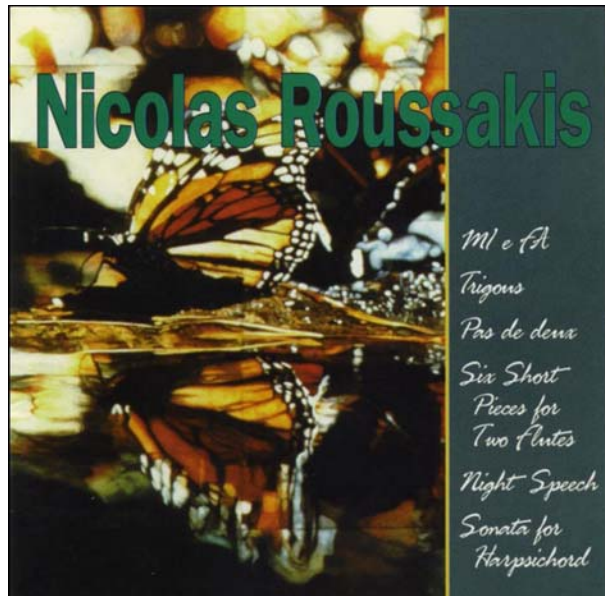


Nicolas Roussakis



<i>Mi e Fa</i> for solo piano (1991)	(12:42)
1. I Misterioso	(2:43)
2. II Impetuoso	(1:54)
3. III Essercizio sulla <i>Fuga del Gatto</i> di Domenico Scarlatti	(2:39)
4. IV Fantastico	(2:35)
5. V Affrettato	(2:51)
Xun Pan, piano	

6. <i>Trigono</i> for trombone, vibraphone and drums (1986)	(17:06)
Ronald Borrer, trombone; Steven Payse, vibraphone; Gregory Charnon, percussion	
7. <i>Pas de deux</i> for violin and piano (1985)	(10:18)
Ruotao Mao, violin; Xun Pan, piano	
Six Short Pieces for two flutes (1969)	(8:53)
8. I Dotted Quarter Note = 108	(1:53)
9. II Quarter Note = 96	(0:51)
10. III Quarter Note = 72	(2:04)
11. IV Dotted Quarter Note = 132	(0:47)
12. V Quarter Note = 60	(2:09)
13. VI Quarter Note = 120	(1:09)
Harvey Sollberger, Sophie Sollberger Quest, flutes	
14. <i>Night Speech</i> for speech chorus and percussion (1968)	(7:58)
Macalester Concert Choir, Dale Warland, conductor	
Harpsichord Sonata (1967)	(12:39)
15. I In a grandiose, festive manner	(2:42)
16. II Merrily	(3:20)
17. III With grace. Burlesque	(2:29)
18. IV Calm, becoming agitated, then calm again	(1:07)
19. V – Lively	(3:01)
Harold Chaney, harpsichord	
Total playing time: 70:15	
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Notes

Nicolas Roussakis served the cause of new music in America with a devotion and sincere interest that makes his loss to the community an extremely serious one. It was not enough for him to write first-class music of a very personal and vivid character. He also embodied musical citizenship of the highest order.

His longest tenure in music administration was as executive director of the Group for Contemporary Music, a position he held for several decades with unwavering dedication, supervising countless world premieres performed with the highest skill. My experience writing for the Group on five separate occasions made me understand that the rehearsal and performance of each work would be handled with total professionalism under Nicolas's eagle eye.

When he took over the American Composers Alliance in the 1970s, Nicholas and I became close partners in the administration of that service organization. During his presidency, the membership grew from 130 to over 300 composers from all over the United States. More striking, however, is the leading role he played in the formation of the American Composers Orchestra (ACO). From 1976 to 1994, he served with distinction as vice president and board member of the ACO. He arranged for the very first concert to be broadcast on the National Public Radio and Voice of America networks. He also convinced Aaron Copland to make a

welcoming address to the first audience, which was also broadcast around the world.

Nicolas also organized a network of students and professors to attend dress rehearsals and performances of the ACO in Alice Tully Hall and, later, Carnegie Hall, as a major educational initiative. His role as teacher was carried out for many years from Columbia University to Rutgers University, where he eventually received a tenured professorship.

His musical citizenship also embraced a consortium of new music groups in New York as well as a number of years of service on the music panel of the New York State Council on the Arts.

On a personal level, I can state unequivocally that my twenty years of close collaboration with Nicolas, both at ACA and ACO, proved to me that there was no finer or upstanding character. Totally dependable and dedicated, he was a joy to work with, always good-natured and alert to opportunities for improving the organizations that he served.

Although the music he wrote speaks eloquently for itself, I can personally attest to the strength and uniqueness of his personal musical profile. Each work was carefully constructed, often with an underlying passion. His Greek heritage and encyclopedic knowledge of history often informed his major works, such as the splendid string quartet

Ephemeris, the orchestral work *Fire and Earth and Water and Air*, and the incomplete symphonic *To Demeter*.

A man of such intense devotion to the cause of music—especially new music—comes along very seldom. I was privileged to be his working partner for two decades and his friend for even longer. His role in our musical world will be sorely missed.

— Francis Thorne, 1995

Mi e Fa a set of five pianoforte pieces, was composed in 1990–91. The name, of course, derives from two of the seven solfège syllables established by the eleventh-century monk, Guido of Arezzo. However, “Mi” and “Fa” are also the names of my two cats and constant companions for many years.

These five pieces are linked in the following fashion: pieces I and IV are both marked “*Senza misura*”—without meter, or time signature—and are rhythmically free like instrumental recitatives. Their pitches are derived exclusively from the overtone series of the twenty-second and twenty-first partials, respectively, on Mi (E) and Fa (F). These pitches are not pure overtones, but are taken to their nearest approximation on the equally tempered, chromatic scale on the pianoforte. Pieces II and V are fast-paced, measured, and their pitches are disposed symmetrically around the horizontal axis of Mi (E) and Fa (F) at the center of the keyboard. Piece II is in 7/8 time, a meter common in Greek folk music. Piece V is in 12/8 time; of interest here is the tension created by the melodic curves against the meter, since these melodic curves are often not the same length as the meter. Piece III stands alone in the set and has no direct relation to the pitches E and F; it does, however, have a lot to do with cats. It is a paraphrase of Domenico Scarlatti’s Sonata XXX, K.30, L.499, nicknamed “*La Fuga del Gatto*” (The Cat’s Fugue) first published in *Essercizi per Gravicembalo* (London, 1738). The unusual subject of Scarlatti’s fugue was apparently created by his cat, who jumped onto the harpsichord, stepping on the G, B-flat, E-flat, F-sharp, B-flat and C-sharp keys. Scarlatti extended the subject with a codetta in G minor and then completed the fugue in a perfectly correct and musical fashion. However, he never developed the polychordal implications of the cat’s six notes (which are an arpeggiation of an E-flat major triad in its first inversion, with an F-sharp major triad in root position on top of it, if B-flat, equals A-sharp). This “*esercizio*” proceeds from the cat’s notes to musical devices unimaginable within the confines of eighteenth-century music theory: tritone polarity, octatonic scales, polychords, metrical modulation, etc. Nevertheless, it retains certain characteristics of the Scarlatti original: the 6/8 meter, the disposition from high to low of the four entries in the exposition, the appearance of the recapitulation at measure 119, the pedal beginning at measure 139 (albeit at the tritone C-sharp and not the dominant), the final coda — which is very similar to the original — and a total of 152 measures in both versions. These pieces were first performed by Peter Pesic on December 6, 1991, in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Trigono was commissioned by trombonist Ronald Borrer, to whom it is dedicated. It was written under a Fellowship from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts in 1985–86. “*Trigono*” means “triangle” in Greek and, just as in English, the word has the implication of a three-way erotic relationship. The instrumentation of *Trigono* consists of one tenor trombone, a vibraphone, and six drums (tom-toms). Each of these instruments is endowed with a personality of its own. The composition is a kind of music drama without words, which unfolds as the three players confront and affect each other in various ways. The trombone is the protagonist

and begins the piece alone. His first playmate is the vibraphone, which brings out the lyrical aspect of the trombone’s nature. Enter the drums, and the music immediately becomes more aggressive. As the three instruments sound together, a *ménage à trois* is established in which the trombone’s music is influenced in turn by the playful aspect of the vibraphone, and then by the dynamic character of the drums. Toward the middle of the piece, the music becomes very rapid and loud; the vibraphone stops playing and leaves the trombone and drums gesticulating and arguing with one another. After an electrifying fulmination, the drums are silenced. At that moment, the vibraphone makes a dramatic reappearance. The trombone and vibraphone are reunited and gradually assume playing with one another again in a gentle music reminiscent of their earlier, youthful badinage.

Trigono is based on a twelve-tone row, whose two hexachords are retrograde tritone transpositions of one another: B-flat, D, E-flat, F-sharp, B, G / D-flat, F, C, A, A-flat, and E. The music of the trombone and vibraphone is to a great extent disposed in thirds and sixths; two augmented triads are pitted against another two a tritone apart to form a *quasi* tonic-dominant polarity. The six drums interpret the set according to the time-point system, to which the composer has added a few ideas of his own.

Pas de deux refers to both the dance rhythms of the music and the two performers who bring them to life. The work is in six sections, played without pause: Prelude, Ballade, Polka, Gigue, Valse, and Postlude. The music is based on a twelve-tone row derived from the chromatically-altered pitches of the upper tetrachord of the melodic minor scale (E-flat, F, G, A-flat, G-flat, F-flat) and its inversion. The series is disposed in such a way that its triadic implications are brought out: thirds, sixths, and tenths are everywhere in evidence. Certain procedures from traditional harmony have been reinterpreted to meet the requirements of the serial idea and are put to use in this piece. *Pas de deux* was commissioned by the violinist Benjamin Hudson, who gave its first performance with Kenneth Bowen at the piano on April 2, 1985, at the 92nd Street Y in New York. It was subsequently choreographed by Felice Lesser for Dance 2000, and performed on the plaza at Lincoln Center Out-of-Doors; it was renamed *Gemini* for that occasion.

Six Short Pieces was composed for Sophie and Harvey Sollberger, who first performed the work in 1969 on a concert presented by the Group for Contemporary Music in New York. They later recorded the work for Nonesuch Records on an album entitled *Twentieth Century Flute Music*. The piece was subsequently choreographed by Felice Lesser for Dance 2000, and in that version received numerous subsequent performances.

Six Short Pieces is based on the twelve-tone row, nicknamed “the wedge,” that consists of two interlocked chromatic scales: one ascending, the other descending. In this composition, rhythms, dynamics, registral dispositions, and the form of each of the movements are all strictly organized according to rational principles.

Night Speech was commissioned in 1968 by Keuka College to be performed by Dale Warland. It is dedicated to Christine Meyers, who choreographed it for the Keuka College Dance Group. The title was taken from a passage in the fantasy trilogy *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien: “...the night speech of plant and stone.” The scoring is for spoken-chorus and various instruments. The text, which consists of sibilants, fricatives, and plosives, is notated in the International

Phonetic Alphabet. The instrumentation calls for gongs, wind chimes (made of brass, bamboo and shell), large sheets of paper, sandpaper. It opens with the sound of bubbling water and at the climax, all members of the chorus play harmonicas.

The Harpsichord Sonata was conceived on Ossabaw Island, off the coast of Savannah, Georgia, in the spring of 1966, and written for Harold Chaney, whom I met when we were both Fulbright students in Germany. It is based on a set from a list of eleven-interval twelve-tone rows obtained through the use

Nicolas Roussakis (1934-1994) was born in Athens, Greece, but spent his early years in Estonia, Italy, and Switzerland. He came to the United States at the age of fifteen and became an American citizen at twenty-one. He attended Columbia University (B.A., 1956; M.A. 1960) and in 1961 received a Fulbright Grant for study in Germany where he attended the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Hamburg and the Ferienkurse für Neue Musik in Darmstadt. Upon his return to the United States, Roussakis began his career as a composer and spent time at several artists' colonies, including MacDowell, Yaddo, and Ossabaw. In 1968 he returned to Columbia University where taught and received a doctorate in 1975. He served on the music faculty at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, from 1977 through 1994. Roussakis became associated with the Group for Contemporary Music in 1970 as administrator, and later became its executive director from 1971 to 1985. From 1975 to 1981, he was president of the American Composers Alliance, a national service organization for composers supported by Broadcast Music, Inc. He was also one of the co-founders (together with Francis Thorne, Dennis Russell Davies and Paul Lustig Dunkel) of the American Composers Orchestra in 1976. His creative work has been recognized by a National Institute of Arts and Letters Award, commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts, as well as two fellowships from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. A number of Roussakis's works have been recorded and are available on the CRI label, including the symphonic poem *Fire and Earth and Water and Air* (1983), performed by the American Composers Orchestra (CD 552); *Hymn to Apollo* (1989) for small orchestra, performed by the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble; and *Ephemeris* for string quartet (1979) (CD 624). On October 29, 1995, the American Composers Orchestra performed the world premiere of *To Demeter*, Roussakis's final work.

Xun Pan, pianist, began his musical education as a child in his native China, and furthered his studies at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing and at Syracuse University in New York. He is currently a student of Theodore Lettvin in the doctoral program of Rutgers University. Mr. Pan was a prizewinner in the 1987 Dr. Luis Sigall International Piano Competition in Chile, the 1990 Pyongyang-Yang International Festival Piano Competition in North Korea, and the 1992 Frinna Awerbuch International Piano Competition. Xun Pan served as assistant professor at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, and is currently on the faculty of Pennsylvania Academy of Music.

Ronald Borrer, trombonist, is equally at home with music from a wide spectrum of historical periods and musical genres. He is a member of the New York Cornet & Sacbut Ensemble, the new music ensemble Parnassus, and the New York City Ballet Orchestra. He has performed with the

of a computer and published by *Perspectives of New Music* in 1965. The set consists of two hexachords, one of which is the retrograde of the tritone transposition of the other. All the pitches and rhythms of the sonata are derived from this set. Moreover, the pitches are disposed symmetrically around the axis B-natural and C. In German, these notes are "H" and "C," the initials of the performer and a contraction of "HarpsiChord" and "HexaChord."

— Nicolas Roussakis

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Waverly Consort, Group for Contemporary Music, and the Orpheus and St. Paul Chamber Orchestras. Mr. Borrer is currently on the faculties of The Hartt School and the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and formerly served on the faculties of Columbia University, Wichita State and Penn State Universities, and the North Carolina School of the Arts.

Ruotao Mao, violinist, came to the United States in 1985 to study at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he graduated with distinction, and in 1989, he continued his studies at Rutgers University with Arnold Steinhardt. At Rutgers, Mr. Mao has been a three-time winner of the University Concerto Competition and an active solo and chamber music performer throughout the New York metropolitan area. He has performed at the Bruno Walter Auditorium at Lincoln Center and has been heard on WNYC Radio and seen on the Monmouth County Cable Network. Currently in the doctoral program at Rutgers University, Mr. Mao is also active in the fields of mathematics and statistics.

Harvey Sollberger, flutist, has been active as a composer, conductor, teacher, and organizer of concerts since the early 1960s. He was a founder of the Group for Contemporary Music and was composer-in-residence at the Interlink Festival in Tokyo, the American Academy in Rome, and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. Sollberger left his position as professor of music at Indiana University to join the music faculty at University of California, San Diego, in 1992.

Sophie Sollberger Quest, flutist, was formerly performed with the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University and the American Symphony. Now a Vermont psychotherapist, she performs regularly at nursing homes, hospice houses and adult day care centers.

Dale Warland, conductor, became director of choral organizations at Macalester College in 1967, the era of this recording. Under his direction, the choir participated in the American premiere of Penderecki's *St. Luke Passion* and appeared in Carnegie Hall with the Minnesota Orchestra. A native of Fort Dodge, Iowa, Dr. Warland also is a composer and holds a doctorate from the University of Southern California. Today, he is known internationally as the founder of the Dale Warland Singers, and as a leader in American choral music.

Harold Chaney, a New York-based harpsichordist and organist, studied with Alice Ehlers at the University of Southern California, where he earned his doctorate. He was also a Fulbright scholar for two years in Hamburg, Germany. Mr. Chaney's career has featured premieres of numerous contemporary compositions, and has included a number of performances with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra and for CBS television. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Asia.

Production Notes

CD mastered by Ellen Fitton, Sony Classical Productions, Inc.

Mi e Fa and *Pas de deux* produced by Joanna Nicrenz, and engineered by Marc J. Aubort, Elite Recordings Inc. Recorded at the American Academy of Arts and Letters Auditorium, NYC, September 19, 1994.

Night Speech and the Harpsichord Sonata produced by Carter Harman. *Night Speech* recorded St. Paul, MN, November 1969. Sonata recorded Studio 2307 Broadway, NYC, May 1970.

Six Short Pieces produced by Joanna Nicrenz, and engineered by Marc J. Aubort, Elite Recordings, Inc., 1975 (for Nonesuch Records).