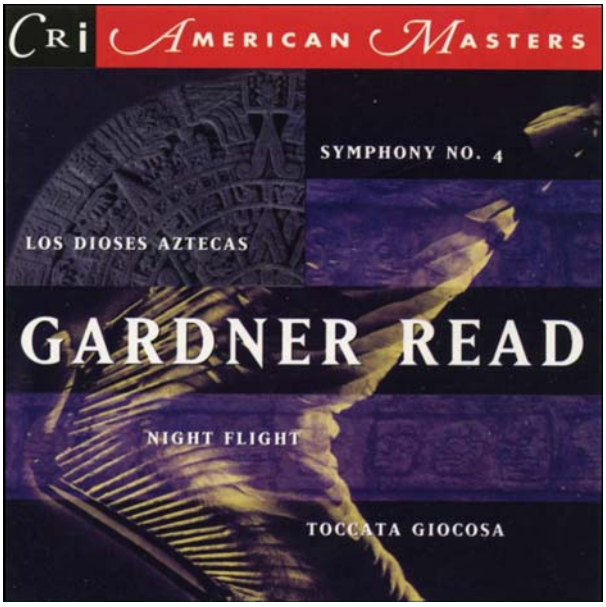
NWCR742

Gardner Read



1. *Toccata Giocosa*, Op. 94 (1953) ..... (7:13)
2. *Night Flight*, Op. 44 (1936-1942) ..... (6:52)
   Louisville Orchestra; Robert Whitney, conductor

   Symphony No. 4, Op. 92 (1951-1959) ..... (28:47)
3. I – Largo con intenzita, Tranquillo assai ... (17:08)
4. II – Lento sostenuto, Allegro scherzando .. (11:47)

   The Cleveland Orchestra; Lorin Maazel, conductor

Los dioses aztecas (The Aztec Gods),
Op. 107 (1959) ..... (25:36)

5. I – Xiuhtecuhtli: Dios del Fuego
   (God of Fire) ..... (2:17)
6. II – Mictecacihuatl: Diosa de los Muertos
   (Goddess of the Dead) ..... (3:51)
7. III – Tlaloc: Dios de la Lluvia
   (God of Rain) ..... (2:41)
8. IV – Tezcatlipoca: Dios de la Noche
   (God of Night) ..... (3:47)
9. V – Xochipilli: Dios de la Alegria y la Danza
   (God of Pleasure and Dance) ..... (3:50)
10. VI – Coyolxauhqui: Diosa de la Luna
    (Godess of the Moon) ..... (4:30)
11. VII – Huitzilopochtli: Dios de la Guerra
    (God of War) ..... (4:36)

Paul Price Percussion Ensemble:
Steve Cornelius, Robert Dubinski, David Kulb, Thomas Langmaak, Michael Pugliese, Walter Schneider; Paul Price, conductor

Total playing time: 66:57

Notes

Toccata Giocosa, Opus 94

This work was written June, 1953, at the MacDowell Colony, Peterborough, New Hampshire, on commission from the Louisville Orchestra. It is a kind of "perpetuum mobile" piece, in which a fast and propulsive rhythm is maintained from beginning to end. The element of contrast provided by dynamic levels, thinning or thickening of texture, and by instrumental combinations. Thematically, the work is based on three melodic ideas, of which the third is a fusion of the first two. At the principal climatic point of the *Toccata*, the three themes are combined.

The *Toccata Giocosa* is somewhat of an orchestral tour-de-force. The brasses are called upon to use a variety of mute types, the percussionist is instructed to play on drums, cymbals, and wood-blocks with various kinds of sticks, including a knife-blade, and the strings employ five different kinds of pizzicato, as well as the jazz slap. The tonal resources of each instrument and the technical devices possible are all exploited fully in this *Toccata*, a display piece in every sense of the term.

—Gardner Read

Night Flight, tone poem for orchestra, Opus 44

Gardner Read composed *Night Flight* in 1936 and 1937, and then revised the score in 1942. The first performance was given by the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Howard Hanson, on April 27, 1944. With some protestation about 'noise pollution', today's city dwellers tolerate the overpowering roar of enormously powerful Pratt & Whitney and Rolls Royce jet turbines in the sky. But at the time when *Night Flight* was written, airplanes were all driven by gasoline engines, whose chief acoustic characteristic was a deep, insistent and unsteady drone. It was the sound and the celebrated novel by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, dealing with the mail planes which flew the South American Andes, which inspired the title and music of Gardner Read's *Night Flight.*

In a note printed in the score Professor Read has written: "No attempt has been made to give a literal tone-painting of the planes flying high above the Andes, but rather the composer has sought to express the loneliness and mysterious beauty of the space in which these planes must fly. A constantly reiterated note on a fixed pitch gives the illusion of the radio beam signal sent to all pilots during their flight."

The work divides into three short but continuous sections. At the start low woodwinds and tam-tam, tolled with soft wool sticks, play very softly and mysteriously against high violin harmonics. They are joined after a few measures by harp and vibraphone, and there is a cumulative building of sound, as if of a plane approaching from a distance. The oboe introduces the 'reiterated note' of the radio signal. As a fortissimo climax approaches, trombones and bassoons, playing tone clusters, move up in semi-tone steps. Then comes the more dream-like second section, marked by tone clusters in the strings (a device, incidentally, very fashionable today, but unusually

progressive in the music of the thirties), with repeated sixteenth-note figures for piccolo and flutes, flutter-tonguing, and harp. Oboe is joined by muted trumpet to depict the more urgent radio beam. Stopped horns start a melodic progression which leads to the second climax. In the final section of *Night Flight* it is as if the plane disappears again into inaudibility. The tone poem is remarkable for its almost prophetic simulation of electronic sounds through conventional orchestral scoring.

—Andrew Raeburn

Symphony No. 4, Opus 92

Symphony No. 4, Op. 92 was begun also at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire in June, 1951 and completed in my Manchester, Massachusetts home in December, 1958. The world premiere took place on January 30, 1970, when the work was introduced by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra under Erich Kunzel. The composer conducted performances on February 9, 1973, with the Boston University Symphony Orchestra and in April of 1981, with the Depauw University Symphony Orchestra. This recording is a live performance of the Cleveland premiere which was on April 10, 1980, with the Cleveland Orchestra conducted by Lorin Maazel.

While using the time-test forms I like to treat them differently each time—to add something unusual or distinctive in their application. But, as a foil to the seemingly intellectual approach, my music is basically romantic in mood, and color and sonority play a very important part. For instance: My first symphony (premiered in 1937 by the New York Philharmonic-Symphony under Sir John Barbirolli) has four extended movements, the middle two being linked together by a transitional bridge. Symphony No. 2 (given its premiere in 1943 by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under my direction) contains three movements, the first being a frenetic scherzo, followed by a slow movement and a concluding sonata-allegro, thus reversing the normal positions of first and third movements in the Classical and early Romantic symphonies. My third symphony, premiered in 1962 by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra under William Steinberg, also relies on three movements; two of them, however, utilize the familiar Baroque forms of passacaglia, chorale, and fugue. Symphony No. 4 is divided into two fairly long movements, of which the first is slow and the last is a kind of scherzo-rondo that recalls material from the first movement.

Symphonies 1, 3, and 4 are cyclical in that thematic ideas from their initial movements appear in one guise or another in succeeding movements. The passacaglia first movement of Symphony No. 3, for example, forms the basis for the fugue in the final movement, while the chordal structure of the scherzo movement is transformed to become the opening chorale of the last movement. Further similarities—and differences—between the four symphonies include the first and fourth both ending queerly and in a somber mood while the second and third finish with a blaze of full orchestra. Symphony No. 1 requires the largest orchestra of the four while No. 4 relies on the standard symphonic ensemble, but minus harp and keyboard instruments. Nonetheless, all differences aside, the one factor linking all four symphonies is their prevailing mood of romanticism, of emotional expression taking precedence over intellectualism, in spite of the elaborate formal structures and complex thematic relationships.

The opening movement of Symphony No. 4 begins with an extended canon in six solo cellos against a subdued background of timpani and double basses (Largo con intenzita). This idea is then transferred to the higher strings, still in canon, reaching a climax in which the woodwinds and brass are gradually introduced into the orchestral texture. An agitated section based on rapidly shifting polytonal harmonies in the wind instruments serves as transition to a second augmentation by solo trombone. The tension of this theme gradually relaxes into a Tranquillo assai, in which the solo clarinet exposes a variant of the idea against a murmuring background of divided violas and cellos and a sotto voce reflection on the canon statement in solo bassoon. A sudden surge of intensity leads to a powerful, combined restatement of the first two themes in the brasses and lower strings accompanied by restlessly moving polytonal chords in the woodwinds. Following a climax in the full orchestra the main thematic ideas are restated in reverse order: the solo clarinet theme slowly dissolves into the first theme, again in the six solo cellos but this time in retrograde. The movement dies away on a low C-sharp in the timpani and double basses, thus ending as it began.

A Lento sostenuto in the full orchestra serves as introduction to the principle theme, heard first in the bassoon, of the Allegro scherzando movement that follows. This theme, rather grotesque in nature, is imitated in fugal style, passing from instrument to instrument and highlighted by trills and odd percussive effects. Indeed, the entire movement might be characterized as a study in orchestral trills as well as in unusual melodic and harmonic spacing.

A momentary relaxation in activity precedes a gradual increase in thematic complexity in which the theme is fragmented, simultaneously combined in various rhythmic permutations, stated in augmentation, inverted, and treated chordally. The principle climax of the movement is reached when the original theme (from the first movement) is proclaimed by the four horns (Molto largamente, con nobilita), echoed by the trombones and then the trumpets. The climax subsides with fragments of the second movement theme tossed between the instruments against a background of the polychordal woodwind figures from the first movement. There follows a brief reference to the second movement's theme, somber—almost tragic in mood. The symphony ends very quietly with polychordal alterations between the woodwinds, muted strings and muted brass, and final low E in timpani, solo double basses, and deep gong."

—Gardner Read

Los dioses aztecas, Opus 107

Los dioses aztecas (The Aztec Gods) Suite for Percussion Ensemble, Op. 107 (1959) is the result, in musical terms, of a trip I made to Mexico during the summer of 1957. The basic idea and the inspiration for the work came not from any actual Aztec or indigenous music but rather from primitive sculptures of the Aztec deities displayed in the National Museum in Mexico City. In this suite I tried to give musical expression to the abstract idea suggested by each Aztec god, my personal impression of what each represents in Aztec history and culture. On a secondary level the suite is an attempt to fashion a full scale percussion work of structural integrity and displaying clear motivic and rhythmic development, and not just a lengthy catalogue of exotic percussive effects.

I. Xiuhtecuhtli: Dios del Fuego (God of Fire) With savage energy

II. Mictecacihuatl: Diosa de los Muertos (Goddess of the Dead) Slowly and solemnly

III. Tlaloc: Dios de la Lluvia (God of Rain) Moderately fast, with steadiness

IV. Tezcatlipoca: Dios de la Noche (God of Night) Slowly and mysteriously

V. Xochipilli: Dios de la Alegria y la Danza (God of Pleasure and Dance) Gracefully and lightly

VI. Coyolxauhqui: Diosa de la Luna (Goddess of the Moon) Quietly, with serenity

VII. Huitzilopochtli: Dios de la Guerra (God of War) Broadly; fast and fiercely

The suite is scored for six percussionists who perform upon the following sixty instruments: glockenspiel, xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, 4 pedal timpani, 4 snare drums, 4 tom-toms, 2 tenor drums, 2 bass drums, 3 tambourines, 7 suspended cymbals, sizzle cymbal, hand cymbals, 2 high gongs, 2 low gongs, 5 antique cymbals, chimes, 3 triangles, thunder sheet, 3 wood-blocks, 5 temple blocks, 2 pair of claves, sandpaper blocks, 2 raspers, pair of maracas.

Dedicated to Paul Price and the Manhattan Percussion Ensemble, *The Aztec Gods* was given its first performance by them on March 8, 1960 at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. It was performed by them on a 1968 State Department sponsored tour through Belgium, Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, and Iran. The work has also been widely performed in South America and the United States.

—Gardner Read

Gardner Read (*b*. Evanston, Illinois, 1913) has had a prolific and varied career as composer, conductor, teacher, and author. As a high school student he studied piano and organ privately and took lessons in composition and counterpoint at Northwestern University's School of Music. He was a student at the National Music Camp, Interlochen, Michigan during the summers of 1932 and 1933, where he studied harp and conducting as well as composition, and where he later taught. In the fall of 1932 he was awarded a four-year scholarship to the Eastman School of Music where his principal teachers were Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson. He was granted resident fellowships to the MacDowell Colony and the Huntington Hartford Foundation as well as a Cromwell Traveling Fellowship for study abroad with Ildebrando Pizzetti and Jean Sibelius, which was cut short by the tense pre-war situation in Europe in the fall of 1939.

A 1941 fellowship to the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood enabled Read to study with Aaron Copland. From 1941 to 1948 Gardner Read headed the composition departments at the St. Louis Institute of Music, the Kansas City Conservatory of Music, and the Cleveland Institute of Music. In 1948 he was appointed composer-in-residence at the School of music of Boston University, becoming Professor Emeritus in 1978.

Gardner Read's activities as a conductor include leading his own works with such ensembles as the Boston, Cincinnati, Philadelphia, and Pittsburgh symphony orchestras. As an author he has published eight books, two of which—*Thesaurus of Orchestral Devices* (1953) and *Music Notation* (1964) are considered classics in their field.

Read has won a number of major awards, including first prize in the New York Philharmonic-Symphony Society's 1937 American Composers Contest for his Symphony No. 1, Op. 30, and first prize in the Paderewski Fund Competition of 1943 for his Symphony No. 2, Op. 45, as well as many commissions.

In January, 1996 Read was honored by the Eastman School of Music with a festival of four concerts of his music and exhibition of his manuscripts. Also in 1996, the Greenwood Press published *Gardner Read: A Bio-Bibliography* by Mary Ann Dodd and Jayson Rod Engquist.

Production Notes

Digitally remastered by Robert Wolff, engineer, Sony Music Studios, NYC.
Louisville recordings digitally remastered by Steve Noble, engineer, Alison Morgan, assistant engineer, University of Louisville.
CRI Production manager: Allison Wolf
Executive director: Joseph R. Dalton

From SD 444
Los Dioses Aztecas (The Aztec Gods), (Op. 107)
Recorded by David Hancock, Tenafly, NJ., June 1980. Produced by Carter Harman. Funding provided by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and by Sky Brooks. Published by M.M. Cole Co. (ASCAP)

From SD 525
Symphony No. 4 (Op. 92)
Recorded live in performance at Severance Hall, Cleveland, OH, in April 1980 by the Cleveland Orchestra Broadcast Service. Robert Conrad, producer; Andrew Massey, associate producer; Vladimir Maleckar, audio supervisor; Bruce Gigax, audio engineer. Funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts, Kulas Foundation, the Bascom Little Fund, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and private donors.

From LOU 63-2
Night Flight (Op. 44)
Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records. Released 1963. Published by C.F. Peters Corporation.

From LOU 545-5
Toccata Giocosa (Op. 94)
Louisville Orchestra First Edition Records. Released 1959. Published by Theodore Presser Co.