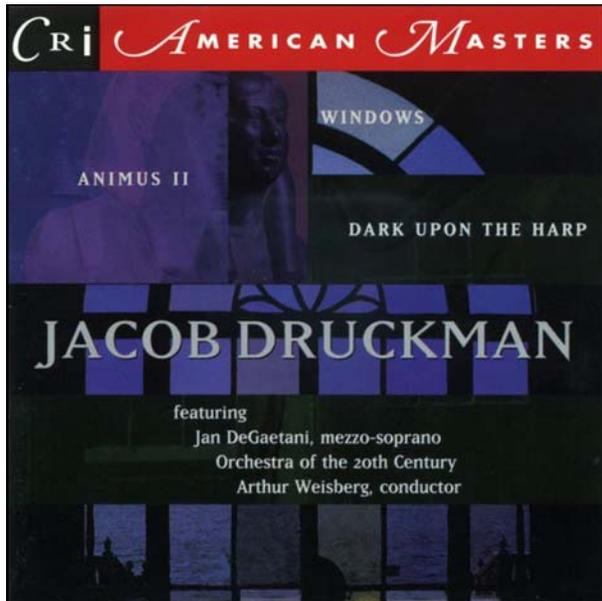


NWCR781

Jacob Druckman

Windows / Dark Upon the Harp / Animus II



1. *Windows* for orchestra (1972) (21:13)
Orchestra of the Twentieth Century; Arthur Weisberg, conductor

- Dark Upon The Harp* for mezzo-soprano, brass quintet and percussion (1961–62) (21:58)
2. Psalm XXII 12-17, 20 (1:55)
 3. Psalm LVIII 4-9 (4:35)
 4. Psalm XVIII 4-9 (4:09)
 5. Psalm XXX 12, 13 (3:14)
 6. Psalm CXXXIII (4:05)
 7. Psalm XVI 6-8 (4:01)
- Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Gerald Carlyss, percussion; Robert Ayers, percussion; New York Brass Quintet: Robert Nagel, trumpet; Fred Mills, trumpet; Ralph Froelich, horn; David Uber, trombone; Harvey Phillips, tuba
8. *Animus II* for mezzo-soprano, percussion, and electric tape (1967–68) (20:07)
(Electronic tape realized at the Columbia-Princeton Center for Electronic Music.) Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano; Richard Fitz, percussion; Gordon Gottlieb, percussion

Total playing time: 63:29

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Notes

During the last twenty years of his life, **Jacob Druckman** (1928–1996) was principal architect of the New Romanticism in American music. Disenchanted with serial procedures, which he regarded as unnecessarily restrictive, Druckman began in the mid 1960s to veer from the academic music establishment. He composed a series of works uncommonly sensuous and dramatic for their time, relying on electronic media and on the symphony orchestra for their seemingly limitless sonic possibilities. In the 1970s he added to his repertory by drawing from the treasure chest of music history a wide variety of tonal forms and practices. As the New York Philharmonic’s composer-in-residence (1982–86) and as artistic director of its Horizons festivals in 1983, 1984, and 1986, he brought the idea of a New Romanticism to a wide audience.

Paradoxically, Druckman’s own music is too complex and individual to fit comfortably within the movement he helped to create. Because he never embraced dodecaphony wholeheartedly—the only thoroughly serial piece in his catalogue is the Second String Quartet (1966)—his work from the mid 1960s onward marked a change in direction rather than an about-face. This is in contrast to two other prominent neoromantic composers, George Rochberg (*b* 1918) and David Del Tredici (*b* 1937), whose changes in style from serial to tonal were more dramatic, even abrupt, because they were tied to particular works—Rochberg with his Third String Quartet (1972) and Del Tredici with his *Alice in Wonderland* works, especially *Final Alice* (1976).

Druckman never became a tonal composer; instead, he used tonality as a shock to the musical system. His method was to mix his own atonal realms in a single piece. But Druckman

often organized the interactions between tonal and atonal musical language with adulterated bits of materials quoted or borrowed from the past. Other composers employed similar methods as part of a post-modern aesthetic, navigating smoothly between tonal and atonal realms in a single piece. But Druckman often organized the interactions between tonal and atonal elements in his music as a succession of theatrically violent clashes. The interaction is always highly controlled, with quoted material never emerging triumphant. He sought to refract the panoply of music history through the present, not to return to the past.

Since the early 1970s Druckman mined the repertory, both familiar and obscure: *Sirènes* of Debussy for *Mirage* (1976), Chabrier and Liszt art songs for *Animus IV* (1977), and the central tune from Leonard Bernstein’s Symphony No. 3, “Kaddish,” for *Aureole* (1979). Borrowings from the opera *Il Giasone* (1649) by Francesco Cavalli found expression in *Delizie contente che l’alme beate* (after Francesco Cavalli) (1973) for woodwind quintet and electronic tape, and in *Lamia* (1975) for soprano and orchestra. In the three-movement orchestral work *Prism* (1980), the apotheosis of this approach, he returned to the Cavalli and explored two other operas based on the legend of Medea and Jason, those by Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1694) and Luigi Cherubini (1797).

Windows (1972) was the composer’s first mature work for full orchestra. While devoid of actual quotation, it exhibited this mixture of tonal and atonal elements. The composer wrote:

“The ‘Windows’ of the title are windows inward. They are points of light which appear as the thick orchestral textures part, allowing us to hear, fleetingly, moments out of time—memories, not of any music that ever existed before, but

memories of memories, shadows of ghosts. The imagery is as though, having looked at an unpeopled wall of windows, one looks away and senses the afterimage of a face.”

Windows was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Foundation and composed for performances of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer’s friend, Bruno Maderna. It was awarded the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for Music. Throughout the work, Druckman combined with his own style both aleatoric procedures and music imitative of late Debussy, in particular the orchestral ballet *Jeux* (1912–13). Aware that the Chicago Symphony Orchestra programs would pair *Windows* with that Debussy score, Druckman treated his commission in part as an homage to the Impressionist master. But the work was inspired by another source also, as the composer explained:

“*Windows* was strongly shaped by the circumstances surrounding its composition and, primarily, by the personality of the late Bruno Maderna who requested the work and conducted the first performances. Bruno’s musicality was a fascinating combination of intense Italianate Romanticism and the sporting nature of a gambler. For him, ‘aleatory’ was simply part of the adventure of Romanticism.”

In many of his pieces Druckman took stock of the performer’s personality, particularly when a soloist was involved. In the Viola Concerto (1978), for instance, the composer directs the violist to inject his own character into the solo part, so as to compete with “the terrible power of the full orchestra.”

Before the run of orchestra pieces that begins with *Windows*, the composer pitted the individual against the terrible power of electronic media. In 1965 Druckman began a fruitful association with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. There he began a series of four works entitled “Animus.” In *Animus I* (1966) for trombone and electronic tape and in *Animus III* (1970) for clarinet and tape, the live soloist jockeys with recorded sound for the attention of the audience. The power of the electronic tape drives the trombonist off stage in *Animus I*, but with new resolve the player returns to complete the piece and show up the tape. In *Animus III* the tape wins the competition and drives the clarinet soloist to the brink of insanity. The other pieces in the series have instrumental forces intervening between a vocal soloist and the tape: two percussionists in *Animus II* (1967–68) and a mixed ensemble in *Animus IV* (1977). In these works a sexually suggestive chase and the adventures of a *bon vivant*, respectively, are enacted. The electronic tapes for all four “Animus” works are concoctions of freely mixed synthesized sounds and *musique concrète*—music made from real sounds and noises. In each piece the *concrète* sounds involved recordings, altered or not, of the soloist.

The results were exciting, but hardly reflected a purist’s approach to the electronic medium. Mario Davidovsky, working at the Columbia-Princeton studio at the same time, created a series of more orthodox works, *Synchronisms*, true dialogues for live performer and tape, which ignored the visual and potentially theatrical simultaneous presence on stage of human beings and mixers with loudspeakers. In contrast, these theatrical elements were Jacob Druckman’s springboard for the *Animus* pieces.

In his program note for *Animus II* the composer discusses the series in general and reveals his sympathy for the live performer:

“Each of the works is involved with the actual presence of the performers theatrically as well as musically. Each work limits its focus to a particular area of human affections as well as a limited body of musical materials, (histrionic ‘themes’ as well as musical ‘themes’). Each work presumes that the theatrical and musical elements are inseparable; that the ideal

performance of the music already embodies the performance of the drama.”

“*Animus II* deals with the sensuality of ensemble playing within the rite of the concert. There are five groups of instruments distributed in the concert hall; three on the stage and two in the audience. The performers enter through the audience with the first tape sounds in a slow processional. Throughout the work they move between the groups of instruments. The epilogue is a ceremonial exit.

“The performance of the work is a celebration of a sybaritic ritual. The tape underlies this as a mirror, memory, inner voice, Greek chorus, catalyst; it is the framework upon which the pageant is played. The sound sources of the tape are real (concrete) and electronic. The concrete sources are entirely vocal [the voice of mezzo-soprano Barbara Martin], the electronic mainly synthesized with the aid of voltage-controlled devices. The finished tape presents a continuous interplay between real and electronic sounds, but the differences between the two are basic. A simple superimposed rhythm (such as four against five) can be charged with energy and excitement when played by people, but the same rhythm played by a machine presents only the decorative symmetries of a moiré pattern. Therefore, for me, the real, the animal, is fundamental; the electronic is the ornamental with which the animal is adorned and through which the animal is mirrored and amplified.

“*Animus II* was composed in 1967–68. The tape was realized at the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. The world premiere was by the Domaine Musical at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris, February 2, 1970, and the American premiere by the present performers at Columbia University, May 6, 1970.”

Much of Druckman’s inspiration for writing *Animus II* came from his collaboration with the glorious mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani, who had already performed *Dark Upon the Harp* (1961–62) many times. The wordless drama of *Animus II* is a far cry stylistically from the earlier piece, which is relatively traditional in its syllabic setting of six Psalms of David. But *Dark Upon the Harp* prefigures much of Druckman’s subsequent output, concerned as it is with the dramatic opposition of solo voice and instrumental ensemble of brass quintet and two percussionists. “The first section,” the composer writes, “establishes the contrast between the fragmentary instrumental writing and the comparatively extended lyricism of the vocal lines, which gradually progress to a more homogeneous texture during the progress of the entire work.” The gradual rapprochement between voice and instruments reflects the order and choice of texts, which move from fear and trembling to the security of the last lines: “Surely He is at my right hand; I shall not be moved.”

In a program note the composer described the music’s genesis:

“Milton Feist, the publisher of Mercury Music, commissioned me to write a work in memory of his publisher father, Leo Feist. He said the work could be for any medium I chose, but his only request was that it should somehow include the line in the Sixteenth Psalm: ‘He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.’ This line is preceded by lines that say, in effect, ‘I am happy with my lot,’ and this, chosen by Milton Feist, who was crippled and dwarfed from birth!

“The texts of *Dark Upon the Harp* were selected by working backwards from Psalm Sixteen, seeking a dramatic shape that would move through struggle to resolution and peace. All of the Psalms chosen are attributed to King David, the title coming from a line in the Forty-Ninth Psalm which reads: ‘I will open my dark saying upon the harp.’”

—Harold Meltzer

2. Psalm XXII, 12–17, 20
 Be not far from me, for the trouble is near.
 Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
 They open wide their mouths against me like a ravening and a roaring lion.
 I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint and my heart is become like wax;
 it is melted in mine inmost parts.
 And my tongue cleaveth to my throat; and thou layest me in the dust of death.
 For dogs have encompassed me; a company of evil doers has enclosed me;
 like a lion they are at my hands and my feet.
 But thou O Lord be not far off.

3. Psalm LVIII, 4–9
 The wicked are estranged from the womb: the speakers of lies go
 astray as soon as they are born.
 Their venom is like the venom of a serpent: they are like
 the deaf asp that stoppeth her ear; which harketh not to
 the voice of charmers, or the most cunning binder of spells.
 Break their teeth, O God, in their mouth; break out the cheek teeth
 of the young lions.
 Let them melt away as water which runneth apace.
 Let them be as a snail which melteth and passeth away, like
 the untimely births of a woman that have not seen the sun.

4. Psalm XVIII, 4–9
 I cry praised is the Lord, and I am saved from mine enemies.
 The cords of death encompassed me, and the floods of Belial assailed me.
 In my distress I called upon the Lord, and cried unto my God:
 Out of his temple He heard my voice, and my cry came before Him, unto His ears.
 Then the earth did shake and quake.
 Smoke arose in His nostrils, and fire out of His mouth did devour;
 coals flamed forth from Him.
 And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly.
 Yea He did swoop down on the wings of the wind.
 And the Lord thundered in the heavens,
 And the most high gave forth His voice: Hailstones and coals of fire.
 And he shot forth lightnings, and he discomfited them.
 And the channels of waters appeared.
 And the foundations of the earth were laid bare at Thy rebuke,
 O Lord,
 At the blast of the breath of Thy nostrils.

5. Psalm XXX, 12, 13
 Thou didst turn for me my mourning into dancing.
 Thou didst loose my sackcloth and gird me with gladness,
 So that my glory may sing to Thee, and not be silent.
 O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto Thee forever.
 Thou didst turn for me in my mourning into dancing.

6. Psalm CXXXIII
 Behold how good and how pleasant for brethren to dwell together
 in unity.
 It is like the precious oil upon the head coming down upon the beard,
 even Aaron's beard:
 That cometh down on the collar of his garment;
 Like the dews of Hermon,
 That cometh down on the mountains of Zion:
 For there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life forever.

7. Psalm XVI, 6–8
 The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places.
 Yea I have a goodly heritage.
 I will praise the Lord, who have given me council.
 Yea in the night seasons my reins instruct me.
 Surely He is at my right hand;
 I shall not be moved.

Production Notes

Digitally remastered by Joseph R. Dalton and Bob Wolff, engineer at Sony Music Studios, NYC.

From CRI SD 457:

Windows: Recorded by David Hancock at Whitman Auditorium, Brooklyn College, April 22 and 23, 1981.

Produced by Carter Harman. Associate producer: Carolyn Sachs

From CRI SD 167:

Dark Upon The Harp: Produced by Carter Harman. Originally released in 1963.

From CRI SD 255:

Animus II: Produced by Carter Harman

CRI American Masters

Executive Producer: Joseph R. Dalton

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