

NWCR763

Will Ogdon



Three Piano Pieces (1949)	(3:32)	Five Preludes (1982)	(8:30)
1. [quarter note] = 66	(:49)	19. Adagio ma flessibile	(1:26)
2. [quarter note] = 108-112	(1:02)	20. Andante ma non troppo	(1:27)
3. [eighth note] = 66-72	(1:41)	21. Andante cantabile	(1:27)
Stefani Walens, piano		22. Adagio tranquillo	(1:53)
Three Baritone Songs (1950/57)	(7:01)	23. Allegretto	(2:17)
4. Moon Song, Percy Shelley	(1:55)	János Négyesy, violin; Will Ogdon, piano	
5. Slow, Slow Fresh Fount, Ben Jonson	(3:02)	Serenade No. 1, for wind quintet (1986)	(9:21)
6. O Let Me Climb, Henry Vaughan	(1:57)	24. I Adagio	(2:02)
Philip Larson, baritone; Stefani Walens,		25. II 1. Arioso	(:37)
piano		26. 2. Adagio	(1:30)
Two "Kechwa" Songs (1955)	(5:54)	27. 3. Vivace	(1:19)
7. That She May Not Find Dew	(3:50)	4. Allegretto	
8. How Sadly She Dreams	(2:04)	28. 5. Arioso 2	(1:22)
Carol Plantamura, soprano; Stefani Walens,		29. 6. [eighth note] = 120	(:52)
piano		30. III Allegro	(1:39)
Three Trifles for cello and piano (1958)	(2:45)	Eolus Quintet: John Fonville, flute; Susan	
9. I – March	(:46)	Barrett, oboe; Robert Zelickman, clarinet;	
10. II – Romance	(1:08)	David Savage, bassoon; Warren Gref, horn	
11. III – Scherzo	(:51)	Two Capriccios for piano (1991)	(6:47)
Peter Farrell, cello; Aleck Karis, piano		31. Capriccio 1	(3:34)
12. <i>By the Isar</i> (1969)	(5:16)	32. Capriccio 2	(3:13)
Beverly Ogdon, soprano; John Fonville, flute;		Aleck Karis, piano	
Bertram Turetzky, double bass		Variation Suite for violin and viola (1995-96)	(9:08)
Six Small Trios (1981-82)	(6:37)	33. 1. Somewhat freely ("dreamily")	(1:13)
13. [quarter note] = 48-52	(1:13)	34. 2. Quasi giocoso	(:44)
14. Poco scherzando	(:53)	35. 3. Scherzo	(:56)
15. Briskly	(1:04)	36. 4. Tranquillo (cantabile)	(:56)
16. Very slow march tempo	(1:36)	37. 5. Scherzando	(:56)
17. [eighth note] = 60-66	(1:02)	38. 6. Andante	(36)
18. [quarter note] = 112-120	(:49)	39. 7-8-7. Quasi Marcia, meno mosso,	
Edwin Harkins, trumpet; David Shively,		piu vivo	(1:15)
percussion; Aleck Karis, piano		40. 9. Quasi Giocoso	(1:02)
		41. 10. Somewhat freely	(1:30)
		János Négyesy, violin; Päivikki Nykter, viola	
		Six Small Trios (1981-82)	(6:39)
		42. 1. [quarter note] = 48-52	(1:07)
		43. 2. Poco scherzando	(:59)
		44. 3. Briskly	(1:01)
		45. 4. Very slow march tempo	(1:33)
		46. 5. [eighth note] = 60-66	(1:48)
		47. 6. [quarter note] = 112-120	(:41)
		Edwin Harkins, trumpet; Keith Humble,	
		piano; Jean-Charles François, percussion	
		Performed by member of SONOR Ensemble and guests, the	
		resident contemporary music ensemble of the University of	
		California, San Diego	
		Total playing time 71:30	
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Notes

Will Ogdon was born in Redlands, California in 1921 where he spent the first three years of his life before his parents returned to their native Illinois. Later the family moved again to Wisconsin where Ogdon received his B.A. from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He took his M.A. degree from Hamline University, St. Paul, 1947 where his teacher was Ernst Krenek, with whom he continued a long professional association. Ogdon also studied with Roger Sessions (at the University of California, Berkeley, 1949–50), Arthur Honegger (on a Fulbright Scholarship at the Ecole Normale de Musique) and René Leibowitz in Paris, 1952–53. Ogdon has taught at the University of Texas, Austin, Indiana University, the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, and Illinois Wesleyan University. He spent two years as music program director at KPFA, Berkeley, and a year producing television and radio music programs at the University of Illinois. In 1966 he became the first chair of the music department at the University of California, San Diego. He became professor emeritus in 1991.

This retrospective recording of Will Ogdon's music spans forty-seven years from 1949 to 1996. Ogdon's composing life is of course longer—almost sixty years in fact. His earliest works date from 1938 through his years of studies with Ernst Krenek in 1942 and 1946–47 (broken by army service from 1942 to 1946). Works from this early period whether lost, strayed or inconsequential, are not represented, nor are the songs and chamber music that he has continued to compose in the late 1990s. Ogdon's composing career roughly divides into two parts, the second beginning with his happy return to his native southern California in 1966, where he became the founding chair of the new music department at the University of California, San Diego in La Jolla. On the advice of its arts advisor, Dr. John Stewart, who was counseled in turn by Ernst Krenek, UCSD committed itself to a faculty of composers and other musicians interested in the music of the present and twentieth-century music in general.

This rather unusual commitment encouraged Will's own composing through his relationships to colleagues willing to perform his music. A case in point is *By the Isar* (1969), a setting of D.H. Lawrence's *River Roses*, a work that resulted from a request by the eminent contrabassist and UCSD colleague Bertram Turetzky who asked Will to compose something for him and his wife, the flutist Nancy Turetzky. Will exhumed an uncompleted setting of *River Roses* begun in 1957 and intended for his not-then wife, soprano Beverly Porter, recomposing its clarinet and harp accompaniment for alto flute and contrabass. On this recording Bert and Beverly are joined by John Fonville, also of the UCSD faculty.

The first four pieces in this anthology predate Ogdon's twenty-five year tenure at UCSD. The first of these, *Three Piano Pieces* (1949), was played in that year by Lucette Stumberg, a student of Egon Petri, on a composers concert at U.C. Berkeley, where will was studying with Roger Sessions. In 1952 Charles Rosen played these pieces at the American Embassy in Paris while Will was in residence on a Fulbright fellowship and studying with René Leibowitz. Only in the 1980s did Ogdon learn that his *Three Piano Pieces* had also been played by Karl Ulrich Schnabel on concert tours of Europe and South America from 1955-1957. The idiom of the *Three Piano Pieces*, like that of the two sets of songs and the *Three Trifles* for cello and piano that follow them, is essentially chromatic and atonal, though one can discern the influence of Bartók almost as readily as that of Schoenberg.

This is especially so in the third piano piece whose leading motive reveals its indebtedness to Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*. The close coordination of dissonance with structural climaxes and relaxations in this piece also reveals the lesson taught by Ernst Krenek's earlier serial music, although no strict serial procedures seem to be present in these pieces. Two of Ogdon's *Three Baritone Songs* were written in 1950 while he studied with Sessions. In fact, one of these, a setting of Ben Jonson's "Slow, Slow Fresh Fount" from *Cynthia's Revels*, was composed on the Sessions's piano while baby sitting in absentia the two Sessions children, who were both off staying with friends. The other sets Shelley's "To The Moon." A third song, "O Let Me Climb," setting a poem by the seventeenth century religious poet Henry Vaughan, was added in 1957 after Will joined the faculty of Illinois Wesleyan University, a position he held for some eight years. Baritone, Philip Larson is accompanied by Stefani Walens who also plays Ogdon's *Three Piano Pieces* and accompanies Carol Plantamura in his Two "Kechwa" Songs.

Ogdon's Two "Kechwa" Songs (1955) were composed in St. Paul for a remarkable dramatic soprano, June Jeffries Peterson, who sang them on a concert series at the Minneapolis Unitarian Church. This series was directed by Thomas Nee who joined the UCSD faculty a dozen years later, taking over the directorship of the La Jolla Civic-University Orchestra (now known as the La Jolla Symphony). The poet is an unknown, but most-gifted Andean mountain Indian.

Three Trifles for cello and piano (1958) was composed as a teaching piece for an Illinois Wesleyan colleague, Ruth Krieger, who introduced them with the composer on a school recital that same year. In 1985, cellist Chris Finckel and pianist Robert Pollack played the pieces on a New Jersey composers' concert and also on television. Curiously, the pieces were formed from music Ogdon was composing for an opera that he never completed, *Leonce and Lena*.

Deceptively silent on this recording is the decade of the 1970s. A primary reason for this is the nature of Ogdon's composing projects during that decade. These include two theater pieces on Jean Cocteau's poetry, a short chamber opera drawn from Lawrence Durrell's *Sappho*, and an orchestral work written for the La Jolla Civic-University Orchestra.

Ogdon's typical repertory of chamber music and songs flourished again in the 1980s and is represented here by several works including his *Six Small Trios* (1981, revised 1982), the *Five Preludes* for violin and piano (1982), and his *Serenade No. 1* for wind quintet (1986/87). Ogdon's music of the 1990s on this recording includes *Two Capriccios* for piano (1991) and the *Variation Suite* (1995/96) for violin and viola.

The *Six Small Trios* was commissioned by the San Diego International Consort who gave the first performance in March of 1981. After a subsequent performance in Seattle, the instrumentation was revised, the marimba replacing the problematic xylophone. Two of the six pieces, "On the Beach at Castiglioni da Pescia" and "Aldo Moro Is Discovered in Rome" reflect the Ogdon family's sojourn in Italy in 1978. Faculty colleagues Jean-Charles François, Edwin Harkins, and Keith Humble first performed the revised version in 1983. The piece also appeared on a Parnassus concert at Merkin Hall in New York in 1991. Trumpeter Edwin Harkins is joined by percussionist David Shively and pianist Aleck Karis in this recording. An earlier performance by Harkins,

François, and Humble is presented as an appendix to remember Keith Humble, composer, conductor, and pianist who died in 1995.

The *Five Preludes* for violin and piano was written during the summer of 1982 with UCSD faculty colleague János Négyesy's sensitive musicianship in mind. As we read through them with János for technical and musical advice, the violinist offered to play them, which he did on March 9, 1983 with composer/pianist Keith Humble as accompanist. Two years later violinist Gregor Kitzis and Max Lifchitz presented the first New York performance on a North-South Consonance concert. Will himself accompanies János in this recording.

Ogdon occasionally composed pieces to use as models in composition courses he taught at UCSD. The *Two Capriccios* (1991) for piano illustrated Schoenberg's structural principles using the twelve-note row. An additional inspiration for the second piece was provided by pianist and faculty colleague Aleck Karis becoming a new father which was acknowledged by a rhythmic setting suggesting Aleck's supposed nocturnal walks.

Perhaps the Serenade No. 1 for wind quintet has been performed more often than any other of Ogdon's music. The La Jolla Wind Quintet and its successor, the Eolus Quintet, have played the piece a number of times in the 1980s and 1990s in various California cities. The Serenade is in three movements, the first with two contrasting themes. The second movement acts loosely like a theme and variations, the theme followed by an adagio, and then a scherzo and trio with the scherzo returning. A second theme then follows, marked arioso like the first, and the movement concludes with a hurrying finale featuring the horn. The third movement, inspired by the finale, is an allegro with repeating and returning-note motives that hurry along completed by a two-phrase codetta.

Three Baritone Songs

4

Percy Bysshe Shelley

To The Moon

Are thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth,
And every changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

5

Ben Jonson

Slow, Slow, Fresh Fount

Slow, slow, fresh fount,
Keep time with my salt tears;
Yet slower, yet, oh faintly gentle springs:
List to the heavy part the music bears,
Woe weeps out her division, when she sings.
Droop herbs, and flowers
Fall grief in showers;
Our beauties are not ours:
Oh, I could still

The latest composition in this retrospective survey is *Variation Suite* for violin and viola (1995/96), written for violist Päivikki Nykter and János Négyesy. The suite includes ten brief pieces beginning and ending with a contrapuntal open-structured prelude and postlude. The theme and its return (numbers 2 and 9) enclose six variations of contrasting tempi and character.

—Will Ogdon

When we set out to establish the departments of fine arts at UCSD, we took as our guiding principle that their first members, and especially their first chairs, should be essentially creators rather than commentators or historians. Thus for our visual arts department we engaged a distinguished painter from the flourishing New York scene. For our music department we chose a composer, Will Ogdon. We had been impressed by the elegance and clarity of his music, and by the way he showed during exploratory conversations how well he understood what we wanted and how strongly he approved of our beginning with vigorously active music-makers. That this was so was shown by his promptly enlisting composer Robert Erickson as his first colleague.

From the beginning, the department under Ogdon's leadership offered challenging instruction and programs—often to the disgruntlement of faculty members in other fields who had anticipated a department focused on the performances of familiar masterpieces from the concert hall repertory. But Will and his successors persisted, and today the department, which has grown to include stellar performers and scholars, is widely recognized as one of the most spirited and innovative to be found anywhere in the world.

We are proud to present this disc of Ogdon's music, in loving performances by his UCSD colleagues, as a tribute not only to his contributions to the department but as testimony to his accomplishments as a composer.

—John Stewart, Provost Emeritus,

John Muir College, UCSD

Like melting snow upon some craggy hill,

Drop, drop, drop, drop,

Since nature's pride is, now, a withered daffodil.

6

Henry Vaughan

O let me climb

O let me climb
When I lie down.
The pious soul by night
Is like a clouded star
Whose beams tho said
To shed their light
Under some dark cloud
Yet are above
And shine and move
Beyond that misty shroud.
So in my bed
That curtained grave, though
sleep like ashes hides by lamp,
And life I will Thee abide.

Two Kechwa Songs

7

That She May Not Find Dew

Vicuña of the hills, deer of the mountains,
tell me if the ungrateful dove passed by,
the dove who left her love.
tell me if she passed, the dove who forgot her love.
Vicuña of the hills, Taruka of the mountains
come see how my eyes are crying, crying
thus she left me with my heart wounded.
Oh that she may thirst upon
the road! that she may
not find frost on the haystacks,
that she may not find dew on the grasses,
that she may thirst upon the road
the dove who forgot her love!

8

How Sadly She Dreams

Her hair is her pillow
On her hair she is sleeping,
the child. She weeps drops of blood it is not tears,
her weeping, she weeps
drops of blood.
What is the girl dreaming?
How sadly she dreams!
Ay, who has hurt her,

who has so hurt her heart!
Síbale, Síbale, Síbale, pale little one.
How shall she awaken,
how shall she waken now?
Síbale, Síbale, pale little one.

12

D.H. Lawrence

River Roses

By the Isar in the twilight.
We were wandering and singing,
By the Isar in the evening,
We climbed the huntsman's ladder and sat swinging
In the fir-tree overlooking the marshes,
While river met with river, and the ringing
Of the pale green glacier waters filled the evening.
By the Isar in the evening
We found the dark wild roses;
Hanging red by the river; while simmering
Frogs were singing and over the river closes
Was savor of ice and of roses; and glimmering
Fear was abroad.
We whispered "No one knows us. No one knows us.
Let it be as the snake disposes
Here in this simmering marsh."

Production Notes

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