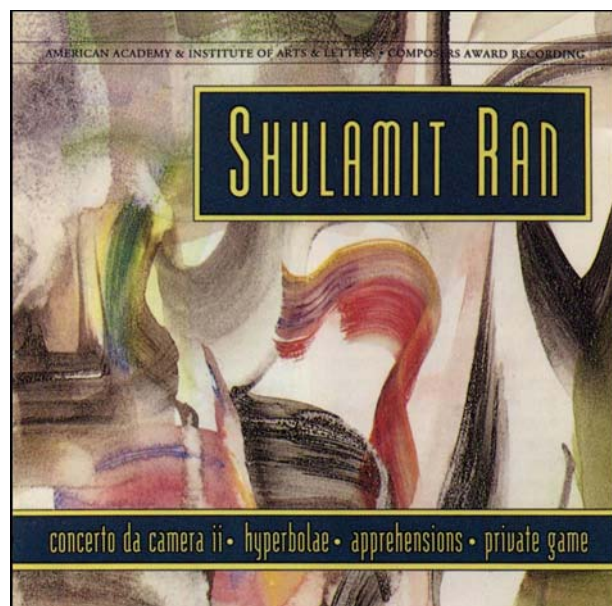


Shulamit Ran



1. *Concerto Da Camera II* (1987) for clarinet, string quartet and piano (17:05)
Edward Gilmore, clarinet; The Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago (Jennie Wagner, violin; Tom Hall, violin; Sharon Polifrone, violin; Barbara Haffner, cello; David Schrader, piano); Cliff Colnot, conductor
2. *Hyperbolae* (1976) for piano (7:49)
Abraham Stokman, piano
3. *Apprehensions* (1979) for voice, clarinet and piano (20:35)
Judith Nicosia, soprano; Laura Flax, clarinet; Alan Feinberg, piano
4. *Private Game* (1979) for clarinet and cello (4:07)
Members of the Da Capo Chamber Players: Laura Flax, clarinet; André Emelianoff, cello

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Notes

Concerto Da Camera II (1987) is a work for six instruments which may be further grouped into three separate entities—clarinet, string quartet, and piano. In this combination, chosen by the work's commissioning organizations (the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in conjunction with Mount Holyoke College), lies the work's first challenge. While pairings of any two of these three "sound types" abound in the concert literature, the three together form a far less common soundscape. The main difficulty appears in the necessity to reconcile the potential of both the clarinet and the piano of acting in a soloistic capacity when pitted against the string quartet. Indeed, the three movements of the concerto deal with this problem in various ways, with the balance of power between the six instruments' potential for unity and contrast, solo and ensemble playing, continually shifting and changing. Yet another more delicate balance of power is at play here, namely, the relationship between the external, foreground level of the piece and a subtler background level. What, at first, appear like small, gentle melodic strands, mere echoes or residues of the main events, gradually assume an inner life of their own—never actually taking over yet always there, a salient, if quiet, factor within the work's compositional fabric, and evolving organicism.

Though each movement includes numerous tempo fluctuations, the overall thrust of the work clearly suggests a fast-slow-fast framework, with the last movement being a loosely structured, occasionally tempestuous Rondo.

My work *Hyperbolae* for piano (1976) takes after both definitions of the word "hyperbolae"—it refers to a geometric design, and is also the derivation of a Greek word meaning extravagant, or fanciful exaggeration. Its first few bars supply the materials for the entire composition, with each event thus being an aspect of an integrated whole, relating to all other points in a specifically circumscribed manner. At the same time, the work is not meant to be merely a logistical real-

ization of an abstract concept, but is also expressive of a fancifully extravagant sentiment. The performance indications I have inserted in the score such as "like church bells—spaciously," "like a hushed prayer," "wild," etc., have been chosen with the aim of setting the player's imagination in motion.

Though cast in one movement, *Hyperbolae* is made up of six distinct, interlocking sections, the last of which, marked *Majestic*, combines most of the work's principal ideas.

Hyperbolae won the competition held by the League of Composers in Israel and the Artur Rubinstein International Piano Master Competition for a piece to be played by all contestants at the Competition which took place in April 1977.

Apprehensions for voice, clarinet and piano (1979) was commissioned by WFMT of Chicago for inclusion in a nine-part radio series examining the twentieth-century art song. The premiere recording prepared for broadcast of the work is the one used here.

It was my initial intention to group together a number of poems, until I came across Sylvia Plath's "Apprehensions." Written in the last year of her life, it is the first poem in the *Winter Trees* collection. What immediately struck me upon reading it was what I perceived as the musical suggestiveness of the poem's central idea and formal plan: in four stanzas, the colors white, gray, red, and black are used as a metaphor for the metamorphosis of a state of mind. Each stanza is rich with powerful imagery, ranging from the eerie to the intensely violent. More than an opportunity to paint color in sound—an attractive but, in and of itself, not exactly an original impulse—the poem's form hinted at the possibility of great contrast between movements, held together and propelled forward by one central idea. The overall shape of a gradual ascent to a horrific climax culminating in a steep fall was one I found myself drawn to enormously, leading me to treat the work as kind of a "mini-opera," consisting of three "acts" or

movements, followed by an “aftermath,” or an epilogue. Toward that end I added a clarinet (to me an instrument which can be closely linked to the human voice), as a kind of “alter ego,” to the more conventional pairing of voice and piano. My increased concern at the time of composing *Apprehensions* for the control of thematic transformation, coupled with contrapuntal thinking, allowed me a greater economy in the use of compositional materials and a new freedom of expression.

Private Game for clarinet and cello (1979) was composed at the invitation of the Da Capo Chamber Players in connection with their tenth anniversary in 1980. I was asked to write a short piece incorporating, in any way desired, the group’s name into its format, which turned out to be an interesting challenge. Repetition is the essence of comprehensibility. But—*da capo*, today? While the initial temptation was to use the term loosely, I found myself intrigued by the idea of having strict repetition, without giving the appearance of arbitrary formalism. My solution: there are three brief *da capo* sections interlaced into the piece in a 1-2-1-3-2-3 sequence. 1 and 2 appear at key points structurally, 3 is more transitory and ornamental. They are essential for they give the piece coherence, but they may or may not be consciously perceived as repetitions on first hearing. They are my private game.

—Shulamit Ran

Shulamit Ran (b 1949), winner of the 1991 Pulitzer Prize for Music, was born in Tel Aviv, Israel of a Russian mother and German father who both immigrated to Israel before World War II. Ran showed an early affinity for music and particularly for composing. An early piano teacher notated her original songs, two of which were performed on a radio program, “Children’s Corner,” while Ran herself still was a child.

Ran also read books about the masters, especially Mozart “because he composed as a child... I am grateful that I got to know great composers at an early age through playing them myself on piano. Their music went through me, a physical presence in my body. I think that’s crucial to how you perceive and hear music the rest of your life. You can’t just study music. You have to exist in it.”

At age fourteen, Ran moved to the United States to continue her music education on scholarships from the Mannes College of Music in New York and the American Israel Cultural Foundation. Within the first year after her arrival in the U.S., she performed as soloist in her *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* on a nationally televised New York Philharmonic Young People’s Concert directed by Leonard Bernstein. Upon graduation from Mannes, Ran pursued an active career as a pianist, performing in the U.S., Europe, Israel, Canada, and Argentina. In July 1971, she performed the premiere of her *Concert Piece* with the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Zubin Mehta.

Ran’s composition teachers in Israel and the U.S. have included A.U. Boskovich, Paul Ben-Haim, Norman Dello Joio, and Ralph Shapey. Her principal piano teachers were Nadia Reisenberg and Dorothy Taubman. As a teacher herself, Ran joined the faculty of the department of music of the University of Chicago, where she is professor of composition. Her teaching covers the full gamut of working with Ph.D. composition candidates to coaching chamber music and instructing non-music students. A frequent guest lecturer, she was visiting professor at Princeton University in 1987. She received an honorary doctorate from Mount Holyoke College in 1988.

The composer’s recent works include the *Concerto for Orchestra* which was commissioned and premiered by the American Composers Orchestra in 1987. In 1988 Daniel Barenboim performed the work as guest conductor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Two years later, after

Barenboim’s appointment there as music director, he invited Ran to be the orchestra’s second composer-in-residence as part of the Meet The Composer Orchestra Residencies program. She is the first woman composer to hold a residency with one of the nation’s “big five” orchestras. She will write a new work for the orchestra’s 1992–93 season.

In April 1991, Ran won the Pulitzer Prize for her Symphony which was commissioned by the Philadelphia Orchestra and given its premiere in October 1990. Ran described the process that led to the composition of Symphony to the *New York Times*: “When I got the commission, I knew immediately that I wanted to write a symphony, because I had not written one before. And it was very inspiring to think of the sound of the Philadelphia Orchestra as the medium through which the work would be heard. Beyond that I had very few preconceived ideas. I find that composing is like going on an unknown voyage, and you never know where the piece will leave you. So I begin with ideas about the framework, but I try to keep myself flexible, because sometimes the inner necessity of the work demands to go elsewhere.”

Symphony was nominated for the award by *Chicago Sun-Times* music writer Robert C. March who later described it as “an emotional, fast-flowing, exciting work. ... It is the work of a very passionate woman and has the stamp of genius—the quality that distinguishes a masterpiece from merely competent workmanship.”

In the torrent of publicity following Ran’s receipt of the Pulitzer Prize, another critic, John von Rhein of the *Chicago Tribune*, described the composer’s music: “Most of Ran’s works are characterized by their sharply dramatic profile, explosive rhythmic energy and eruptive richness of detail. Her music adheres to no harmonic or melodic system and speaks in a voice that is distinctly her own and distinctly a product of the late twentieth-century.”

Edward Gilmore, clarinet, is a winner of numerous competitions, grants and awards, among them a National Endowment for the Arts grant. He also has the distinction of winning concerto competitions at both the Juilliard School and Queens College, where he studied on scholarship with Leon Russianoff. Currently a member of the University of Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players, Mr. Gilmore is the co-founder and music director of the ACCESS Chamber Ensemble and is on faculty at the Aaron Copland School of Music, Queens College.

The Contemporary Chamber Players was founded at the University of Chicago in 1964 by composer and conductor Ralph Shapey. It is unique among the nation’s new music ensembles in its successful twenty-seven-year history under a single artistic director. The ensemble presents professional performances of compositions by young as well as established living composers, and by the recognized and lesser-known masters of twentieth-century music. The core ensemble includes members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Cliff Colnot, conductor, has conducted the University of Chicago Contemporary Chamber Players, Chicago Ballet, Hinsdale Chamber Orchestra, Elmhurst Symphony and is principal conductor of ACCESS, a chamber ensemble based in New York. He received his Ph.D. from Northwestern University, served on its conducting faculty, and now teaches in DePaul University’s department of commercial music and jazz studies. As a composer and arranger of music for television and film, he heads his own production company, Cliff Colnot Music, Inc.

Abraham Stokman, piano, has performed at Town Hall and Alice Tully Hall in New York, the Gardner Museum in Boston, Phillips Gallery in Washington, Mandel Hall in

Chicago as well as universities across the country. He spent six years as pianist-in-residence and assistant professor at the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University and subsequently served as chairman of the piano department of the American Conservatory of Music in Chicago. In the spring of 1991, Mr. Stokman participated in The Irving S. Gilmore International Keyboard Festival in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He played a solo program featuring a new work written especially for him by Ramon Zupko and *Verticals* by Shulamit Ran.

Judith Nicosia, soprano, has performed works by Oliveros, Rorem, Messiaen, and Small, with the composers at the piano, as well as serving as guest artist with the Da Capo Chamber Players, New York New Music Ensemble, and the Performer's Committee for Twentieth Century Music. A specialist in contemporary music, Ms. Nicosia has also sung with numerous regional opera companies and orchestras.

Laura Flax, clarinet, has come to be recognized as one of New York's most distinguished clarinetists through her solo recitals and performances with chamber ensembles and orchestras. A native New Yorker, Flax has performed over fifty world premieres, including numerous works commissioned for her. She is a member of the Da Capo

Chamber Players and has also recorded for CRI music of Joan Tower.

Alan Feinberg, piano, has become an internationally recognized performer of contemporary music. Feinberg has premiered numerous works, including those of John Adams, Milton Babbitt, and Steve Reich. He maintains a rigorous performance and recording schedule and has also recorded for CRI music by Milton Babbitt.

Da Capo Chamber Players are known for the special musical vitality that comes from working closely with both established and emerging composers. They have commissioned over sixty compositions, and premiered numerous others, recording many of them on CRI, including works of Joan Tower, Joseph Schwantner, and George Perle. This recording of *Private Game* was originally released on CRI SD 441 as part of their special 10th anniversary LP.

André Emelianoff, cello, is currently a member of the Da Capo Chamber Players and principal cellist with the New York Chamber Symphony under Gerard Schwarz. He is also principal cellist and member of the cello faculty of the Waterloo Music Festival and assistant musical director of the Music Today series at Merkin Concert Hall in NYC.

Production Notes

Concerto Da Camera II

Produced by Judy Sherman. Recorded at RCA Studio A in NYC on June 25, 1988. Published by Theodore Presser (ASCAP).

Hyperbolae

Recorded at the University of Eastern Michigan on August 6, 1991. Published by Israel Music Institute, Tel Aviv (ASCAP).

Apprehensions

Produced by Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz. Recorded at Rutgers Presbyterian Church by Elite Recordings, Inc., NYC, on June 6, 1979. Published by Israel Music Institute, Tel Aviv (ASCAP).

Private Game

Produced by Carter Harman and Carolyn Sachs. Recorded by David Hancock at the Church of the Holy Trinity, NYC, on February 23 & 24, 1981. Published by Theodore Presser (ASCAP).

Digital remastering of *Apprehensions* and *Private Game* by Joseph R. Dalton and Charles Harbutt, engineers, at Sony Classical Productions, NYC using the DCS 900 20-bit a/d converter.

This compact disc release was made possible, in part, by a 1989 Composers Award Recording grant from the American Academy & Institute of Arts & Letters. Four awards are given annually to honor and encourage composers and to help them continue their creative work.