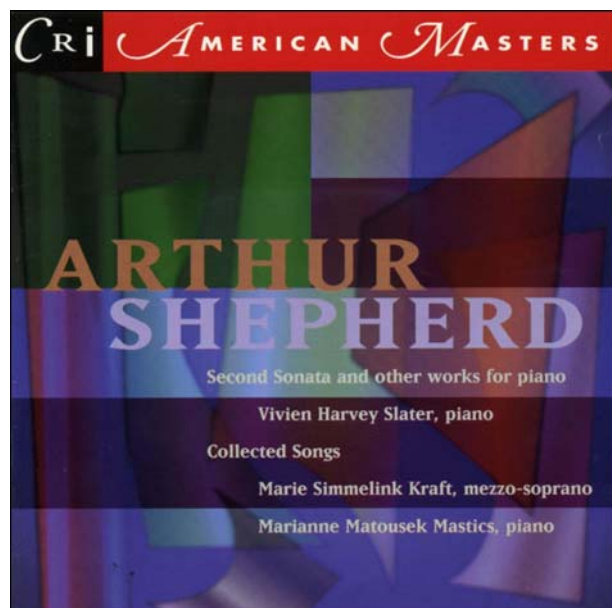


Arthur Shepherd



Sonata No. 2 for piano (1930)	(17:16)
1. I. Moderato, ma decisamente	(4:26)
2. II. Moderato cantabile, ma semplice	(8:20)
3. III. Enfatico ed affrettato—Toccata: Vivacissimo	(4:29)
4. Capriccio II (1941)	(5:46)
5. Lento Amabile (1938)	(2:20)

6. In Modo Ostinato (1945)	(1:42)
7. Exotic Dance No. 1 (1928)	(2:31)
8. Exotic Dance No. 3 (1941, rev. 1945)	(2:32)
9. Eclogue No. 4	(3:03)
10. Gigue Fantasque (1931, rev. 1945)	(3:46)
Vivien Harvey Slater, piano	

Collected Songs:

11. The Starting Lake (1944)	(4:36)
12. The Fiddlers (1931)	(2:27)
13. The Gentle Lady (1916)	(2:51)
14. The Lost Child (1909)	(3:45)
15. Sunday up the River (1912)	(2:14)
16. Golden Stockings (1937)	(2:23)
17. In the Scented Bud of the Morning (1941)	(1:55)
18. Morning Glory (1951)	(2:40)
19. To a Trout (1941)	(2:37)
20. The Charm (1943)	(2:29)
21. Bacchus (1932)	(2:28)
22. Where Loveliness Keeps House (1931)	(3:39)
Marie Simmelink Kraft, mezzo-soprano; Marianne Matousek Mastics, piano	

Total playing time: 73:28

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Notes

Arthur Shepherd (1880–1958) was one of the most notable American creative artists of the generation that built a solid bridge between the music of composers active at the turn of the century (MacDowell, Loeffler, Chadwick, Parker, Foote, Griffes, et al., with Ives, of course, a special phenomenon), and those now considered the founders of modern American music (Piston, Harris, Copland, et al.). Like the music of his own contemporaries, Converse, Carpenter, Farwell, Gilbert, and so on, the lifework of Arthur Shepherd is now regarded as an important contribution to the mainstream of American art. His extensive catalogue of music in many forms has been performed internationally by leading orchestras and soloists; it is distinguished by exceptionally solid workmanship, a striking individuality of sound and content, and a communication which has been called “genuinely aristocratic”. Perhaps Shepherd’s most famous work is his first symphony, *Horizons*, of 1927, which has been performed world-wide. His long career as composer, teacher, conductor, pianist, critic, and counselor of countless younger artists, was, in the words of William S. Newman, “marked by a quiet steadfastness of purpose, not by spectacular adventures.”

Born in Paris, Idaho, on February 19, 1880, of parents who were English converts to Mormonism, Shepherd studied at the New England Conservatory, later teaching there and in Salt Lake City. He gained national prominence as a composer and conductor while still in his twenties. In 1920 he settled in Cleveland, and until 1926 was the first assistant conductor of

the Cleveland Orchestra, and until 1930 its erudite program-annotator. For a time he was also music critic of *The Cleveland Press*. Between 1930 and 1950 he taught at Western Reserve University, serving as chairman of its music department from 1933 to 1948. After his retirement he lectured at the Longy School, in Cambridge, Mass., and at the University of Utah. He died in Cleveland on January 12, 1958.

“Shepherd combines the austerity and constancy of the New Englander and the Mormon, with a Yankee candor and vigor,” writes Dr. Newman. “There is simply no affectation in him, whether it be of speech or manners. All of which points to an artist of high, unswerving ideals, that have provided very salutary and elevating standards for his colleagues and students.” Growing acquaintance with his output suggests that the usual stylistic classifications, such as “traditionalist” or “modernist”, fade in importance as one recognizes his substance as genuinely contemporary— that is to say, of his time, and of his own making.

Sonata No. 2 for piano (1930)

In an extensive study of Arthur Shepherd’s life and work, published in the *Musical Quarterly* (April, 1950), William S. Newman, who studied and worked with Shepherd at Western Reserve University, provides a valuable commentary on the *Second Sonata*: “[It] is certainly one of Shepherd’s most successful works, and stands very high among American piano sonatas. The work is dramatic, concise, extremely effective in performance, and without weak spots from begin-

ning to end. If, as he says, he has always found writing for the piano “a tough problem”, it is not because his considerable experience as a pianist has failed him but because he so often conceives large pointed sonorities and rich active textures. Yet the writing, although it seldom achieves a Mendelssohnian fluency, usually comes off surprisingly well in performance in spite of its frequently unpianistic look. The incisive opening of the sonata, with its lowered second and raised fourth, is clue enough to the identity of the composer... The first movement is epigrammatic. Its development is scarcely more than a re-transition. By his characteristic method of hovering about a single tone in each important structural division, the composer projects a very direct and clear tonal scheme that sharply defines the form.”

Newman describes the theme of the variations in the middle movement as “wonderfully simple and expressive”, and finds the entire movement “a sort of précis of Shepherd’s style... It contains a remarkable three-voice canon (Variation I), a fleet passage in double octaves (Var. II), a bold outpouring of strong harmonies and imitations (Var. III), a driving, modally flavored gigue (Var. IV), a final sweeping line that culminates in a thrilling climax.” Yet the close of this noble music is quiet and reflective.

“Introduced by retrospective allusions to the previous two movements,” Newman concludes, “the finale is an impressive toccata impelled by a successful use of mixed meters in the crisp main theme.” Perhaps surprisingly, the composer who is most vividly recalled by the remarkable mixture of lyricism and sardonic sharpness is Prokofiev. While other meters are also employed, the rhythmic freedom of alternating 3/8 and 4/8 measures for the body of the movement gives the music a quite extraordinary impetus without the effect of motoric regularity.

Capriccio II (1941)

Except for a certain quality of willfulness, even stubbornness, the term *Capriccio* should not here be taken to mean capriciousness. This is a large-scaled, virtuosic composition, more complex in organization than appears on the surface. The more songful material of the middle section, marked *Meno mosso e ben cantando*, is soon displaced by more brilliant figurations, and the quiet return to the opening material is aptly designated as somewhat “sinistro”. The ending is grandiose. *Capriccio II* is dedicated to pianist Vivien Harvey Slater.

Lento Amabile (1938)

The tonality of this piece is so elusive, the harmony so chromatic, that the composer provided no key signature. In fact, the opening melody approaches the shape of a Schoenbergian twelve-tone row, not, to be sure, carried through in strict adherence to the method.

In Modo Ostinato (1945)

In Modo Ostinato, in which a noncommittal, almost jaunty, phrase recurs “obstinately” and imperturbably, begins as if it were an etude. The 7/4 meter lends it a constant sense of fluidity, and the ending, in which the home key of G is superimposed on that of C, shows the composer’s skill in dealing with a device made “classic” by Stravinsky.

Exotic Dance No. 1 (1928)

Despite its title, *Exotic Dance No. 1* contains no fake orientalism; only a subtle use of augmented intervals, in a scale probably invented by Shepherd. In the close, the tonality gravitates between the major and minor modes of B. In 1930, the composer used the theme of this piece for his *Choreographic Suite*, performed under his direction by the

Cleveland Orchestra in October of 1931. In the program note, he remarked that his composition of 1928 “from the very beginning evoked for me certain orchestral sonorities and secondarily a sort of choreographic characterization. During a visit to London in the summer of the same year, I went repeatedly to performances of the Russian ballet... My little exotic tune seemed to take color from this experience and was soon to set forth on its orchestral adventures.”

Exotic Dance No. 3 (1941, rev. 1954)

Exotic Dance No. 3 is one of the composer’s elusive pieces - almost a sketch, an improvisation, and with the magic of spontaneity, almost French in spirit.

Eclogue No. 4 (1948)

An eclogue is defined as a pastoral poem or, more charmingly for this instance, as a conversation between two shepherds. Like the middle movement of the *Second Sonata*, *Eclogue No. 4* shows the composer’s masterly command of traditional harmony untraditionally employed. One thinks at times of Prokofiev’s skill in turning a conventional thought, by a certain turn of harmony, into a jewel. A more agitated middle section in distinct keys, with the 4/4 time converted into a kind of 12/8, gives us figurations which continue as the main theme returns. The ending utilizes the sustaining power of the piano, at the triple-pianissimo level, for a fine harmonic solution.

Gigue Fantasque (1931, rev. 1945)

The ancient dance known as the gigue or jig is here revitalized through virtuosic treatment and many a fantastic excursion. On the one hand, the composer insists in a note that “due adherence to the metronome indication (eighth-note=144) is important”, and that “a strict tempo must be maintained throughout”; and on the other, he warns that “this piece is not an “etude” for development of *fingerfertigkeit* [finger agility].”

—Klaus G. Roy

Vivien Harvey Slater is one of the leading pianists in upstate New York. Born in Toronto, Ontario, she is a graduate of the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music. There, and in Cleveland, she studied with Severin Eisenberger, and appeared as soloist with the Cleveland Orchestra under Erich Leinsdorf’s direction. She has since given recitals and made concerto appearances in many cities, including New York (Town Hall recital and New York Philharmonic summer concert), and has toured several times in Europe with exceptional success. Her compositions have been performed by the Rochester Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and others; many of her piano pieces are published, and widely used in teaching and recital. For over twenty years she has been on the faculty of Colgate University, Hamilton, New York, where her husband, Joseph Slater, was head of the English department; she teaches privately as well as at Colgate, and is active in the musical life of the area as soloist, accompanist, and composer. While living in Cleveland, Mrs. Slater studied Arthur Shepherd’s music with him, and in the mid-1950s made the tapes of the present selection of his piano music with his counsel and approval. She has continued to champion his music in numerous recitals since. This recording remains the most substantial documentation of Shepherd’s music for the keyboard.

The pianist writes about her relationship, both personal and artistic, to the composer: “My friendship with Arthur Shepherd extended over a period of eleven or twelve years. It was in his classes in composition at Western Reserve University that I first came to know him. He was extremely articulate and would sometimes spend the greater part of a class trying to find concrete reasons why a certain passage under discus-

sion failed to “come off”. All his students felt the depth of his musicianship and the penetration of his mind.”

“Many years later, when I was preparing the works which are to be heard on this record, he spent three days at my house so that we could go closely over everything before the final taping. It was a rare weekend, with hours of musical give-and-take. I would play a passage for him; we would argue; he would play it back at me. He was very meticulous about tempos, and I remember that he told me he tried everything with the metronome to mark the exact speed he intended. He was also very intolerant of over-pedaling, though he did not mark normal pedaling in the scores.

“We disputed a good deal over the use of the sostenuto pedal, a feature which fascinated him. He wanted it to be used in the variation in the second movement of the sonata. I had had some disappointing experiences with faulty sostenuto pedals and was reluctant to trust them, for the variation requires some rapid pedaling. He finally decided to let the sostenuto

pedal-mark stand but agreed that my use of the damper pedal was perfectly satisfactory to him. We talked, too, about phrasing and retards at the end of phrases. He wanted a sparing use of the retard except where he had marked it, for he felt that otherwise the music would be weakened and sound sentimental. How right he was! - for the music, though highly lyrical, has a pleasing astringency to the melodic line and the very individual harmony, developing as it does from a complex contrapuntal texture, is pungent and never over-sweet. I find these qualities particularly in the opening theme of the second movement of the sonata and the lovely and haunting *Lento Amabile*.

“All of Arthur Shepherd’s piano music is thoroughly satisfying to the performer, both physically and intellectually. I am perhaps too close to it and to him to attempt a judgment of it, but I find it —after many, many playings—fresh and rich and deeply moving. Most of all, I hope that I have played it as he wanted it played.”

Production Notes

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

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Publishing: *Capriccio*: Ricordi (Belwin-Mills); *Lento Amabile*: Presser; *In Modo Ostinato*, *Eclogue*, *Gigue*: Presser; *Exotic Dance No. 1*: Oxford; *Exotic Dance No. 3*: Carl Fischer (ASCAP).

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