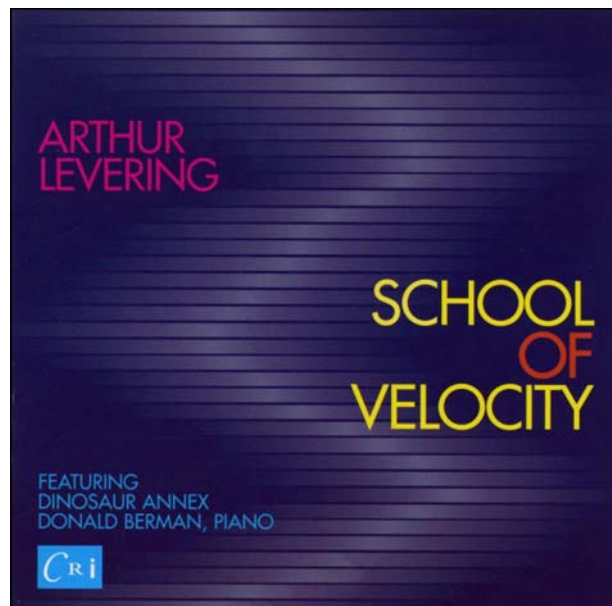


Arthur Levering



1. *Twenty Ways Upon the Bells* (1994) (8:59)
Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble: Sue-Ellen Hershman, flute, piccolo; Katherine Matasy, clarinet, bass clarinet; Cyrus Stevens, violin; Anne Black, viola; Michael Curry, cello; Donald Berman, piano, celesta; James Russell Smith, percussion; Scott Wheeler, conductor
 - Clarion/Shadowing* (1992) (11:51)
 2. Quarter note = 80 (6:25)
 3. Quarter note = 144 (5:26)
Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble: Ian Greitzer, clarinet; Cyrus Stevens, violin; Donald Berman, piano
 - School of Velocity* (1991-92) (11:27)
 4. Quarter note = 132 con bravura (3:55)
 5. Eighth note = 72 Quarter note = 144 (3:39)
 6. Quarter note = 120 energico (3:53)
Donald Berman, piano
 7. *Roulade* (1991) (7:45)
Christine Fish, flute; Susan Robinson, harp; Clayton Hoener, violin; Scott Woolweaver, viola; Andrew Mark, cello
 - Uncle Inferno* (Three Easy Pieces for Piano, 6 hands) (1987) (6:11)
 8. Quarter note = 120 (2:27)
 9. Quarter note = 56 (1:59)
 10. Dotted Quarter note = 88 (1:45)
Donald Berman, Marti Epstein, Sandra Herbert, piano
 11. *Cloches II* (1997) (8:47)
Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble: Susan Gall Hampton, flute; Ian Greitzer, clarinet; Cyrus Stevens, violin; Anne Black, viola; Michael Curry, cello; Pascale Delache-Feldman, bass James Russell Smith, percussion; Scott Wheeler, conductor
- Total playing time: 57:04
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Notes

Every conductor appreciates the distinction Rimsky-Korsakov made among orchestration ideas: those that sound good the first time in rehearsal, those that sound good after some rehearsal, and those that never quite work no matter how much rehearsal time they take. Arthur Levering writes the first kind, and he does it more consistently than any composer I can think of. For each of the pieces I conduct on this disc, the first reading at the first rehearsal revealed a clear, ringing musical conception. There was still plenty of work for us to do as performers: we had to learn to articulate the elegant formal structures, to match the pacing and exquisite taste of the music, and finally to rise to its power. But there was never any doubt that we were working on music with a stunning mastery of every compositional element.

Not that Arthur uses every compositional element he might—he is scrupulously selective in what his music can include. The beginning composer's desire to say everything in every work, using every possible means, has been replaced by the professional's sureness in knowing what to omit. Arthur Levering puts this focusing energy not only into each piece but also into the creation of a body of work that speaks with a clear and identifiable voice. Arthur has created this voice the hard way, without gimmicks or eccentricity. To have known and worked with him has been one of the most satisfying experiences of my musical life; this is some of the best music I know.

—Scott Wheeler

Twenty Ways Upon the Bells is based on a fragment of three-part counterpoint played by clarinet, viola, and piano at the outset. Each of these three contrapuntal parts is treated as a separate theme and what follows is a series of intertwining variations (twenty, to be precise). The title alludes to a small body of Elizabethan works for lutes or keyboards, early examples of program music. These pieces consist of variations over a short ground, in imitation of church bells. While my “bell” theme (in the right hand of the piano at the start) is very strange by Renaissance standards, the use of open fifths and modal harmonies in some sections reinforces the allusion to early music. *Twenty Ways Upon the Bells* was commissioned by the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble for its twentieth anniversary season with funding provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

The two movements of *Clarion/Shadowing* are both variation forms of a sort. The first movement is based on three themes heard at the start (one for the clarinet, one for the piano, and one for the violin doubled in various octaves by piano) and the entire piece is constructed of different juxtapositions of these themes or fragments of them. Movement two uses a nineteen-note theme to generate all of its material, although the theme itself is played in its entirety only five times during the course of the work, somewhat in the manner of a rondo.

School of Velocity is a set of three display pieces, in the genre of concert etudes. The title is borrowed from Carl Czerny's *Die Schule der Geläufigkeit*, a nineteenth-century collection

of piano studies still popular today. Although the spirit and aim of Czerny's work may coincide with my own, there are no direct musical connections. The first movement involves rapid descending chromatic scales among other challenges. The second is a quasi-tremolo study, and the final movement, a study in compound melody, is the most contrapuntal of the set and is perhaps the least didactic in nature. *School of Velocity* was commissioned by Donald Berman.

Roulade, a single-movement work for flute, harp, and string trio, is based entirely on three themes stated at the outset (one for the flute, one for the harp, and one played in hocket-fashion by the strings). Occasionally, all three themes are heard with their original rhythmic relationship preserved (other parameters being varied), but more often, one theme will assert itself and become the primary focus of a section or part of a section. The title has several meanings, some humorous (a rolled-up slice of cheese?), but the one I intended is an eighteenth-century term referring to a vocal melisma or an ornament consisting of rapid passing tones inserted between two principal melodic notes. *Roulade* was recomposed and re-orchestrated as the first movement of *Clarion/Shadowing*.

Uncle Inferno was written for the inaugural program of the "Pianists and Composers Meet" series at the Longy School of Music in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Given the challenge of composing for pianists in the early stages of training, I decided to do something a little ridiculous—write for three players at one keyboard. While each part is necessarily simple from a technical standpoint, the primary challenge for the performers is in the ensemble. These three very short, very light pieces are all based on the same insipid tune. (Don't worry, you can't miss it.)

Cloches II contains many allusions to the sound of bells, from the oscillating fourth in the piccolo and clarinet at the start, to a shameless but brief reference to Big Ben in the cello near the end. It was written during an idyllic year in Rome and was inspired by the tolling of that city's thousands of church bells. *Cloches II* was commissioned by the Gruppo Strumentale "Musica d'Oggi."

—Arthur Levering

Arthur Levering (b 1953) received his musical education at Colby College, Yale University (studying classical guitar under Eliot Fisk), and Boston University (studying composition under Bernard Rands). He has been a fellow in

composition at the Aspen Music Festival, the June in Buffalo Festival, the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival, the MacDowell Colony, and Yaddo. His awards include the 1997 Heckscher Foundation Composition Prize, a 1996 Barlow Foundation Commission, a 1994 National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the 1992 Lee Ettelson Composer's Award from Composers, Inc., two Composers Guild 1st Prizes, and the 1988 Malloy Miller Composition Prize (Boston University). In 1996 he was awarded the Frederic A. Juilliard/Walter Damrosch Rome Prize Fellowship from the American Academy in Rome. He has received commissions from the Music Teachers National Association, the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, the Brass Consortium, the Boston Conservatory Chamber ensemble, Boston Musica Viva, Musica d'Oggi (Italy), the Rascher Saxophone Quartet (Germany), and pianist Donald Berman. His works have been performed in Britain, France, Italy, and Germany, as well as in the U.S.A.

Dinosaur Annex is a chamber ensemble dedicated to music of the twentieth century, especially new works and works by composers from the Boston area. The group was founded in 1975–76, as the concert-giving annex of New England Dinosaur Dance Theater—thus the unusual name. Artistic director Scott Wheeler acts as the group's resident conductor; guest conductors have included Gunther Schuller, Ralph Shapey, John Harbison, Donald Palma, and Christopher Kendall. Among its recordings are two discs of music by Ezra Sims on CRI.

The Boston Globe has acclaimed **Donald Berman** as an "essential" and "first-rate" pianist. He is a winner of the 1991 Schubert International Competition in Germany, and has been a member of the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble since 1987. He has been a featured soloist on the Masters of Tomorrow series in Germany, French Cultural Services (Fauré Sesquicentennial), Tanglewood, Jordan Hall, Emmanuel Music (Schubert Series), Fromm Foundation (concerts of music by Imbrie and Babbitt), Goethe Institute, League-ISCN New York, Monadnock Music, Boston Aria Guild, Boston Aria Guild, *Art of the States* and NPR's *A Note To You*, and with the Martha Graham and Mark Morris Dance Companies. In 1997 and 1998 he was a visiting artist fellow at the American Academy in Rome. His solo recording of music by Charles Ives, *The Unknown Ives*, can also be heard on CRI.

Production Notes

Produced by Arthur Levering.
Editing engineer: Brad Michel.

Twenty Ways Upon the Bells was recorded in concert October 30, 1994, at First and Second Church, Boston, Massachusetts; engineered by Frank Cunningham.

Clarion/Shadowing was recorded May 26, 1998, at First and Second Church, Boston, Massachusetts; engineered by Frank Cunningham.

School of Velocity and *Uncle Inferno* were recorded May 17, 1998, at Paine Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts; engineered by Joel Gordon.

Roulade was recorded in concert November 13, 1991, at First and Second Church, Boston, Massachusetts; engineered by Frank Cunningham.

Cloches II was recorded June 8, 1998, at Mechanics Hall, Worcester, Massachusetts; engineered by Frank Cunningham.

Publishing: mss. (composer) (BMI)

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