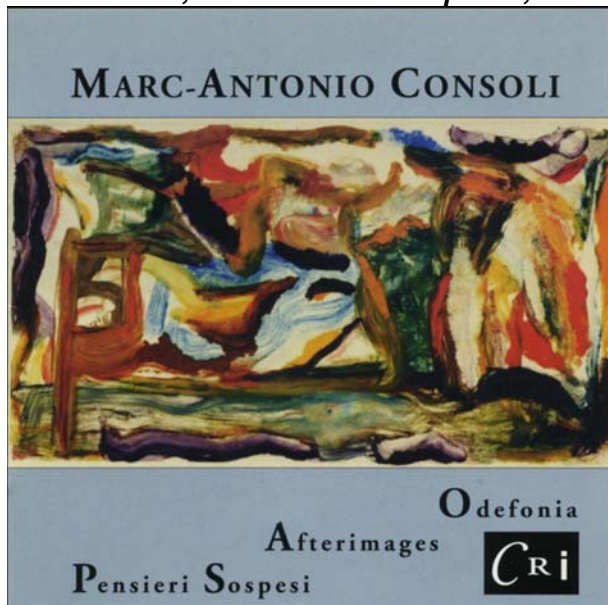


NWCR789

Marc-Antonio Consoli

Odefonia, Pensieri Sospesi, Afterimages



<i>Odefonia</i> (1976)	(23:51)
1. I	(10:49)
2. II	(6:24)

3. III	(6:37)
American Composers Orchestra; Gunther Schuller, conductor	

<i>Pensieri Sospesi</i> (1997)	(20:12)
4. I	(5:48)
5. II	(7:49)
6. III	(6:32)
Onix Nuevo Ensemble de México: Alejandro Escuer, flute; Baltazar Chavarría, clarinet; Julia Dinershtein, violin; Omar Hernández-Hidalgo, viola; Marta Fontes, cello; Mauricio Náder, piano; Carlos Miguel Prieto, conductor	

<i>Afterimages</i> (1982)	(22:35)
7. I October Lights Refrain	(7:35)
8. II Elegiac Lullaby	(7:42)
9. III Dream at the End of Joy Tract Road	(7:17)
The Louisville Orchestra; Lawrence Leighton Smith, conductor	

Total playing time: 66:53

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Notes

Odefonia

Consoli is a virtuoso of orchestral sounds, and *Odefonia* could be described as a virtuoso concerto for orchestra. Though the title means “symphonic poem” the work is in three movements, with each movement structurally related to the classic concerto. Thus, the architecture rests on the sonorities and instrumental combinations, rather than on classical “themes.” Consoli often layers the groups, sometimes having one layer disintegrate as another emerges from the background.

After a raucous opening outburst from wind, brass and percussion instruments, four solo cellos and two basses begin to sing out softly, in sustained calm, lines marked “Lux Aeterna,” a quotation from Consoli’s choral work of that title. This begins a long crescendo, rising two octaves, while the winds, brass and percussion whisper fragments of the opening material, until another raucous outburst is reached. The strings soar in unison, as the wind and brass introduce seven chords punctuating this climactic passage. The two ideas unite and transform in a thoroughly organic way throughout the movement, ending with the seven chords loudly crying out.

The second movement has a similar contrast of instrumental choirs against one another. It is a slow and tranquil setting, but with an underlying tension, which prepares for the third movement that follows without pause. Parts of the *arco* (string) passages in this movement are quotations from Italian folk songs. The third movement has a highly dramatic and explosive chord-idea that appears as a kind of *ritornello*, used throughout to separate contrasting sections. The movement’s rhythmic and harmonic tension builds to an explosive end with the seven chords heard in the first movement.

Pensieri Sospesi was written for the ONIX Nuevo Ensemble de Mexico. The title (“suspended thoughts”) refers to images from the composer’s youth, rich images which were frozen or suspended in his memory bank. Ideas and emotions become activated, in part, through his incorporation of Sicilian folk songs into his compositions. These act as bridges for the composer to travel back to suspended time, and to reconnect with his past.

The first movement of *Pensieri Sospesi* contains a four-note motive, which is derived from the tune of a nursery rhyme the composer sang as a child. This fragment is spun off across the movement in numerous combinations, manipulations, and extensions of itself, until, at the close, the movement balloons and explodes. While the second movement is free of actual folk music, it is not free from the composer’s own brand of folk elements, which permeate it throughout. The third movement, like the first, makes use of a short quotation from an actual folk-song. As earlier, this fragment is tossed about until it reaches saturation point, culminating in an all-out coda. The outer movements have more than folk materials in common: they share a rhythmic idea, mostly carried out by the piano, and these rhythmic motives, together with the role of the piano, act as a unifying structural factor in both movements.

Afterimages was written to a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation at the Library of Congress, and was premiered by the New York Philharmonic in June 1983. The work was begun in the early part of 1982 and completed that summer at the MacDowell Colony, New Hampshire.

The titles of the three movements have passionate and romantic overtones related to the composer’s personal life

during the period of composition. *October Lights Refrain* is a moody movement that alternates between quiet, introspective sections, and aggressive, angry ones. The title grew out of an observation noted by the composer one night, as the moon's light upon a tree cast a shadow through his bedroom window onto the floor. The interplay between the light and darkness gave rise to the music's moods.

Elegiac Lullaby mourns not the passing of life, but dashed hopes for a new one. It begins with pitch-bending, and short glissandi, in the winds and brass. Next we hear soft harmonic clusters in the strings, slowly swirling around, while glittering sounds of bells and other metal instruments join in, accompanying French horns in the distance quoting from a Bellini song. It is atmospheric and lullaby-like. The music changes to an aggressive, angry, tone before returning to the lullaby. A central segment follows leading to the aggressive part again, which in turn builds to a climax as the orchestra, triple-fortissimo and in unison, briefly outlines the Bellini song. The movement ends quietly and on an elegiac note.

In the third and last movement, *Dream at the End of Joy Tract Road*, the composer takes the anger and pathos of the previous two movements and turns them into a positive, joyful, song. Two simple melodic lines, which appear together throughout the movement, interlock, in question and answer, to make up the basic materials for the movement.

Marc-Antonio Consoli was born in Italy and came to the United States when he was fifteen. Music was an integral part of his family: his paternal grandfather had been a respected local amateur musician and organist at one of the town's three churches, with his ten children as the choir. Consoli began his formal music studies in his early twenties, and went on to earn his doctor of musical arts from Yale University. While at Yale he founded, coached, and conducted the Yale Players for New Music. That ensemble performed a wide variety of twentieth-century works, a formative experience which helped mold and shape Consoli's early creative years. From the start, Consoli sought a clear personal musical style. Following the obligatory serial phase, he spent two years in Poland, on a Fulbright Fellowship, absorbing what the Polish musical scene had to offer. Then, during the mid-70s, he began to look back to his Italian heritage and, in particular, its folk-songs. Thereafter, there is a growing release of emotion in his music through the use of folk materials. Mr. Consoli's musical aesthetic involves dense sonorities, the result of musical strata built by combining tonal centers, meters (when any are used), and irregular-length contrapuntal lines. The thickness of the texture shifts from section to section according to the motion and structure of the music, creating a kind of floating lyricism on top of a stratum of complex harmonies and rhythms.

Mr. Consoli has received many awards, among them two Guggenheim Memorial Fellowships, three National Endowment for the Arts grants, and an award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His works have been recorded under the auspices of the Alice M. Ditson Foundation, the Jerome Foundation, and the Louisville Orchestra. He has been a prize-winner at the International Symphonic Competition of Monaco; the Concorso Internazionale di Trieste, Italy; and the Omaha Competition for Orchestra and Soloist. Major commissions include the Steirischer Herbst festival in Austria; France's Festival International d'Art Contemporain; the Fromm Foundation, and the Koussevitzky Foundation. Works of his have been performed at the Gaudeamus Music Week in Holland; at Tanglewood; at the ISCM festivals in Finland and Belgium; and by orchestras that include the New York Philharmonic; the Los Angeles Philharmonic; the Baltimore, Louisville, and Nashville orchestras; and the American Composers Orchestra.

Onix Nuevo Ensemble de Mexico is a Mexican ensemble devoted to contemporary music. Its flexible instrumentation (winds, strings, piano, percussion, harp, brass, guitar, electronics) allows composers to explore diverse resources of timbre and contrast. The members of the ensemble share a commitment to new music and the goal of communicating the highly crafted forms of musical expression that defined twentieth century music and that still determine the music of the twenty-first century. Founded in July 1996, Onix has been awarded the prize of the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes.

The **American Composers Orchestra** was founded in 1975 by composers Francis Thorne and Nicolas Roussakis, conductor Dennis Russell Davies, and assistant-conductor Paul Dunkel. For many seasons it held an annual subscription series at Lincoln Center's Alice Tully Hall before moving to Carnegie Hall. More than 200 composers have had works performed by the ACO including many world premieres each season. The orchestra made early recordings for CRI and in more recent years has also recorded for Argo, Point, Music Masters, and Nonesuch.

The **Louisville Orchestra** has long been known as one of America's most daring symphony orchestras. Its commitment to contemporary works dates back to the 1950s, when the Louisville Orchestra Commissioning Project was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation, resulting in more than 100 new scores by composers from America and around the world. Many of these works were recorded by the orchestra on its own label, First Edition Records. Several of these LPs have since been licensed for reissue on CD to CRI and other labels.

Production Notes

Recording credits

Odefonia: from CRI SD 384; produced by Carter Harman; recorded by David Hancock, May 24, 1978, at St. Peters Church, NYC; original recording made possible by grants from the American Composers Orchestra, the Jerome Foundation, and the American Academy of Arts

Pensieri Sospesi: engineered by Eliseo Fernandez Bolland; Alejandro Colinas, assistant engineer; edited by Paul Furedi.

Afterimages: from Louisville First Edition Recordings, LS-783-784; engineer: Andrew Kazdin; licensed courtesy the Louisville Orchestra, Inc.

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