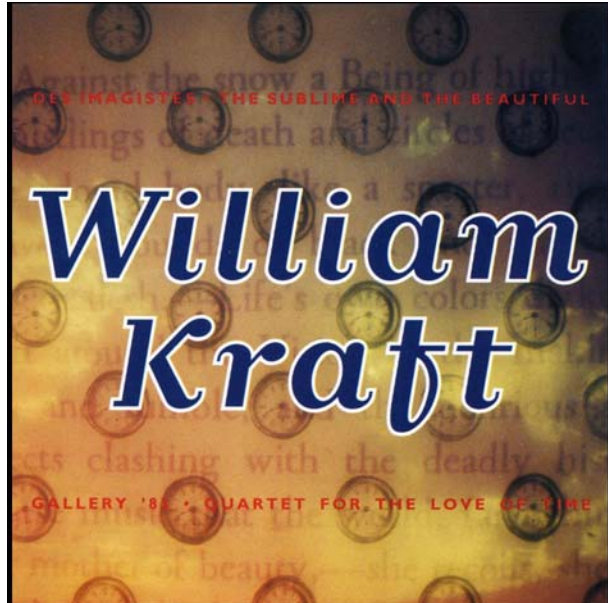


William Kraft



William Kraft (1923)

1. *Gallery '83* (1983) (12:52)
 - I. Waterloo Bridge (Monet)
 - II. Convergence (Pollack)
 - III. Kandinsky Variations (Kraft)
Speculum Musicae; John Graham, conductor
2. *Des Imagistes* (1974) (23:40)
 - I. stinging gold (cummings)
 - II. Sestina: Altaforte (Pound)
 - III. Strung On Some Unseen Web (B. Kraft)
 - IV. 11/2/72 E.P. (E. Frost)
 - V. I Have Tried to Write Paradise (Pound)
Ellen Geer, Michael Kermoyan, narrators; Los Angeles Percussion Ensemble; William Kraft, director
3. *Quartet For The Love of Time* (1987) (11:05)
Ensemble for Contemporary Music, University of California at Santa Barbara
4. *The Sublime and The Beautiful* (1979) (14:52)
 - I. Notes From The Underground (Dostoyevsky)
 - II. Being Beauteous (Rimbaud)
Paul Sperry, tenor; Pittsburgh New Music ensemble; William Kraft, conductor

Total playing time: 62:54

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Notes

Gallery '83 (1983) is a manifestation of my interest in both music and visual art. The work is in three movements, each of which has the title of a painting by Monet, Pollock, and Kraft. The first movement, “Waterloo Bridge” (Monet), portrays in sound the delicate texture and gentle sensuality of Monet’s vision of Waterloo Bridge. A quiet but nervous line for the graduated drums brings “Waterloo Bridge” into a second movement, “Convergence” (Jackson Pollock). A large part of the movement is based on contrasting metric relationships, particularly 5 vs. 4 vs. 3. The drums maintain a pulse of 5 (quarter note = 120), against which the ensemble enters at 4 (quarter note = 96) and, later, the celeste brings in the relationship of 3 (quarter note = 72). “Convergence” fades for the slow, quiet entrance of “Kandinsky Variations,” the third movement based on my own serigraph. Originally intended for improvisation, the graphic piece “Kandinsky Variations” was simple in concept. This movement represents a fully realized and notated version of the serigraph. *Gallery '83* was a consortium commission from the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players, the Contemporary Music Forum of Washington, D.C., and Speculum Musicae of New York.

Two of the five poems on which *Des Imagistes* (1974) is based are by Ezra Pound; the other three are by poets—e.e. cummings, Everett Frost, and Barbara Kraft—profoundly concerned with and influenced by Pound’s works and aesthetics. The poems were chosen particularly for their imagery and musically evocative substance.

Des Imagistes was originally titled, during the writing stage, “Hexagrammoid,” because the number 6 played such an

integral role in the concept of the piece: six players positioned in the shape of a hexagram, many families of six instruments; pitched instruments grouped into complementary hexachords; and many physical and acoustical considerations derived from aspects of the hexagram, e.g., the second poem, “Sestina: Altaforte,” being essentially set as a double trio between players I-III-V and II-IV-VI.

Eventually the title became *Des Imagistes*, taken from the anthology of that name put together by Pound: “An ‘Image’ is that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time.... It is the representation of such a ‘complex’ instantaneously which gives that sense of sudden liberation; that sense of freedom from time limits and space limits....”

The exploitation of the hexagram was clearly subservient to the larger desire to put into sound what the poets had put into words: to capture the colors and auras of cummings’s “stinging gold”; the clangorous mentality of Pound’s medieval warrior in “Sestina: Altaforte”; the suspension of materiality in Barbara Kraft’s “Strung on Some Unseen Web”; the gentle expression of loss in the work of Pound scholar Everett Frost in his “11/2/72: E.P.” (the date of Pound’s death).

Des Imagistes represents the fruition of a longstanding desire to create a large work in which, by the use of cross-cueing and similar interactive devices, the percussion ensemble would function without a conductor.

Des Imagistes was commissioned by the Percussive Arts

Society for performance at its national festival, March 26-27, 1974.

Quartet for the Love of Time (1987) was commissioned by the consortium of Chamber Music Northwest, Music Festival of Florida, and the Toledo Symphony chamber music series, supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. It was premiered July 6, 1987, by Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, Oregon, and was intended to be a companion piece to Messiaen's *Quartet for the End of Time* on a subsequent tour. It is for that reason that the instrumentation is the same as that of the Messiaen.

The title was at first whimsical, but it proved to be rather appropriate – because I have long been involved with the use of various time relationships and the use of pulse as part of my overall interest in looking more closely at my essential musical personality, which reflects my long-lasting love affair with jazz and impressionism.

The second movement was written first, with the last two notes intended to be the first two of the following movement. However, I felt the piece to be more successful structurally when the movements were reversed to the present order. The piece, therefore, begins with those two notes.

The first movement has two basic tempos with various fluctuations. Tempo I is quarter note = 50, and contains a series of slow-moving notes that form four pillars which are altered and varied with succeeding entrances. Tempo II is quarter note = 100, carrying more animated material.

The second movement begins with a violin solo, joined by the cello to form a double cadenza. The clarinet and piano gradually make their presence known; the clarinet taking the soloistic role from the violin and cello as they recede into the background, and the piano playing slow music, but eventually becoming quite an active participant. All instruments take the active music of the piano and throw it around in hocket fashion. The violin introduces material rhythmically reminiscent of the second movement's opening material and has a playful duet with the cello, while the clarinet and piano have slow music, all of which leads to the final brief section, which offers fragments from other parts of the movements.

In an age characterized by violence, tension, and technology, I felt that the idea that art should mirror its age had dubious merits. This approach may serve history as a reflection of the time, but it serves current humanity less well. Therefore I wanted to look into beauty: how the artist got in touch with his creative self, and how the artist described beauty itself.

The Sublime and the Beautiful (1979) represents two explorations: In the first part, I have abstracted excerpts from Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* to create a description of a manic depressive personality's introspections into the creation of, in Dostoyevsky's words, "the sublime and the beautiful." The second part is Rimbaud's "Being Beauteous," being an abstract, imagistic concept of beauty

itself, which I have deliberately given an Impressionistic setting.

The Sublime and the Beautiful was commissioned by Collage, a contemporary music ensemble in Boston, and premiered by them on January 6, 1980, with the composer conducting.

—William Kraft

William Kraft (b 1923, Chicago) has had a long and active career as composer, conductor, percussionist and teacher. Currently he is chairman of the composition department and holds the Corwin Chair at the University of California Santa Barbara. From 1981-1985, Mr. Kraft was the Los Angeles Philharmonic's composer-in-residence, for the first year under Philharmonic auspices, and the subsequent three years through the Meet the Composer Orchestra Residencies program. During his residency, he was the first director of the orchestra's performing arm for contemporary music, the New Music Group. Mr. Kraft had previously been a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for twenty-six years; eight years as percussionist, and eighteen as principal timpanist. For three seasons, he was also assistant conductor for the orchestra.

Mr. Kraft was awarded two Anton Seidl Fellowships at Columbia University, graduating with a bachelor's degree, cum laude, in 1951, and a master's degree in 1954. His principal instructors were Jack Beacon, Seth Bingham, Henry Brant, Henry Cowell, Erich Hertzmann, Paul Henry Lang, Otto Luening, and Vladimir Ussachevsky. He received his training in percussion from Morris Goldenberg and in timpani from Saul Goodman, and studied conducting with Rudolf Thomas and Fritz Zweig.

During his early years in Los Angeles he organized and directed the Los Angeles Percussion Ensemble, a group that played a vital part in premieres and recordings of works by such renowned composers as Ginastera, Harrison, Krenek, Stravinsky, Varèse, and many others. As percussion soloist, he performed the American premieres of Stockhausen's *Zyklus* and Boulez's *Le Marteau sans maître*, in addition to recording *L'Histoire du soldat* under Stravinsky's direction.

Mr. Kraft has received numerous awards and commissions, including: two Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards; two Guggenheim Fellowships; two Ford Foundation commissions; a fellowship from the Huntington Hartford Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts; commissions from the Library of Congress, U.S. Air Force Band, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, Kronos Quartet, Voices of Change, the Schoenberg Institute, Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, the Koussevitzky Foundation, and many others. His works have been performed by most major American orchestras as well as in Europe, Japan, Korea, Australia, Israel, and the U.S.S.R. In November 1990, Mr. Kraft was inducted into the Hall of Fame of the Percussive Arts Society.

Production Notes

Gallery '83

Produced and recorded by Marc Aubort and Joanna Nickrenz at Rutgers Presbyterian Church, New York City, November 10, 1986.

Des Imagistes

Originally recorded and released by Delos Records (Capitol), 1977.

Quartet for the Love of Time produced by Bill Kraft.

Recorded and edited by Kevin Kelly at the University of California at Santa Barbara, Sound Recording Studios, 1992

The Sublime and the Beautiful

Produced by David Stock and Mark Yacovone.

Recorded and edited by Tom Ammons.

Recorded at Chatham College Chapel, Pittsburgh, May 15, 1984.

The original recordings of *Gallery '83*, *Des Imagistes* and *The Sublime and the Beautiful* were made possible by a 1984 grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Additional support was generously given by Betty Freeman.

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