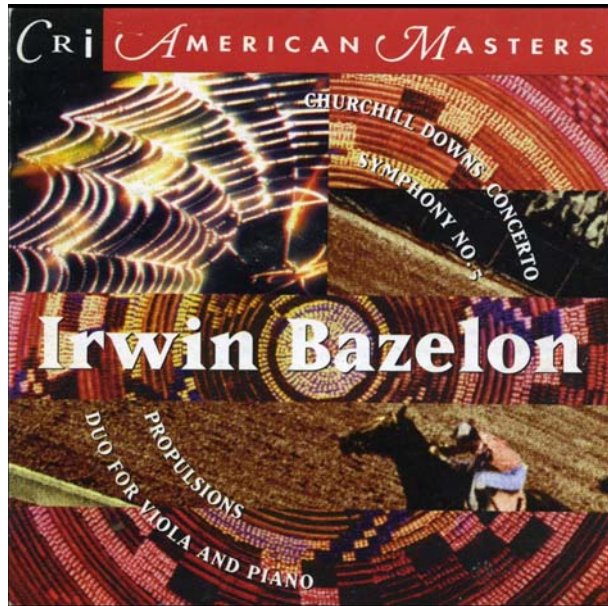


Irwin Bazelon (1922-1995)



- Symphony No. 5 (1967) (28:14)
 1. I. Slow (10:36)
 2. II. Vigorously (4:48)

3. III. Fast and Lively (6:21)
 4. IV. Broadly (6:29)
 Indianapolis Symphony; Izler Solomon, conductor
5. *Churchill Downs Chamber Concerto* (1970) (15:38)
 Harvey Estrin, flute, clarinet, alto saxophone; Dick Berg, French horn; Joe Wilder, Ray Crisara, Dick San Filippo, trumpets; Chauncey Welsch, Tom Mitchell, trombones; Herbert Harris, Dave Friedman, John Kassica, percussion; Tom Pearson, electric organ; Zita Carno, electric piano; Herb Bushler, electric string bass; Gene Bertoncini, electric guitar; Irwin Bazelon, conductor.
6. *Duo for Viola and Piano* (1963, rev.1969-70) (12:25)
 Karen Phillips, viola; Glenn Jacobsen, piano
7. *Propulsions* (1974) (18:09)
 Raymond DesRoches, Richard Fitz, Gordon Gottlieb, Herbert Harris, Arnie Lang, Walter Rosenberger, Colin Walcott, percussion; Irwin Bazelon, conductor

Total playing time: 74:54

© 1974, 1975, 1993 & © 1992 Composers Recordings, Inc.
 © 2007 Anthology of Recorded Music, Inc.

Notes

Churchill Downs Concerto; *Symphony No. 5*; *Propulsions*; *Duo for Viola and Piano*

In my music there is a relentless surge of super-charged city life that reflects the fact that I have lived all of my years in the city. The pulse of its rebellious mutterings has directly influenced my world of “violent silence.” The alternations of mood, color and dramatic flair are a direct expression of the constant changes of pace, the rhythmic beat of life in the big metropolis. I believe that a composer cannot escape his roots and those origins come to flower in his creative imagination and musical fantasy.

Symphony No. 5 (1967) is in the traditional four movements. There are twelve-tone techniques utilized without being of a strict, unyielding serial nature. In addition, there is a “synthetic” jazz spirit throughout the score. This spirit is characterized more by rhythmic vitality than formalized jazz techniques. It is “jazzy” in a personal sense, reflecting my own world of fantasy, separate and yet a part of this special milieu.

The first movement is both nervous and mysterious, a large, expressive chamber-music piece with solo instruments weaving in and out of musical focus and blending one phrase into another. There are frequent changes in tempo, dynamics and dramatic color. Short-clipped, pungent rhythmic phrases alternate with lyrical passages.

The second movement is a short dance form commencing with a broadly stated theme in strings and horns. An oboe introduces a “tune” with brass accompaniment. This theme is passed to other winds as well as the violin and flute, solo viola and clarinet.

The third movement is a second dance, scored primarily for percussion, piano and brass. It is strongly accented with

frequent dynamic clashes and features solo piano and bass passages. It is filled with splashes of color and rhythmic variety.

The fourth movement is a large, broadly lyrical movement with strings and brass juxtaposed against each other in an antiphonal relationship. Lines and phrases grow out of each other, expand and become dominant as other material fades into the background.

The *Churchill Downs Chamber Concerto* was composed during the summer of 1970 and given its world premiere under my leadership as part of Max Pollikoff’s “Music In Our Time” series.

I have called my chamber concerto *Churchill Downs* not because I have consciously attempted in any way to describe the sights and sounds of the racetrack—although I hoped to catch in my music the pulse and rhythmic beat of this mass audience spectator sport which I have long enjoyed for many years—but rather to accent the fact that it is a “fun” piece, and something to be enjoyed aside from whatever other aesthetic values it may contain.

The concerto is scored for fourteen players including an electronic group (guitar, Fender bass, organ and electric piano-harpsichord), brass sextet, percussion and a solo woodwind who triples on alto sax, clarinet, and flute.

The piece contains jazz elements and certain twelve-tone techniques, without the strict serial interpretations. The jazz spirit inherent in the score is mostly characterized by rhythmic vitality, rather than by formalized jazz innovations. Certain passages contain improvised material under, over, and through written notation. I have attempted to combine the elements of the electronic group with the colors of the brass and percussion, and at the same time, to use these “rock-jazz”

instruments to express my own musical thoughts.

The concerto can be divided into three sections: the opening bars (utilizing both jazz and rock passages) lead into thematic material, ending with an elaborate percussion solo, and followed by a development of the preceding musical statements. The middle section is a lyrical one, featuring the blending and mixing of phrases and ideas into a weaving musical flow of colors and textures. The final section is a fast-paced, driving piece interpolating brass, percussion, and electronic groups into a constantly alternating rhythmic design, featuring an *ad lib* sax solo over a pounding rhythmic bass. How long this free section continues is up to the conductor who calls a halt on the final chord sequence at his or her own discretion.

Duo for Viola and Piano (composed in 1963, revised in 1969-70) is in one continuous movement. Neither instrument is a protagonist, but both exist in opposition to each other, having their own material and rhythmic pulse. There is a constant inner struggle between the soloists; a dialogue contrasting, complementary, and antagonistic. Directions for instrumental superiority usually take the form of stress markings and dynamics. False downbeats (*sfz*) within the bar give rhythmic prominence.

The viola – an instrument that "sings" like a string and "stings" like a brass—vacillates back and forth between lyrical phrases and passages of driving rhythmic energy. As in all of my music, certain twelve-tone techniques are utilized along with jazz elements. In neither case are they strict or traditional.

Propulsions (1974), an eighteen-minute concerto for percussion, is scored for seven players (it can be performed by six) and a wide variety of Eastern, Western, and African instruments. The list includes: Indian "tabla" drums, conga drums, bongos, timbales, tom-toms and snare drums (high and low), tenor drum, bass drum, Chinese drum, timpani, log drums, "cuica" (friction drum), African "talking" drum, marimba, vibraphone, chimes, African rattle and "thumb" piano, metal plates and gongs, Japanese cup- and bowl-gongs, Javanese "hat" gong, ship's bell, shell and wood chimes, assorted cymbals, "sizzle" cymbal, finger cymbals, wood blocks, temple blocks, triangle, scratcher, claves, maracas, bells, bass slide whistle, anvil, metal plate "in water," and "cricket-clickers."

It was my intention to interrelate the sounds of membrane, steel, wood, glass... and silence; to explore their color ranges both single and in combination. And, in so doing, to bring into play various performance techniques that would contrast sharp blows, gentle strokes, and friction. In addition to the usual mallets and sticks, the methods include the taps of hands and fingernails on instruments, a bass bow drawn slowly up and down on the edge of a vibraphone bar, wire brushes whisked across the keys, soft mallets on chimes, and a "super ball" rubbed around the edge of a tam-tam and bass drum. These less common methods of coaxing sounds from inanimate objects can set in motion delicate timbres that evoke gossamer webs of sound-color, or in some cases, increase tension.

The varying relationship between pitches (high and low), dynamics (loud, soft, and sudden accents) and rhythmic attacks (fast, slow, slow-to-fast, fast-to-slow), often written in spatial notation, triggers a series of emotional rhythmic explosions that propel the music forward.

Because the musicians are kept very busy performing, and are occasionally called upon to shout vocal accents that add an extra dimension of stress to the rhythmic bombardment, the music has a theatrical flavor, one that I hope will enhance the listeners involvement.

—Irwin Bazelon

Born in Chicago in 1922, **Irwin Bazelon** graduated from DePaul University and later studied composition with Darius Milhaud at Mills College. Following his studies in 1948, he settled in New York City. David Harold Cox made these observations in his 1982 essay on the composer:

"Life in the grand metropolis... has inspired many forms of artistic production, particularly during the first half of the twentieth century. In music there were the efforts of the Futurists to reproduce the sounds of the city (1914), in the visual arts Walter Ruttmann's film *Berlin* (1927) and in painting Max Weber's *New York at Night* (1915) and Georgia O'Keefe's *The American Radiator Building* (1929). Bazelon has taken up this theme, imbued it with new life and carried it into the latter part of the century. In his music he captures his personal vision of the essence of city life in the years in which the great American dream reached fulfillment and began to decay."

As the composer readily admits, his work was greatly influenced by jazz, in its essence if not specifically in its form. And in works such as *Double Crossings* for trumpet and percussion (1976) and *Triple Play* for two trombones and percussion (1977) the composer features the jazz solo instruments of brass, winds, or percussion. He regards the brass quintet as his string quartet and in 1980 composed *Cross Currents* for brass quintet and percussion. Bazelon also has many orchestral works, including nine symphonies, and numerous chamber works for piano, vocals and strings. These works have been performed extensively in concert halls throughout the U.S. and Europe.

In 1962, the composer first conducted his music when he premiered his *Short Symphony* with Washington's National Symphony. He has gone on to conduct his music with the Detroit Symphony, the Kansas City Philharmonic, and the Orchestre National de Lille. Grants and commissions are many, and include the Serge Koussevitzky Prize in 1982, in recognition of his "valuable contribution to the music of our time."

The composer has served as guest composer and lecturer at many American colleges and universities, including Rutgers University, Williams College, Eastman School of Music, Oberlin College, and Rice University. Bazelon is also a noted authority on film music and a composer of many documentary film scores. He has written the popular text *Knowing the Score : Notes on Film Music* (1975).

Production Notes

From CRI SD 287:

Symphony No. 5

Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by David Hancock at Clowes Memorial Hall, Indianapolis on December 6, 1971. Published by Boosey & Hawkes (ASCAP).

Churchill Downs Chamber Concerto

Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by Frank Kulaga at the National-Edison, NYC, on June 4, 1971. Published by Boosey & Hawkes (ASCAP).

From CRI SD 342:

Duo for Viola and Piano

Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by David Hancock at CAMI Hall, NYC, on September 19, 1992. Published by Theodore Presser Co. (ASCAP).

From CRI SD 327:

Propulsions

Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by Frank Kulaga at National Studios, NYC, on July 26, 1974. Published by Boosey & Hawkes (ASCAP).

CRI American Master

Executive Director: Joseph R. Dalton.

Digitally remastered by Joseph R. Dalton and Charles Harbutt, engineer, at Sony Classical Productions, Inc., NYC, using the DCS 900 20-bit a/d converter.

Special Thanks to Bette Snapp.