

NWCR735

Marc-Antonio Consoli



Varie azioni (1995) (16:48)

1. I Cantilena (5:46)
2. II Notturmo Triste (5:34)
3. III Salta Fuoco (5:28)
Cyrus Stevens, violin; George Fisher, piano

Vuci Siculani (1979) (20:25)

4. I Sturmentu I (5:43)
5. II In Festo Corporis Christi (6:37)
6. III Sturmentu II (5:47)

7. IV Epilogo (2:18)
Barbara Martin, mezzo soprano; Elizabeth Szlek, flute/ fiscalettu (folk-bamboo flute); Bernard Yannotta, B-flat clarinet; Katsuko Esaki and Valerie Levy; violins; Maryhelen Ewing, viola; Daryl Goldberg, cello; David Leisner, guitar; Marc-Antonio Consoli, conductor
8. *Memorie Pie* (1976) (11:08)
Eric Moe, piano
- Di. ver. ti. mento* (1995) (17:41)
(*Games for 4*)
9. I Pres and Ludes (3:50)
10. II Imitations, Real and Otherwise (4:04)
11. III Ostinati and Other Obsessions (4:34)
12. IV Invention and Interventions (5:13)
Esther Lamneck, B-flat clarinet; Paul Cohen, alto saxophone;
Daniel Grabois, French horn; Christopher Washburne, trombone;
Richard Clark, conductor

Saxlodie (1981) (8:03)

13. I Andante Comodo (3:45)
14. II Allegro Feroce (4:18)
Lynn Klock, alto saxophone; Nadine Shank, piano

Total playing time: 74:22

© & © 1996 Composers Recordings, Inc.
© 2007 Anthology of Recorded Music, Inc.

Notes

Varie azioni translates from the Italian into Various Actions; and it is one of the two implied meanings, the other being Variations. The work was written in the summer of 1995, while I was at the MacDowell Colony. During this period when my thoughts turned entirely to the writing of the piece, a couple of things kept surfacing: I was writing this work for a recording first and not a concert performance, and therefore, I wanted the work in some way to relate to the rest of the music in the CD, which would include some LP re-releases. I knew that *Vuci Siculani*, a work which I am fond of, was going to be included in this project; therefore, I borrowed what I call a melodic turn from this work, and proceeded to write free variation on it. So my thoughts once again turned toward my native land, Sicily, and its wonderful mélange of folk sounds. The new work is a carrier of both happy thoughts and sad ones: while I was composing the work, news that my father was terminally ill added more than a touch of melancholy to my already stirred spirits. Hence, movement 1, *Cantilena* is a kind of continuous chant. Movement 2, *Notturmo Triste*, also reflects my state of mind at this time. The third and last movement, *Salta Fuoco*, however, is a celebration of life: wild and frenetic gestures in the solo violin are reminiscent of gypsy music, which the Spaniards left behind during their occupation of the island. The work is dedicated to my father and the memories I have of us together when I was young.

Vuci Siculani (Sicilian Voices), like a detail from a large mosaic, depicts a small segment of the rich life on the island of Sicily, whose people have survived wave upon wave of colonizers, conquerors and rulers. The Siculi and Sicani tribes (from whom Sicily took its name) saw the early settlements of Phoenician traders, and were followed by Greeks around 750 B.C. In successive eras, Roman, Byzantine, Arabian, Norman, Aragonese Spanish and Bourbon rulers held sway over Sicily. The first movement, subtitled *Sturmentu I* (meaning canzona), deals with one of the Sicilian social conventions still in practice today, with its roots clearly planted in the Renaissance. It concerns a woman of years singing of her youth and lost love: her father had refused to give her hand in marriage, and her lover, rebuked, left town, but not before she had sworn to him fidelity and love till death. The *Fiscalettu*, a type of bamboo-flute, still in use today by shepherds, adds an eerie quality to the movement. The second movement, *In Festo Corporis Christi*, depicts an important ancient rite in the Roman Catholic Church. The feast celebrates the Holy Eucharist, its chief feature being a procession in which the Host is displayed for adoration. As the procession winds through the streets, stops are made at outdoor neighborhood altars which have been built and flower-decked for the occasion. Religious on-lookers pray for

their loved ones. In the first instance a woman prays that her sick husband might soon recover, and later another that her blind son and paralyzed daughter might be restored to health. In the first and third sections of the movement different people can be heard crying out similar prayers to the holy procession. In the score the instrumentalists are asked to hum and shout to approximate the desired crowd noise. The movement includes the well-known Gregorian Chant *Pange Lingua*. Latin texts are used in the central part of the movement as well.

The third movement, *Sturmentu 2*, is a love song for one's faraway native land. The whole work is built upon my own brand of folk music and folk-text, as opposed to the "real" folk music, fragments which are heard toward the end of this movement (as an aural flash-back) vanishing as quickly as they arrived. The melismatic vocal writing is reminiscent of the kind of singing one hears from peasants. A short instrumental *Epilogue* brings the music from the first movement quietly back to close the work.

While in Holland, in 1975, having a work performed at the Gaudeamus Festival, a number of composers, performers and music festival directors ventured out after a concert for food and drinks. Among us there was a Belgian musicologist, who was then the music director of the Royan Contemporary Music Festival in France, and who had an urge for apple pie and coffee. Thus we walked for miles around the city of Rotterdam; passing through what must have been a half dozen places in search of this "golden fleece" of pies. Finally, exhausted and tired, we settled down in a local bar. It was at this point the director turned to me and asked if I was interested in writing a work with the title "Apple Pie." I already had two other works scheduled for premiere the following season at this festival, so I did not jump at his suggestion. But a month later I wrote to him that I was interested in the piece if he, of course, was interested in *Memorie Pie* as a title. He loved it. Read in English, it refers to the memory of that day in Holland spent looking for apple pie. However read in Italian it reads "Pious Memory". The pious memories are the very short quotations from Bach to Beethoven, Mozart, Liszt, Chopin and Brahms which permeate the work. The *Prelude* opens the work using the Bach quote which is the most dominant for it appears several times in different guises. Though the work is continuous, it is divided into six sections with two *Andata* (walks), two *Sosta* (stops) and a *Finale* representing our "via crucis."

Di. ver. ti. mento (Games For 4) was completed before *Varie azioni* was begun. While the two works have different musical agendas, both share materials which are derived from Mediterranean folk elements, my treasure chest which I repeatedly dip into, consciously and unconsciously, to weave my musical tapestries. Depending on the nature of the work these materials are brought out as much or as little as necessary. In *Di. ver. ti. mento* the folk elements do not surface till the last movement, where we hear hints of middle-Eastern melodic and rhythmic flavors. The other focus behind my writing this piece was to pay homage to two great composers whom I admire, and who are as different in style as the periods in which they lived. I took Bach's contrapuntal approach and Messiaen's chordal and rhythmic essence and kneaded them together until a fusion was reached. I had fun

composing the work, and wanted to make it fun for the listener as well-hence the title, subtitle and the movement titles. Taking this grand old title and separating it into a four-syllable phrase, gives the work a third title in Italian, one that implies not only mischief but perhaps, a bit of mystery as well!

Saxlodie was written in a short week or two before its premiere, which took place in Warsaw, Poland, 1981. This was a restless period in my life; the energy and driving force especially in the outer sections of the last movement truly reflect the turbulent and high powered flood of emotions I was experiencing at the time. A calmer central section slowly unfolds, however, bringing some tender and even serene moments into focus to balance and contrast the frantic musical gestures that open and close the movement. The first movement opens with repeated descending rhythmic figures in the saxophone which carry the seeds of the nervous energy later developed into the frenetic rhythmic passages in the last movement. However, in both movements, it is the middle section, where the music reaches a tranquil plateau, and the two instruments share in a peaceful lyrical interplay.

—Marc-Antonio Consoli

Marc Antonio-Consoli was born in Italy in 1941 and came to the United States when he was fifteen years old. Music was an integral part of his paternal family. His grandfather was a respected local amateur musician and the organist at one of the town's three churches, having his ten children as the choir. Consoli began his formal music studies in his early twenties, and went on to earn the doctor of musical arts from Yale University. While at Yale he founded, coached and conducted the Yale Players for New Music, which performed twentieth-century music in a variety of styles. It was a rich musical experience, one that in his formative years helped him to better understand the many styles available, and be a beacon in the search for his own.

Consoli strived to achieve a clear personal musical voice from early on. During the mid-seventies he began to develop his mature style by looking to his Italian heritage and its folk songs in particular. Consoli's musical aesthetic is the result of multiple atonal melodic lines layered contrapuntally with each other, often without meters, creating a variety of lyrical yet complex textural sonorities.

The same approach is taken with the folk materials. These melodies are often fragmented and combined in a way that obscures their folk profile to achieve the desired sonorities.

Consoli has received numerous awards including two Guggenheim Memorial Fellowships, three National Endowment for the Arts grants, and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has won the International Symphonic Competition of Monaco; Concorso Internazionale di Trieste, Italy; and the Omaha Competition for Orchestra and Soloist. He has been commissioned by major ensembles, foundations and festivals including the Steirischer Herbst Festival, Austria; the Festival Interationale d'Arte Contemporaine, France; and the Fromm and Koussevitzky foundations. His music has been performed by the New York Philharmonic, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the Baltimore, Louisville, Nashville, American Composers orchestras, and many others.

I

(Sturmentu 1)

Amuri miu, fiamma ardenti
'mmezzu 'stu mari di peni
mi lassasti murenti.

Quannu ppi sposa a manu mia vulisti
e miu padri maritata nun m'havia
ti giurai eterna fidi, e dissi
ca n'autru omu nun vulia.

Beddu cavaleri, occhi di l'anima mia
ritorna, furasteri, ritorna
'stu con mori ppi tia.

Ne' me' capiddi l'argentu e già, spuntatu
e comu 'na rosa scurdada
'ntra 'u giardinu 'ncantatu
morU sicca, senza amuri e rappata.

II

(In Festo Corporis Christi)

Signuruzzu beddu, facitimi 'na grazia:
Me' maritu 'n lettu sta
assai malatu, e comu 'na bestia
firta si lamenta e dici ca voli muriri.
Signuruzzu beddu, aiutatilu vui,
Ju nun ci la fazzu chiù!

Pange lingua gloriosi
Corporis mysterium,]
Sanguinisque pretiosi,
Quem in mundi pretium
Fructus ventris generosi
Rex effudit gentium.

Deus, qui corda fidelium
Sancti Spiritus illustratione
docuisti: da nobis in eodem
Spiritu recta sapere, et de gaudere.
Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

Signuruzzu meu, du' figghi haju
ca sunu beddi com' 'u sula e 'a luna.
Però, unu e orvu e l'atra ciunca!
Che casticu ca mi dasti ppi l'amuri ca ti detti.
Signuruzzu, fammi 'stu miraculu:
facitili divintari boni!

III

(Sturmentu 2)

Fuddia,
serena tra vigneti e arangeti d'oru
ti ricordu; e oggi 'n fantasia
mi fai cumpagnia.
Chianannu 'i to" munti
l'alberi d'aliu a mennuli
mi vidu; mentri l'unni du mari
sbattennu contru l'antichi petri
sonanu l'ura da to' gloria passata.
Fuddia,
amica terra, chiara e umili
mi torni; e oggi, comu sempri,
'n fantasia mi fai cumpagnia.

I

(Sturmentu 1)

My dear one, my love
you left me to die
in a sea of sorrow.

When you asked for my hand
and my father forbade us to marry,
I swore my faith to you eternally
and said I would have no other.

My knight, eye of my soul,
return to me, stranger,
for this heart dies.

Silver grows into this hair,
and like a rose forgotten
in the enchanted garden
I'll die without love, I'll wither there.

II

(In Festo Corporis Christi)

Lord, give me this grace.
My husband lies in bed
sick, and like a beast
he howls and says he wants to die.
Lord, you must help him,
for I can do no more.

Praise we Christ's immortal Body,
And His Precious Blood we praise:
Born of royal virgin Mother,
He shall reign for ever.
Dying once to save us all,
Ever more he wins our praise.

God, who taught the hearts of the
Faithful by the light of the
Holy Spirit: grant us in the same
Spirit to be truly wise and ever to
Rejoice in His consolation.
Though Christ Our Lord.

Lord, I have two children,
one is a beautiful sun and the other the moon.
But one is blind and the other lame.
Lord, if you see the punishment you have
given me
for all the love I have given you,
then make this miracle
and let the sun and the moon
rise whole over the earth.

III

(Sturmentu 2)

Fuddia,
serene among vineyards and orange groves
I remember you; and today in my reverie
you keep me company.
I see myself climbing your mountains,
the olive and almond trees;
while the waves of the sea,
battering the old rocks,
play the hour of your past glory.
Fuddia,
friendly earth, clear and humble
you come to me as always; and today
in my reverie, you keep me company.

Production Notes

Varie azioni:

Produced by Martin Confurius. Recorded & Edited by Federico Panero, May, 1996, Eastside Sound Studio, NYC.

Vuci Siculani:

Produced & edited by Carter Harmon. Recorded by David Hancock, NY, May 1981.

Memorie Pie:

Produced by Martin Confurius. Recorded by Federico Panero. Edited by Eric Moe.

Recorded May, 1996, Eastside Sound Studio, NYC.

Di. ver. ti. mento

Produced by Martin Confucius. Edited by Federico Panero.

Recorded by Louis Holtzman February, 1996, Eastside Sound Studio, NYC.

Saxlodie:

Produced by Martin Confurius and Marc-Antonio Consoli. Edited by Louis Holtzman.

Recorded by Michael MacDonald at Classic Studio, NYC, March, 1986.

Mastered by Robert Wolff at Sony Music Studios, New York.

Originally released on CRI SD 465 (*Vuci Siculani*.) and SD 539 (*Saxlodie*). All other works newly recorded.

All works published by Rinaldo Music Press (BMI) except *Vuci Siculani* published by Margun Music Inc. (BMI)

Cover Art: Marc-Antonio Consoli

Design: Miesha Bartosh, Trutone Inc., Hackensack, NJ CRI Production Manager: Allison Wolf

America's premier new music label, Composers Recordings, Inc/CRT is a nonprofit, tax-exempt corporation, founded in 1954 and dedicated to the discovery, distribution and preservation of the finest in contemporary music representing the diverse inspirations of American culture. CRI's general operations and recorded projects are supported by a coalition of private foundations, universities and individuals.

Executive Director: Joseph R. Dalton

This compact disc has been made possible through the generous support provided by the Arthur Judson Foundation, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and the following individuals: Francis J. Kennedy, F. Blair Weille, Regis Schultis, William Mayer, Edward & Kathleen Ryan, Matthew Trachtenberg, Robert Graff, Jr., Frances Kennedy, Louisa & Moorhead Kennedy, Jr., Patricia & Fred Malabre, Jr., Elizabeth & James Guiher, Roberta Stafford, Judith Lee, Phebe Bowditch, J. R. Paul, the May & Morris Newburger Foundation, Nancy & Peter Hadley, Karen & Charles Young, Jr., Vals Osborne, J. Moreno Lacalle, Nancy Hagin, Pieter de Kadt, Andrea & Anthony Ragusa, Peggy Freedman, Partow Payandeh, Pierce Flynn, and Richard Bank.