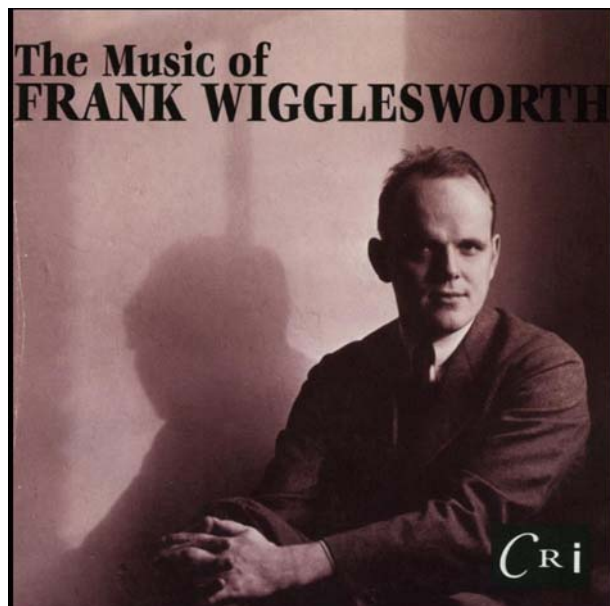


The Music of Frank Wigglesworth



- Symphony No. 1 (1953) (21:51)
1. I – Allegro (7:23)
 2. II – Adagio (3:46)
 3. III – Allegretto (4:06)
 4. IV – Adagio-Presto (6:35)
- The Vienna Orchestra; F. Charles Adler, conductor
5. *Twin Songs*, for Baroque flute (1995) (6:50)
- Andrew Bolotowsky, Baroque flute

- A Short Mass* (without Credo),
for SATB chorus (1970)..... (5:44)
6. Kyrie (2:36)
 7. Gloria (3:03)
- The Choir of the Church of Saint Luke in the
Fields; David Shuler, conductor
8. *Summer Music*, for bass clarinet (1993) (3:31)
- Evan Ziporyn, bass clarinet
9. Sanctus (0:59)
 10. Benedictus (0:50)
 11. *Lake Music*, for solo flute (1946) (2:44)
- Samuel Baron, flute
12. Agnus Dei (2:14)
 13. *Trillium*, for flute and violin (1992) (3:03)
- Tara Helen O'Connor, flute; Sunghae Anna Lim,
violin
14. Psalm 148, for SATB chorus, three flutes
and two trombones (1973) (7:09)
- The Choir of the Church of Saint Luke in the
Fields; Kathy Fink, Elizabeth Brown and Jeanne
Wilson, flutes; Kevin James and David Taylor,
trombones; David Shuler, conductor

Total playing time: 53:33

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Notes

Though he was a fixture on the cosmopolitan New York new music scene for more than forty years and also a close colleague and friend to such pioneering legends as Cowell, Cage, Varèse and Thomson, composer **Frank Wigglesworth** (1918-1996) was a modest man whose music reflected his simple life. His work might be described as neo-classical—it does not reach for the grand gesture but reflects a joy in the making of music for standard instrumentation and traditional occasions. It states its ideas clearly and genially and rewards both the skilled player and the attentive listener. This is the first compact disc recording of music by Wigglesworth. The Symphony No. 1 was issued on a CRI LP in the 1950s; all other works are newly recorded. Frank Wigglesworth was born in Boston on March 3, 1918. Seventy-eight years later, on March 19, 1996, he died in New York City. Otto Luening, his mentor and friend, called him “an iconoclastic composer,” noting that his New England heritage had a strong influence on his development. He was a grand-nephew of the new music patron Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge on one side of his family, and Oliver Wendell Holmes on the other. He grew up in a musical culture which had its roots in the works of early American composers such as Lowell Mason and William Billings.

In *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, Luening (with Barbara H. Renton) wrote about Wigglesworth’s genesis of style and his melodic and harmonic techniques: “He has an unusual insight into twentieth-century trends in

American composition. His interest in the French Ars Nova, in particular the works of Machaut, was stimulated by Varèse. Wigglesworth’s compositions use sharply defined motifs that expand into phrases and melodic lines, mostly lyric in character but sometimes abstract and even harsh in their effect. Such melodic lines often develop into long linear statements with harmonies used both as punctuation and as chordal accompaniment. His works can be tonal, atonal, and sometimes polytonal and polymodal.”

All of Wigglesworth’s music is, in one way or another, chamber music in that it is intimate and relies on a lucidity of line, clarity of texture, and balance of structure. Above all, counterpoint informs his writing; lines meld and flow, often employing simple rhythmic contrasts.

Symphony No. 1 (1953), the focal point of this recording, incorporates the most salient aspects of Wigglesworth’s musical language. Composer and critic Lester Trimble wrote the following in the liner notes for the original release of this work on LP:

“Well, I like a good tune; there’s no question about it!”
Composer Frank Wigglesworth said this in 1956, and it was obviously just as true in 1953, when he was composing his First Symphony at the American Academy in Rome. In hardly a measure of the four-movement work here recorded is the lilt of a melody of less than prime importance. From the opening measures’ announcement

of a bustling, dance-like tune, to the fourth movement's Presto jig, every pulse beat maintains its frank, forward-moving energy; and cheery tunefulness is never for a moment left behind.

In a textural sense, there is a similar consistency to Wigglesworth's writing. The melodies are frequently treated to an almost Baroque series of contrapuntal entrances. Full orchestral tuttis are rare, as are long note values. Themes bounce hither and thither from strings, to woodwinds, to brasses; duo and trio passages abound in a milieu of bright, clean-cut voice leadings and carefully administered counterpoint. Actual solos occur less frequently, for the composer has an eager eye for energetic counter-melodies. But the fabric of sound remains transparent. Each voice is a solo unto itself, cooperating with its neighbors, but maintaining its independence at the same time.

According to the composer, the First Symphony was undertaken with the conviction that "any composer worth his salt should be able to write a symphony, not in the 'modern' sense, but in the classical, where four movements were involved and the standard forms were honored. This is not a 'classical' symphony in the manner of Prokofiev; but at the same time, in the formal sense, it could easily be considered one." (The first movement, as an example, is cast in a classical sonata-allegro form, with careful demarcations of the melodic groups; development; recapitulation; and coda.) "The scoring is generally light, so that the work might be played by either a large or small orchestra." Its requirements are: woodwinds in pairs; two trumpets and tenor trombones; tuba; percussion; and strings.

In 1970 Wigglesworth wrote *A Short Mass* to feature the boys choir of St. Luke's Chapel (now The Church of Saint Luke in the Fields) in New York City's Greenwich Village. The recording on this disc uses the standard SATB voices. "The mass is in memory of Frank Overton, an actor with whom at times I shared the duties of Sunday Chapel bell-ringer at Bard College," he wrote in the notes for a 1988 performance of this work. "It has no sung Credo, as it was and is the custom for the congregation to recite it."

Wigglesworth was very conscious of the way masses used to be performed. Since the fourteenth century, most compositions called "Mass" have been settings of the Ordinary: Kyrie, Gloria, (Credo), Sanctus, Benedictus, and Agnus Dei. These fixed parts of the Roman Catholic liturgy were never meant to be sung sequentially but rather interspersed with the eleven parts of the Proper, those texts that vary from day to day.

A memorial service celebrating Frank Wigglesworth's life on April 27, 1996 at St. Luke's featured the various parts of *A Short Mass* separated by readings, hymns, anthems, and included his *Twin Songs* (as the Prelude), Psalm 148, and Recessional, for organ.

In keeping with the spirit of his memorial and within the historical conventions of performing the mass, the five sections of *A Short Mass* are presented here separated by short instrumental works as follows: *Twin Songs* (as the "prelude"); Kyrie; Gloria; *Summer Music* (as an "interlude"); Sanctus; Benedictus; *Lake Music* (as an "interlude"); Agnus Dei; and *Trillium* (as the "postlude").

Twin Songs, for Baroque flute, was written in March of 1995 for Andrew Bolotowsky. The work is in two movements. "There is a sense in these pieces, especially in the first part, of an ongoing conversation," said Bolotowsky after he recorded the piece. "The second movement is simple, slow, sad. There is a woody, throaty quality to the sound because of the nature

of the instrument. Given the Baroque flute's unique timbre, Wigglesworth also played with its contemporary tuning: he used mean-tone tuning where special fingerings were needed in order to arrive at the enharmonic differences between A#/Bb, Db/C#, E#/F natural. And A, normally 440, is tuned to the eighteenth-century 415. There are some places which sound positively Near Eastern! Thirds and fifths are not as wide intervallically, nor as bright sounding. Seconds are resolved down, slightly compressed. Sevenths seem to slide up. This was Frank's foray into microtonality!"

Summer Music, for bass clarinet, was written in 1993 and premiered that year on the Bang on a Can Festival held at The Kitchen in New York City. The Festival commissioned the work for Evan Ziporyn. "I think that the spirit of Bang on a Can is the spirit that we all had—particularly Henry Cowell. He was ready and game for anything. And anything I learned about that kind of thing I learned from him," said Wigglesworth while introducing this piece at the concert. This work is, in fact, a departure for him. It is jazzy, repetitive, almost minimalist, and unlike any of his works up to that time. Its dance-like opening unfolds in a series of tremolos, arpeggios and syncopated motives which interconnect to become one very long and comprehensive line.

Lake Music, for flute, was written in 1947 for the first of the New Music Edition Concerts given in New York City that same year. The concert was devoted wholly to solo flute music performed by René LeRoy. In the liner notes for the original release of this work on LP, Wigglesworth wrote: "The title of the piece is meant to reflect the same kind of serenity that quiet lake views convey—in this instance that of Squam Lake, New Hampshire."

Trillium, for flute and violin, was composed in July of 1992 in Ipswich, Wigglesworth's summer home in Massachusetts. It was written for Andrew Bolotowsky and Gabriela Klassen who first performed it at a Greenwich House Music School concert in celebration of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday. (On that day he received a Citation from The Council of the City of New York as well as a Proclamation from the Manhattan Borough President declaring March 3, 1993 to be "Frank Wigglesworth Day.") The work is in three movements, based on a contrapuntal and imitative unfolding of melodies. In the first movement, these melodies are anchored by unisons, seconds, fourths and fifths, an harmonic underpinning which looks back to medieval musical techniques. The second movement shows a more playful interaction between musical thoughts. The third movement begins with an exploration and interweaving of ideas based on an initial scalar motive. It arrives at a middle section that begins with a simple melody and develops through canonic imitation, ending with a slow, short, poignant coda.

Psalm 148, for SATB chorus, three flutes and two trombones (1973), was also written for St. Luke's and is a polymodal setting of this psalm. The use of chordal dissonances in the instrumental writing for the flutes and trombones creates an organ-like registration which, in turn, reveals the most ethereal work on this disc.

Frank Wigglesworth's catalogue contains over 140 works. He began writing music when he was eleven, and composed in all genres from solo instrumental works to opera. His output includes three symphonies (1953, 1958 and 1960) and the short orchestral work *Janus* (1988), as well as numerous concertinos and works for string orchestra—most notably *Summer Scenes*, for flute, oboe and string orchestra (1951); *Telesis* (1951); Concertino, for piano and strings (1965); the striking *Three Portraits* of 1970 (the third movement of which is an

Adagio in Memory of Henry Cowell); *Aurora* (1983); and *Sea Winds* of 1984 (his only twelve-tone work). He wrote virtuoso solo instrumental works—for instance, *Wind Shadows*, for flute (1983); and *Honeysuckle*, for viola (1984); as well as much chamber music which included duos, sonatas, string trios, and especially Brass Quintet (1958); *Four Winds* (1978); and Woodwind Quintet (1975). *Mr. Westcott's \$1,000,000 Inheritance: a Statement Made to the Press Upon Being Awakened, While Sleeping Under a Bridge* (1970) is one of many songs. He wrote song cycles and a one-act opera—the atonal and rhythmically complex *The Willowdale Handcar* (1969), based on the book by Edward Gorey. He wrote sacred and secular choral music—masses and anthems, as well as *Police Log of the Ipswich Chronicle* (1986), based on clippings from the *Chronicle*, illustrated by twelve original ink and watercolor drawings by Anne Parker Wigglesworth. And he wrote incidental music for theater—*Between the Atoms and the Stars* (1959), and *Hamlet* (1960), as well as ballet—the acclaimed *Young Goodman Brown* (1951), and *Ballet for Esther Brooks* (1961). His music is published by the American Composers Alliance and Merion Music of Theodore Presser.

His works have been performed by the Vienna Philharmonic, the R.A.I. Orchestra-Rome, Music in Our Time, New Music String Quartet, flutists Julius Baker and Severino Gazelloni, and the violist Walter Trampler, among others. He received commissions from the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, the Cambridge School of Ballet, the Bennington Chamber Music Group, Castle Hill Concerts, the American Composers Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, the Sage City Symphony, and the Little Orchestra Society at Town Hall. As well as the Rome Prize (1951-1954) from the American Academy in Rome, he was the recipient of awards from the Alice M. Ditson Fund and the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1989 the American Composers Alliance awarded him their second Laurel Wreath “for outstanding contribution to American music.”

He was a performer—a violinist, a violist, and a choral conductor. He was a teacher and administrator, most notably at The New School for Social Research where he was chairman of the music department for over twenty years. Other positions included Converse College, the Greenwich House Music School, Columbia University, Barnard College, Queens College, the East Woods School, the Dalcroze School of Music, the Woodbury Monroe Public Schools, Bronx Community College, The City University of New York. He attended Bard College, earned degrees from Columbia University (B.S. 1940) and Converse College (MMus 1942), and studied composition with Ernest White, Otto Luening, Henry Cowell, and Edgard Varèse. As a young man, he was a soldier and served in the U. S. Army in the South Pacific from 1942-1945.

Wigglesworth was a composer, but his role as a tireless champion of new music cannot be overemphasized. He was an advocate for young composers, beginning with his work as editor of *New Music Edition* and *New Music Recordings*, and

as an organizer of New Music Concerts. He was also an influential board member of such organizations as Composers Recordings, Inc. (CRI), the American Composers Alliance (ACA), Composers Forum, Inc., the Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East, the Greenwich House Music School (where he created the Mostly New Music concert series), the MacDowell Colony (where he was often in residence), New Music for Young Ensembles, and the New York Youth Symphony (where he founded the influential First Music commissioning series). When he was a resident at the American Academy in Rome in 1969 - 1970, he inaugurated a series of concerts in Rome which featured nearly every Roman composer active at the time.

For over thirty years he lived on Downing Street in Greenwich Village, only a few blocks away from St. Luke's, and there he and his wife, the artist Anne Parker, raised their two children, Philio and Henry. He did not strive to be a public person, or self-promoting. Yet his genius was admired by all who knew him. Over the years he gathered around him, and often around his grandmother's nineteenth-century Steinway, musicians, painters, sculptors, and writers—people with whom he would play four-hand music and share his wine as well as his passion for all of the arts.

The following tribute was written for A Concert of the Music of Frank Wigglesworth Honoring his seventieth Birthday on March 5, 1988, at The New School for Social Research, presented in association with Composers' Forum, Inc.:

Frank Wigglesworth has devoted his life to music—composing his own and supporting others'. In the 1940s, he took up the cause of new music, its distribution, publication, recording and, above all, performance. He created performing groups and presented avant-garde concerts. He gathered audiences, copied music, and turned pages for the performers, moved pianos and set up music stands onstage, took tickets at the door, turned the lights down and announced the program. From the 1950s on he managed and initiated concert series here and in Rome for music not otherwise heard, performed by virtuoso players and conductors early in their career. No history of new music in New York for forty years can exclude his hard work and unwavering enthusiasm. Without bias, Wigglesworth has listened, cared, encouraged, advised, taught, lectured, and joined; raised money, played in orchestras, written criticism, given interviews; served on faculties, boards, committees, panels and juries.

He is besides and chiefly a composer—writing music every hour, week, year he can claim as his own-increasing volume and originality with ever-widening recognition. Passion for music combined with deeply rooted humanism gives him a unique role that he fulfills with distinction and remarkable equanimity.

On his seventieth Birthday, we celebrate this musician who celebrates all musicians.

—Chester Biscardi

Production Notes

Executive producers: Chester Biscardi and Joseph R. Dalton

Twin Songs:

Produced and Engineered by Adrian Carr

Recorded June 27, 1996 at Adrian Carr Music Designs, NYC

Summer Music:

Recorded in concert at the Bang on a Can festival, May 25, 1993 at The Kitchen, NYC

Sound Design: Bob Bielecki

Trillium:

Recorded in concert November 6, 1994 at Reisinger concert Hall, Sarah Lawrence College

A Short Mass and Psalm 148: Produced and engineered by Paul Zimman, Sound Bite Productions, NYC

Recorded At St. Luke's Church, NYC, April 28, 1996

From CRI SD 110:

Symphony No. 1: Recorded September 1., 1956

From CRI SD 212:

Lake Music: Recorded 1946

CD Mastered by Joseph R. Dalton and Robert Wolff, engineer, at Sony Music Studios, NYC.

All works published by ACA (BMI), except Lake Music which is published by Merion Music, Inc./Theodore Presser Co. (BMI),