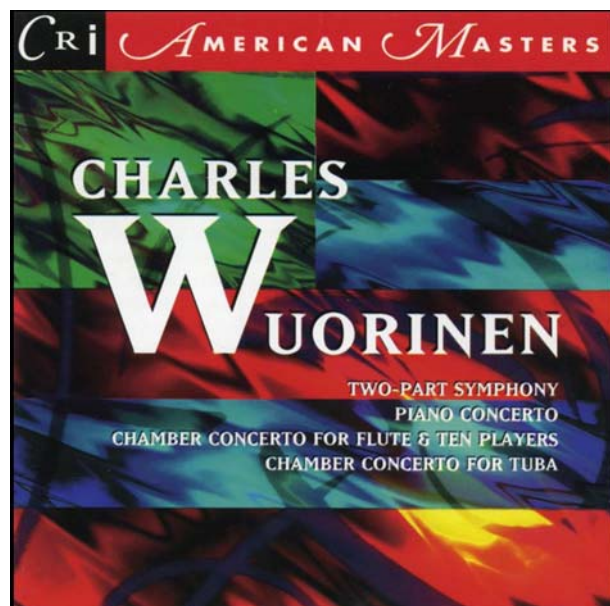


Charles Wuorinen



Two Part Symphony (1977-78)	(23:30)
1. I	(12:27)
2. II	(11:03)
American Composers Orchestra; Dennis Russell Davies, conductor; Chamber Concerto for Tuba with 12 Winds and 12 Drums	

3. I	(7:42)
4. II	(6:36)
5. III	(4:42)
David Braynard, tuba solo; The Group for Contemporary Music: Patricia Spencer, Harvey Sollberger, Sophie Sollberger, Karl Kraber, flutes; Josef Marx, Susan Barrett, oboes; Donald MacCourt, Leonard Hindell, bassoons; David Jolley, Edward Birdwell, Ronald Sell, Barry Benjamin, horns; Raymond DesRoches, percussion; Charles Wuorinen, conductor	
6. Piano Concerto (1966)	(19:47)
Charles Wuorinen, piano; Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; James Dixon, conductor	
7. Chamber Concerto for Flute and Ten Players (1964)	(14:48)
Harvey Sollberger, flute; The Group for Contemporary Music: Stanley Silverman, guitar; Susan Jolles, harp; Cheryl Seltzer, harpsichord; Joan Tower, celeste; Robert Miller, piano; Raymond DesRoches, John Bergamo, Richard Fitz, George Boberg, percussion; Kenneth Fricker, contrabass; Charles Wuorinen, conductor	

Total playing time: 77:27

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Notes

As we near the twenty-first century perhaps it is time to take stock of the great artistic wealth offered by our tumultuous, yet prolific, age. While masterworks of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are recorded for the hundredth time, many of the notable twentieth century classics still await their first recording. Thanks to the good work of labels such as CRI (a forerunner of many others) we have a taste of the riches in store for those who wish to seek them out.

The disc brings together four **Charles Wuorinen** recordings spread originally among four LP's. Two of the works call for full orchestra, the Piano Concerto and *Two Part Symphony*; the other two are chamber concerti which Wuorinen originally wrote for his own Group for Contemporary Music (the ensemble formed in 1962 by Wuorinen and Harvey Sollberger, which set new standards for performing challenging new works). Whether he is writing for his own players or for standard symphony, one characteristic you can count on is the virtuosity he demands from his players. This was (and is) no doubt inspired by the wealth of performing talent which has surrounded Wuorinen in his native Manhattan.

The *Two Part Symphony* was composed between 28 November 1977 and 1 August 1978 for the American Composers Orchestra and is dedicated to ACO music director and new music champion, Dennis Russell Davies.

The symphony is scored for 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 2 trombones, tuba, timpani, 4 percussion, harp, piano, and strings. As is 'typical'

of a Wuorinen orchestral work, the percussion section is an equal partner with the other choirs of the orchestra. This (along with the Tuba Concerto) is a mature Wuorinen composition. It offers a view of the composer at ease with a style of writing he had been formulating since the early 1960s. The composer has written of his Symphony:

I would have preferred to call this work Symphony in C, which it is, or Short Symphony, which it also is. But these names have been used by Stravinsky and Copland already, and so I am left to call it what it also is: a *Two Part Symphony*. The two movements (both predominantly fast, although the second has a slow introduction which is to some extent an independent entity) are actually quadruplex, so that the symphony may be considered a "variation squared": the first movement is two variants of the same music, and the second is a variant of these.

What of substance? I begin with a chord of the twelve tones, unordered, repeated variously in the orchestra. From this 'ylem' (a cosmological term derived from the Greek word meaning that on which form has not yet been imposed) the 12-tone set for the work is extracted, and it in turn produces the rest of the piece. But disorder lurks behind order and the original chord does not go away, but returns from time to time as a reminder that, in the end all dissolves.

What of manner? It is of course not for me to say, but I have the impression that this work is more regular, conventional and familiar than some of my others. I had a very good time writing it.

Wuorinen has always had a special affinity for the low-sounding instruments of the orchestra and so it is not surprising that he has written a Tuba Concerto¹—the Chamber Concerto for Tuba with 12 Winds and 12 Drums is a substantial work, and it requires a soloist of amazing dexterity and control. It was written between 22 September 1969 and 6 August 1970 for Donald Butterfield, who premiered the work on 7 March 1971 at the Music in Our Time series at the 92nd Street YMHA in New York City. The work is divided into three movements, performed as a continuity; these could perhaps be described as an introduction, scherzo and toccata (my tags).

Wuorinen has written the following description of this work:

It contains four main instrumental strands: The soloist and three homogeneous choirs—four flutes, four horns, four double reeds (oboes and bassoons). These are supplemented by a battery of twelve drums which serve to summarize the rhythmic activity of the other instruments. The soloist's role is as the initiating voice in the four-part polyphony, and what he says in single notes becomes then ramified and multiplied into many notes of the three instrumental choirs. The underlying polyphony spans the whole work, which is divided into three movements. The piece shows a tendency to accelerate throughout, though this process is neither regular nor linear. The piece is also strongly centric, although this characteristic is still derived from the twelve-tone set governing the whole composition.

This idea of centrality, which acts to some degree as a tonic center does in music of an earlier age, is, I believe, one of the reasons his work—beginning around 1970—takes on a new dimension, making the surface easier to follow (that is after hearing a Wuorinen work a few times I can remember it—as I would a work of Brahms. This is a characteristic that is lacking among many of Wuorinen's contemporaries).

Wuorinen's Piano Concerto is an early work, from the same period that produced his Chamber Concerto for Flute and 10 Players but is on a considerably larger sonic scale. The orchestra calls for traditional instrumentation (triple winds) but includes a percussion battery of nine players. The percussion acts as a multi-voiced, multi-textured component much of the time. For an interesting comparison take a listen to (or a look at) Wuorinen's 1983 Third Piano Concerto which opens with an explosive interplay between drums and piano soloist. Wuorinen is a very fine pianist, and indeed he premiered his first two concerti.²

Wuorinen adds:

Since the concerto is in a single movement, the various contrasts of speed, texture, and so forth, that occupy different movements in older pieces, here are all present simultaneously in a multi-layered continuity. Even the general pauses may be considered windows in the piece opening on the silence in which it swims.

The Chamber Concerto for Flute and 10 Instruments (1964) is one of Wuorinen's early masterworks.³ It is a punchy, Carteresque work, full of surprise at every turn, in addition to

being a virtuoso tour de force for the soloist (here the dedicatee, Harvey Sollberger) as well as the other ten instruments—who seem to get as much of a work out as the soloist.

The work was composed between 11 March and 4 May 1964 under a commission from the Fromm Music Foundation for the Berkshire Music Center where it was performed the same year at the first Festival of Contemporary Music. The work calls for an intriguing group of plucked and percussive instruments: flute, guitar, harp, four percussionists, celeste, piano, harpsichord, and contrabass.

In the original LP liner notes Wuorinen is quoted as follows:

Its generative material is twelve-tone, but the surface of the piece results from operation upon this material according to principles not generally regarded as twelve-tone. Therefore it may be considered twelve-tone in origin, but not in execution. The work spans several variations, whose main external characteristics lie in a continuous revision of the rate of overall unfolding. This means that the densest occurrences of events (at the beginning) gradually give way to a more continuous but less thickly populated musical environment. Along with all this there functions a continuous change in the relation of flute to ensemble: The flute plays not at all at the beginning, but after its initial appearance, gathers more and more of the materials of the composition under its influence, until by the end, it has virtually silenced the rest of the instruments.

As we near the beginning of a new millennium it is my hope that America will take stock and delight in the extraordinary music created on our shores over the past 100 years. Since the mid-1970s Wuorinen has devoted himself to creating a body of orchestral work of unparalleled elegance and beauty. Perhaps in the not-too-distant future there will be recordings of *The Celestial Sphere*, *Movers and Shakers*, the *Tashi Concerto*, *Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra*, *Bamboula Squared*, *Delight of the Muses*, *Crossfire*, *Microsymphony*, *The Mission of Virgil*...

—Howard Stokar

¹ Wuorinen has written two tuba concerti, the latter—dating from 1980—is titled *Prelude to Kullervo*. There is also a marvelous Trio for Bass Instruments for tuba, bass trombone and contrabass (1981).

² The Second Piano Concerto—for Amplified Piano and Orchestra) was composed for the New York Philharmonic where Wuorinen premiered the work with Eric Leinsdorf conducting.

³ Among other early Wuorinen works are a Chamber Concerto for Cello and 10 Players (1963), Composition for Violin and 10 Instruments (1964) and the Chamber Concerto for Oboe and 10 Instruments (1965).

Production Notes

From SD 410

Two-Part Symphony:

Recorded live in Alice Tully Hall, New York City, December 1978; by David Hancock, Electronic Transformations: Michael Riesman, NYC, May 1979. Original recordings made possible by grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, the American Composers Orchestra, Broadcast Music, Inc., Contemporary Music Society, Inc., Joseph Machlis, and Walter s. Rosenberry III.

From SD 491:

Chamber Concerto for Tuba:

Recorded by David Hancock, NYC, December 1972 and Michael Riesman, NYC, December 1981. Produced by Carter Harman. Remixed by Riesman, March 1983. Original recordings made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. Additional funding was provided by the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., and private donors.

From SD 239:

Piano Concerto:

Recorded by Robert Auger. Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded 1968. Original recording made possible by a grant from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music.

From SD 230:

Chamber Concerto for Flute and Ten Players

Recorded at McMillan Theater, Columbia University, NYC. Released in 1968.

All works published by C.F. Peters Corporation (BMI)

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