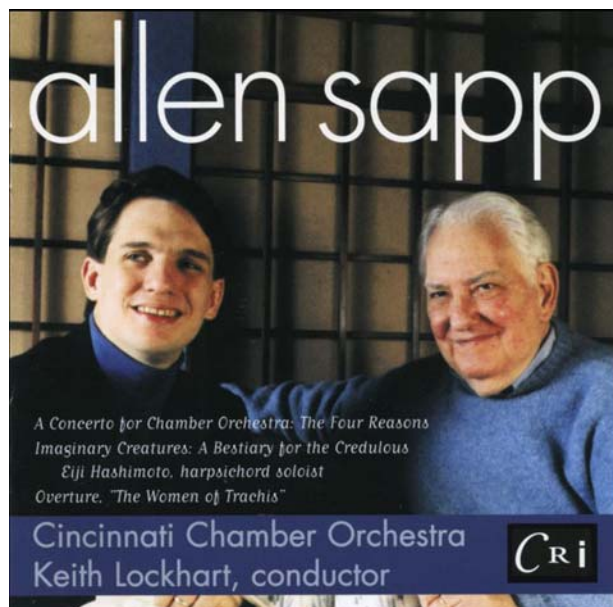


NWCR765

Allen Sapp

Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra

Keith Lockhart, conductor



A Concerto for Chamber Orchestra:

- The Four Reasons* (1994) (22:24)
1. A Classical Sonata-Allegro
 2. (Allegro molto) (7:13)
 3. A Theme and Variations (Fluently) (6:28)
 4. A Fugue (Larghetto) (6:10)
 5. A Rondo (Vivace) (2:33)

Imaginary Creatures: A Bestiary

- for the Credulous* (1981) (20:49) (20:49)
6. Halcyons (3:21)
 7. Basilisk (3:44)
 8. Unicorn (5:05)
 9. Phoenix (2:56)
 10. Centaurs (5:43)

Eiji Hashimoto, harpsichord soloist

11. Overture, *The Women of Trachis* (1960) (12:47)
- Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, Keith Lockhart,
conductor

Total playing time: 56:00

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Notes

This recording of three orchestral works by **Allen Sapp** arrives in celebration of the composer's seventy-fifth birthday on 10 December 1997. Sapp (born in 1922, Philadelphia) studied composition with Walter Piston and Irving Fine at Harvard, and upon graduation he studied privately with Aaron Copland and Nadia Boulanger on a John Knowles Paine Fellowship. During World War II Sapp served as a specialist in cryptanalysis, and following the war was appointed chief cryptanalyst and chief of code research of the Civil Censorship Division, European Theater. He returned to Harvard for graduate work in 1948, and served on the music faculty there from 1950 to 1958. Sapp lectured at the Salzburg Seminar in American Studies in 1954, and was Charles F. Walgreen visiting lecturer in American Studies at the University of Chicago in 1955.

After brief service on the faculty at Wellesley College (1958-61), Sapp was appointed chairman of the music department at the University of Buffalo (later, State University of New York at Buffalo) in 1961. Together with Lukas Foss, the music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Sapp founded the Center of the Creative and Performing Arts at SUNY-Buffalo in 1964, transforming Buffalo into one of the major centers for experimental music in the 1960s and 1970s. Among the musicians associated with the Center who proceeded to have notable professional careers were George Crumb, Richard Dufallo, Don Ellis, Vinko Globokar, Henri Posseur, Terry Riley, Frederic Rzewski, David Tudor, and Paul Zukofsky. Sapp later served in several other administrative positions at Buffalo, including head of the

Division of Languages, Literature and the Arts, and chairman of the Council of College Masters. He also held several important leadership positions in national arts organizations, most notably as executive director of the American Council for the Arts in Education (1972-74) and Project Arts/Worth (1971-74).

In 1975 he moved to Florida State University, where he accepted the positions of provost of the Division of Communication and the Arts and director of Cultural Affairs. In 1978 Sapp was appointed dean of the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He relinquished administrative responsibilities there in 1980 to assume a post as professor of composition, devoting his energies since then toward teaching and composition. Since 1980, after nearly two decades of relative inactivity in composing in the 1960s and 1970s (owing primarily to his intense administrative activity), Sapp has created more than sixty-five works, including two of the compositions on this recording (*Imaginary Creatures*, and *A Concerto for Chamber Orchestra*). In recognition of the quality of his recent compositions, Sapp was awarded the 1986 George Rieveschl Award for Distinguished Creative and Scholarly Works at the University of Cincinnati. Sapp's orchestral works have been performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, l'Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion Française, the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, the Boston Fine Arts Chamber Orchestra, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

A Concerto for Chamber Orchestra: *The Four Reasons* was commissioned by the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra to celebrate its twentieth anniversary. It was composed in 1993 and premiered by Keith Lockhart and the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra on March 20, 1994. With a title such as *The Four Reasons*, one might expect to find quotations from Vivaldi; instead we find the composer quoting himself, orchestrating music previously in the form of solo and chamber music. The first three movements are from Sapp's piano sonatas of the 1950s. The first movement is a setting of the first movement of the Piano Sonata III (1957); the second sets the third movement of Piano Sonata IV (1957); and the third is the opening movement of Piano Sonata II (1954-57). The finale is an orchestration of the fifth movement of Sapp's wind quintet *Polyhedra* (1992).

The subtitle *The Four Reasons* refers to four separate events in 1992 and 1993 leading the composer to write this retrospective work. 10 December 1992 marked Sapp's seventieth birthday. Spring 1993 was the date of his official retirement from the faculty at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. That summer was also the fiftieth anniversary of his marriage to pianist Norma Bertolami Sapp, making appropriate the composer's selection of three movements from piano sonatas frequently performed by his wife. Finally, the commission to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra was the fourth and most direct "reason" to compose this work. The tonal centers of the movements form the composer's initials: I = A, II = D, III = Eb ("Es" in German, a homophone for "s"), returning to A for movement IV. The work is sparsely orchestrated in order to focus attention on the soloists of the orchestra. The composer's familiarity with the members of the ensemble permitted him to fashion the orchestration with the strengths of the specific performers in mind.

Imaginary Creatures: A Bestiary for the Credulous is a virtuosic concerto for harpsichord and chamber orchestra. It was commissioned by the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra and premiered by harpsichordist Eiji Hashimoto (the soloist on this recording) and conductor Paul Nadler in 1982.

The five movements of *Imaginary Creatures* are titled after mythical beasts featured in the legends of Hellenistic and Roman times. The first movement "Halcyons" portrays the fabled birds, which were capable of charming the wind and waves in order to calm the seas. This is followed by the "Basilisk," a golden-crested serpent capable of turning any living thing to stone by its mere look or casting of its breath. The tranquil third movement is inspired by the "Unicorn," a white horse with a single spiral horn capable of purifying poisoned waters, and which could only be captured by a pure virgin. Next is "Phoenix," after the large bird of brilliant scarlet-and-gold plumage, which at the end of its long life would immolate itself, then miraculously emerge reborn from the ashes. The work concludes with "Centaur," depicting the wild mountain beasts which were half-human and half-horse, slaves of their animal passions and known for their drunken and amorous behavior.

Expanding the concept of hybrid forms, Sapp also experimented with fusing different types of harmonic languages in several movements. For example, in "Basilisk" Sapp presents the serpentine bass line of the second movement of Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5 (which was also performed the evening of the premiere of *Imaginary Creatures*) in the left hand of the harpsichord, while the right hand presents a dodecaphonic theme. The cello echoes the left hand of the harpsichord in canon at an interval of eleven eighth notes. The flute then takes up the dodecaphonic theme

of the right hand in transposed retrograde form with longer note values than the original presentation; the flute is echoed in canon by the violin at an interval of ten eighth-notes until the concluding measures. The "Unicorn" movement also presents starkly contrasting sonic textures, with the strings and harpsichord representing the purity of the Unicorn exclusively in "white notes" while the oboe solo plays a meandering dodecaphonic melody, interrupted by occasional striking interjections of complex chromatic block chords from the woodwinds.

The Women of Trachis Overture was commissioned and premiered by the Boston Fine Arts Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra in 1960. The choice of Sophocles's drama as the subject came from another commission to write incidental music for a production of *Trachiniae* at Wellesley College the following year. The play is centered on the death of Hercules. The drama opens with Deinara, his wife, bemoaning Hercules's long absence from home. She sends their son Hyllus for news of his father. Shortly thereafter, Lichas, the faithful companion of Hercules, arrives with the good word that Hercules is safe. Accompanying Lichas is a group of captives, including Iole, daughter of Eurytus, King of Oechalia. Deinara learns that Hercules became infatuated with Iole, and when Eurytus refused to give Iole for his concubine, Hercules killed Eurytus and destroyed Oechalia, sending Iole to live with his wife at their palace in Trachis. Deinara tries to regain Hercules's love through the use of a magic ointment made of the clotted blood of the centaur Nessus as he lay dying from an arrow of Hercules. Nessus told Deinara that any man wearing a garment rubbed with this ointment would love her forever. Deinara smears the ointment on a cloak and sends it with Lichas as a gift to Hercules. Hercules accepts the cloak, wears it, and is killed by a terrible poison in the ointment which slowly eats away his flesh. When Deinara hears of the poison in the ointment from her son Hyllus, she kills herself. Hercules, cursing his father Zeus, asks Hyllus to burn his body upon Zeus's sacred mountain Oeta, and to marry Iole. Hyllus grimly accepts his father's dying wishes, and curses the gods: "They bring forth children, they call themselves parents, and yet they can look on this anguish and pain."¹ The tragedy concludes with Hercules being carried to his funeral pyre by Hyllus and his companions.

The overture is in three sections, and follows the approximate form of the drama on which it is based. The lyrical opening section featuring a plaintive oboe solo evokes the spirit of Deinara's opening soliloquy, recalling her earliest memories of Hercules as he rescued her from Achelous, and lamenting his long absence from her. The agitated and pulsating middle section summons images of the lies and deception that lead to the agonizing deaths of Deinara and Hercules. The third section depicts the intensity of Hercules cursing Zeus, and closes with the more somber and chilling music depicting Hyllus's condemnation of the distant, cruel, and uncaring gods. A three-note motive pervades the entire work, including the opening and closing measures, perhaps representative of the love triangle at the root of this tragedy.

—Alan Green

Keith Lockhart is serving his sixth season as music director of the Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra, as the orchestra celebrates its twenty-fourth season. With his appointment in May of 1992, he became the Chamber Orchestra's third conductor.

Lockhart became the twentieth conductor of the famed Boston Pops Orchestra in 1995, succeeding Arthur Fiedler and John Williams. In his first three seasons, he has conducted over 150

concerts, taped fifteen television programs for the PBS's series "Evening at Pops" and the A & E network, and led the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra on four national tours and a 1997 tour of Japan and Korea. In addition, he has recorded four albums with the Pops on the RCA Victor label (*Runnin' Wild*, *American Visions*, *The Celtic Album*, and a Christmas album to be released in the fall of 1998).

In the summer of 1997, Mr. Lockhart debuted with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra to great acclaim for an audience of more than 80,000 in New York City's Central Park. His numerous conducting engagements have included performances with the Montreal Symphony, Utah Symphony, Colorado Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, National Arts Center Orchestra of Canada, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Toronto Symphony, Indianapolis Symphony, and many others. He recently made his debut with the Washington Opera in Washington D.C. conducting Douglas Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Upcoming engagements include debuts with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas symphony, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

A native of Poughkeepsie, New York, Mr. Lockhart currently resides in Boston with his wife, violinist Lucia Lin.

Harpsichordist **Eiji Hashimoto** has been acclaimed by critics around the world: "It was an encounter with a great artist" (Berlin, *Der Tagesspiegel*); "A great harpsichordist" (*Luxembourg Wort*); "An exceptional harpsichordist, almost in a class by himself: (Santiago, Chile, *La Segunda*); "An artist in an unshakable domain of his own: (Tokyo, *The Mainichi Shimibun*); "The evening was a triumph for harpsichordist Eiji Hashimoto" (*The Washington Post*).

A native of Tokyo, professor Hashimoto graduated from the Tokyo University of Fine Arts and Music and received master's degrees from the University of Chicago and Yale University. He has taught at the Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo, and is a professor of harpsichord and harpsichordist-in-residence at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music.

The **Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra** performs a wide range of music from the Baroque through twentieth century. Under the direction of music director Keith Lockhart, the CCO consistently performs to sold-out houses and receives rave reviews. The Chamber Orchestra recently has expanded its subscription series to twelve concerts a year from September through May. Special features of the CCO include Pre-Concert Conversations which are informal introductions to featured concert programs, and Small Talk which is an educational series for children featuring musicians from the orchestra demonstrating their instruments and talking about the performance. In addition to the regular season, the CCO presents special educational programs.

The Cincinnati Chamber Orchestra made its New York City debut in February 1997 in Town Hall. The orchestra also has recorded *New Energy from the Americas*, featuring works by Eduardo Alonso-Crespo and Nancy Galbraith on the Ocean Records label.

¹ Sophocles; Robert Torrence, trans., *The Women of Trachis and Philoctetes*. (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1966), p.42

Production Notes

Producer: Carol Nies

Executive Producer: Alan Green

Recorded by Corbett Studies, WGUC, Cincinnati. John Burgess, recording engineer.

Digital mastering by John Burgess, at Sound Foundry Productions, Cincinnati.

All works recorded at Emery Theater, Cincinnati.

Piano provided Courtesy of Baldwin Piano & Organ Company.

Louis Proske, piano technician

Eric L. Wolfley, harpsichord technician.

Imaginary Creatures Published by Margun Music (BMI). Recorded on 1 October and 4 November 1996.

Overture, *The Women of Trachis* published by American Composers Alliance (BMI).

A Concerto for Chamber Orchestra: *The Four Reasons* published by American Composers Alliance (BMI). Recorded on 4 November 1996.

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