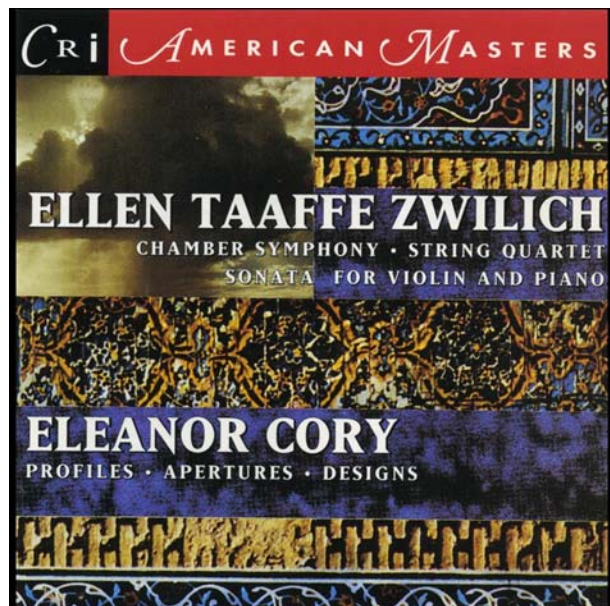


Ellen Taaffe Zwilich / Eleanor Cory



Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

1. *Chamber Symphony* (1974) (14:59)
Boston Musica Viva; Richard Pittman, conductor
- String Quartet (1974) (13:27)
2. I. (3:09)
3. II. (2:16)
4. III. (5:04)

5. IV. (2:51)
New York String Quartet: William Fitzpatrick and Paul Kanto, violins; Brian Dembow, viola; Steven Erdody, cello
- Sonata in Three Movements for Violin and Piano (1973-74) (10:28)
6. I. *Liberamente* (5:01)
7. II. *Lento e molto espressivo* (3:33)
8. III. *Allegro vivo e con brio* (1:43)
Joseph Zwilich, violin; James Gemmell, piano

Eleanor Cory

- Profiles* (1986) (9:26)
9. I. $\downarrow = 66$ (3:45)
10. II. *Adagio* $\downarrow = 60$; *più mosso* $\downarrow = 72$ (3:45)
11. III. $\downarrow = 160$ (1:56)
Allen Blustine, clarinet; Chris Finckel, cello; Aleck Karis, piano
12. *Apertures* (1984) (11:44)
Aleck Karis, piano
13. *Designs* (1979) (11:25)
Arioso Trio: Benjamin Hudson, violin; Judith Davidoff, cello; Harold Lewin, piano

Total playing time 72:08

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Notes

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich (b Miami, Florida, 1939) won the Pulitzer Prize in music for her Symphony No. 1 (Three Movements for Orchestra), a work commissioned and premiered by the American Composers Orchestra under the direction of Gunther Schuller. She was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize in music.

Her life in music began with studies of the piano, the trumpet, and violin. For a number of years, Zwilich was an active violinist in the New York free-lance scene, and she was a member of the American Symphony Orchestra during the music directorship of Leopold Stokowski. She began composing at age ten, and later she wrote music for her high school band to play. She studied at Florida State University, where she came into contact with Ernst von Dohnányi, and later she studied at Juilliard where her principal teachers of composition were Elliott Carter and Roger Sessions. Pierre Boulez introduced her *Symposium* (1973) with the Juilliard Orchestra, and her String Quartet (1974) consolidated her reputation when it had its premiere during the ISCM World Music Days in Boston.

In recent years, Zwilich has received commissions and performances from virtually every major American orchestra. She maintains commissions for three to four years of works. Among the important works following her Symphony No. 1 are Symphony No. 2 (Cello Symphony) written for the San Francisco Symphony (1985); a Piano Concerto (1986) commissioned by the Detroit Symphony and the American

Symphony Orchestra League; *Symbolon* for Orchestra (1988) which the New York Philharmonic commissioned and premiered under Zubin Mehta during a 1988 tour of the U.S.S.R.; and the upcoming Symphony No. 3 which the Philharmonic under Kurt Masur will premiere during its 150th anniversary season in 1993.

The *Sonata in Three Movements* for violin and piano was composed in 1973–74 for my late husband violinist Joseph Zwilich, to play on a recital tour of Europe. Thus, it came out of the whole issue of writing a piece for somebody to play on a recital. I wanted to use the things I most love about the violin—the kind of sonorities you can get out of this wonderful instrument of wood. I was very conscious of the process of incorporating the sonorities that I know work on the instrument into the choice of harmonies. I tried to build on these sonorities in a variety of ways—to use the resonance of an open string in a chord, for example. I didn't want to write a neo-classical or neo-romantic piece but music in my own language that would incorporate a concept of sonority characteristic of the classical period, and a concept of style you would find most clearly in Romantic music. I wanted all of that to be in there.

This composition grew out of my feelings for Joseph as well as from my particular fondness for the wonderfully dramatic and expressive powers of the violin. I wrote this for him; felt that it was the piece. I loved his sense of

timing, of proportion, the way he could shape a melodic line.

String Quartet (1974) comes from the subsequent year; it is dedicated to my teacher Roger Sessions. It is in four movements, of which the first serves as a Prologue and the fourth as an Epilogue to the piece as a whole. The two inner movements explore contrasting facets of string playing; the second movement is dominated by material of a marked and vigorous character; the third movement is predominantly lyrical.

All of the basic materials of the piece (including thematic fragments developed in the second and third movements) are introduced in the Prologue. The quartet opens with an extended statement for the first violin alone. In the course of the work each player has an individual response to the initial material, and the work comes to a close after a rhapsodic variation for the cello in the final movement.

The formal structure of all four movements might best be described as a fluid process of evolution of the musical materials. Further, the four individual movements are parts of a larger overall design, forming in essence, a single movement. The work is also motivated by the drama inherent in a conversation among four equals.

The *Chamber Symphony* was commissioned by the Boston Musica Viva and its director Richard Pittman, who had liked my String Quartet (1974). The ensemble premiered the piece in November 1979 and subsequently performed it on U.S. and international tours.

Scored for flute doubling piccolo, clarinet doubling bass clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano, the work is cast in a single movement which evolves from the initial material. Perhaps the most significant formal process in the piece is the development of long lines from shorter ideas. The character transformation that occurs in the course of thematic and motivic evolution is also of formal importance. In *Chamber Symphony*, the orchestration also contributes to the shape and meaning of the work. I sought to exploit the solo capabilities of each instrument and to contrast that with the use of doublings and other devices to achieve an almost orchestral sound.

For me, however, the ultimate meaning of this *Chamber Symphony* is in connection with the fact that it was written not long after the sudden death of my husband, violinist Joseph Zwilich.

—Ellen Taaffe Zwilich

Eleanor Cory studied composition with Meyer Kupferman at Sarah Lawrence College; Charles Wuorinen at the New England Conservatory; and Chou Wen-Chung and Bülent Arel at Columbia University. She received her DMA from Columbia. She has taught at Yale University, Baruch College-CUNY, Manhattan College, Brooklyn College-CUNY, the New School for Social Research, and, currently, Kingsborough Community College-CUNY.

Her work has been recognized by awards from the National Endowment for the Arts; New York State Council on the Arts; New York Foundation for the Arts; Yale University; MacDowell Colony; and Meet the Composer. She has received an American Composers Alliance Recording Award as well as prizes from the Hollybush and Kucyna International Composition competitions; the Music of Changes, Inter-

national New Music, Davenport, and New Jersey Guild of Composers competitions.

Performances and commissions of her work include the New Jersey Symphony, Chamber Symphony of Princeton, Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago, The Eastman Chorale, Alea III, Earplay, The Gregg Smith Singers, The Guild of Composers, Washington Square Contemporary Music Series, The Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, The Cygnus Ensemble, and soloists Ursula Oppens, Aleck Karis, Gregory Fulkerson, Beverly Morgan, Benjamin Hudson, Joan Heller, Patricia Spencer, and Chris Finckel.

Her music is published by Phantom Press-Soundspells Productions; the Association for the Promotion of New Music; and the American Composers Alliance. She was president of the American Composers Alliance from 1985–89, and has served on the Boards of the Guild of Composers and League-ISCM.

Designs is structured in three sections, initiated by violin, piano, and cello solos respectively. Each section is a series of mini-variations which start out similarly and then develop in unpredictable directions. The instruments play simple, lyrical music in their solos, and employ their virtuosic capabilities in *tutti* passages. In addition they are often fused so that their individual timbres are indistinguishable.

The compositional process involves chord progressions which are varied with increasing complexity and spaced to sound jazzy in some parts of the piece, or romantic, impressionistic, or expressionistic elsewhere. Because *Designs* contains many stylistic contrasts, the ending brings together elements of the rest of the piece in an attempt to synthesize them and affirm their peaceful coexistence.

The music in *Profiles* moves in and out of focus; obscure and mysterious passages evolve into clear and direct “profiles,” with distinctive musical character. Each of the first two movements, which are played without interruption, starts with slow, ethereal, low-register material. The first gradually broadens as the three instruments blend into a single cascading profile, while the second turns into a clarinet and piano profile where romantic lushness is spiced with jazz-like harmonies. The final movement begins abstractly and ends very concretely in a thumping *ostinato*.

Apertures organized with a surge of energy. During the early stages of composition the entire piece was intense and driving with rapid turnovers in textures. The title grew out of the discovery that the piece needed opening or breathing spaces to allow the high energy material to diffuse. Hence the “apertures,” the quiet, contemplative sections of the piece, were born. They introduce the listener to the active music in slow motion. Musical material is constantly being transformed from dissonant to consonant, vertical to horizontal, rhythmically complex to simple, widely spaced to close together, without losing sight of the common harmonic and melodic sources that link them. The piece is three large sections with an “Aperture” at the end of each.

—Eleanor Cory

Production Notes

From CR546

Chamber Symphony: Produced and recorded by Charles Fischer at Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts. July and August 1980.

Published by Merion Music, Inc. (BMI)

String Quartet: Produced and recorded by David Hancock at the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, NYC in November 1986.

Published by Margun Music, Inc. (BMI)

Original recording was made possible by a 1984 grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

Sonata in Three Movements: Recorded live in concert in New York City.

Published by Merion Music, Inc. (BMI)

From CR542

Profiles and *Apertures*: Produced and recorded by David Hancock. Recorded at the Church of the Holy Trinity, NYC on June 12, 1986. Both published by ACA (BMI) Original recording was made possible by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

From CR459

Designs: Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by David Hancock at Church of the Holy Trinity, NYC in June 1981. Published by the Association for the Promotion of New Music (BMI). Original recording was made possible by a grant from the American Composers Alliance.