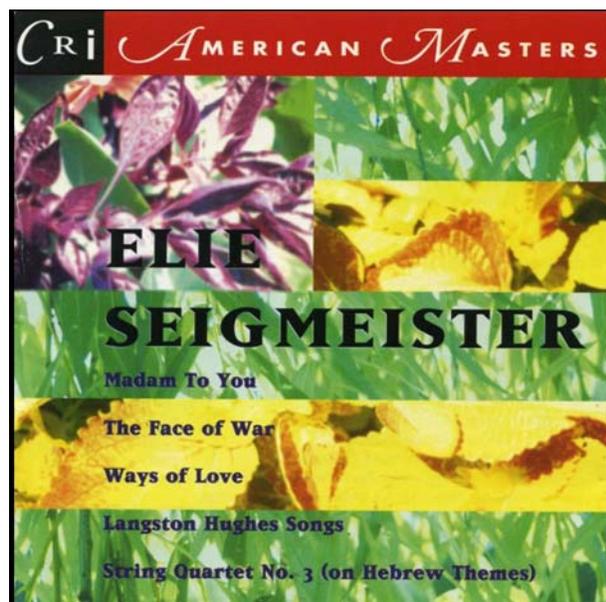


Elie Siegmeister



<i>Ways of Love</i> (1983)	(15:42)
1. Come lie with me and be my love (Lawrence Ferlinghetti)	(4:55)
2. See it was like this when (Ferlinghetti)	(1:31)
3. Love Letters, Unmailed (Eve Merriam)	(3:15)
4. Someone Who Used to Have Someone (Miriam Waddington)	(2:11)
5. Fired (Langston Hughes)	(1:32)
6. May i feel said he (e.e.cummings)	(2:17)
Elizabeth Kirkpatrick, soprano	
<i>Langston Hughes Songs</i> (1948)	(8:34)
7. Ballad of Adam and Eve	(1:51)
8. Motto	(0:46)
9. Hope	(1:06)
10. Question	(0:46)

11. Life is Fine	(4:05)
Charles Williams, baritone; The Washington Music Ensemble: Mary Findley, violin; Harriett Kaplan, cello; Jan Pompilo, flute; Charles Stier, clarinet; Robert Lynn, percussion; Alan Mandel (artistic director), piano; Joel Lazar, conductor	

String Quartet No. 3 (on Hebrew Themes) (1973)	(23:09)
12. I Andante con moto	(7:17)
13. II Vivo—Allegro moderato	(5:30)
14. III Tema con variazioni	(10:23)
Primavera String Quartet: Martha Caplin, violin; Kathryn Caswell, violin; Diann Jezurski, viola; Melissa Meell, cello	

<i>Madam to You</i> (1964)	(13:57)
Poems by Langston Hughes	
15. Madam and the Census Man	(2:07)
16. Madam and the Minister	(2:21)
17. Madam and Daughter	(2:04)
18. Madam and the Rent Man	(1:12)
19. Madam and the Fortune Teller	(2:12)
20. Madam and the Number Runner	(1:49)
21. Madam and the Wrong Visitor	(2:12)
Esther Hinds, soprano; Alan Mandel, piano	

<i>The Face of War</i> (1966)	(9:15)
Poems by Langston Hughes	
22. Official Notice	(1:49)
23. Listen here, Joe	(1:47)
24. Peace	(1:53)
25. The Dove	(1:33)
26. War	(2:13)
Esther Hinds, soprano; Alan Mandel, piano	

Total playing time: 71:06

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Notes

I am absolutely delighted that some of Elie Siegmeister's important works are being released as a compact disc recording on the CRI label, and I know that Mr. Siegmeister would have had the same reaction. The composer told me that he felt that CRI was of inestimable value in allowing an important body of contemporary American music to be heard and to survive. In the present recording, we can note some prime examples of Siegmeisterian characteristics: brilliant melodic invention; tender lyricism in a contemporary romantic idiom; the wildness of violent rhythms and biting harmonies; an almost surrealistic humor; taut, precise architecture; a free, improvisatory quality; dramatic expression. These compositions reveal a fierce independence of any school or compositional formula, an affirmation of life as the main inspiration for musical expression. Siegmeister declared, "Music comes out of life and should go back into it." His music continues to show the importance of this idea.

—Alan Mandel, 1999

Ways of Love

A prolific composer of songs (Elie Siegmeister's output is well over the one hundred mark), the composer has touched on a wide variety of subjects. Yet although love appears as a central theme in all of his operas, it has served with relative infrequency as the subject of his *Lieder*. When the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation commissioned him in 1983 to write a work for voice and chamber ensemble, Siegmeister selected poems by five North American poets—Lawrence Ferlinghetti, e. e. cummings, Eve Merriam, Miriam Waddington, and Langston Hughes—to write of love in its many guises. The six songs, lyrical, and with long-line melodies in Siegmeister's special way, present contrasted moods: tender, raucous, elegant, tragic, ironic, and finally, in the current sense, "explicit." The cycle is dedicated "to Hannah."

—Alan Mandel, 1986

Five Langston Hughes Songs

Elie Siegmeister has long had a particular fondness for the poetry of Langston Hughes. Whether it is because the composer was born in Harlem, or because the two men were close friends for more than thirty years, the composer has turned repeatedly to the poet's work from 1933 to 1983 (and he says he's "not done yet"). The cycle begins with a bittersweet love song, "Ballad of Adam and Eve," followed by three "minute songs"—each lasting less than a minute—"Motto," "Hope," and "Question." The last of the five songs (adapted from its original version for chorus and orchestra in the cantata *A Cycle of Cities*) treats with jazzy irony the rejected lover whose suicide attempts are foiled because the water is too cold, and the building from which he intends to leap is too high. And finally because "life is fine."

—Alan Mandel, 1986

String Quartet No. 3

My third string quartet (1973) reflects a place "somewhere near the soul" (as Ives said). My grandfather was Orthodox, and an amateur part-time cantor in the synagogue of the tiny Russian village where the family lived before coming to America, but I had rarely made use of this heritage in my music. The occasion arose in 1972, when Temple Adath Jeshurun of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, commissioned me to write a string quartet that would include traditional Hebrew themes. I was somewhat doubtful at first, but after some research and reflection found four beautiful old melodic phrases that seemed to lend themselves to development by string instruments. I did not attempt to write Jewish music, but simply my own music which would take off from these lovely tunes.

The first movement, *Andante con moto*, stems from an ancient Jewish Yemenite chant, quiet and mysterious in character. The music might be described as "multi-tonal", a mingling of tonal and atonal shapes in sonata form. The second movement, a scherzo marked *Vivo*, then *Allegro moderato*, develops two Yiddish Chassidic tunes from Eastern Europe. It is quizzical, fantastic-humorous, and perhaps calls to mind an image of upside-down rabbis, and enchanted Chassidim, sailing through the air. The last movement, a *Tema con variazioni* (seven of them), builds a sweeping, twenty-measure theme from two Ashkenazic prayer-fragments, then transforms it in various ways, ending with a touch of the beginning.

—Elie Siegmeister, 1979

Madam to You, and The Face of War

Langston Hughes, the great black poet, was my friend and collaborator for over thirty years. We wrote about fifty songs together, of which the two cycles, *Madam to You* (1964) and *The Face of War* (1966), remain my favorites. The first reflects the typical Hughes earthiness, character-portrayal, *joie de vivre*, and love of common living. Just as his famous "Simple" character was the quintessential black man,

"Madam" Alberta K. Johnson was the typical black woman of the Harlem tenements, spunky, bright, in love with life, and standing up (long before Women's Lib) to all put-downs, whether by the Census Man, the Minister, the Rent Collector, or even Old Death himself. In each of the seven songs of the cycle, Madam meets a formidable antagonist, and always comes out the winner. Befitting its subject, the music is down-to-earth, breezy, light-hearted or tender, but never complicated. Like Langston Hughes and many other artists, I hated the Vietnam War. In 1966 I simply had to voice my anger, and together with a dozen colleagues, including William Mayer, Ulysses Kay, George Rochberg, Aaron Copland, George Crumb, and Ezra Laderman, I organized a concert, *Composers for Peace*, in New York's Carnegie Hall. A few weeks before the concert I had read Hughes's poems, *The Face of War*, which struck me as among the most powerful indictments of man's brutality to man—especially to the black and brown man—I have ever seen. Working very quickly, I dashed off five songs of the cycle for voice and piano, then orchestrated them so they might be performed at this anti-war concert. If *Madam to You* is a celebration of life, *The Face of War* is an outcry, sometimes in harsh, almost atonal, musical terms, against needless, horrible death on the battlefield. I'd like to think of these songs as in some small measure an American counterpoint of a cycle I have always deeply admired Mussorgsky's *Songs and Dances of Death*.

—Elie Siegmeister, 1979

Elie Siegmeister (b New York, 15 Jan 1909; d Manhasset, NY, 10 March 1991) followed an independent path in composition, working in a modern romantic idiom that is always highly lyrical and communicative, often spiced with strong dissonances, intricate rhythms, and dramatic, folk, and jazz, elements. He created many works deeply American in spirit, and as many bearing an introspective quality. Siegmeister's thirty orchestral compositions have been performed by major orchestras throughout the world under such conductors as Toscanini, Stokowski, Mitropoulos, Maazel, and Comissiona. His eight operas have been produced in France, Belgium, and Canada as well as in the United States. He also wrote chamber music, choral works, more than one hundred solo songs, piano music, and important scores for Broadway, Hollywood, and for ballet.

Siegmeister was born in New York, and entered Columbia University at age fifteen, where he studied with Seth Bingham. He also took private counterpoint lessons with Wallingford Riegger, and studied for four years in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. His own teaching career included posts at Brooklyn College, the New School, the University of Minnesota, and Hofstra University. He served on the Boards of ACA, ASCAP and the American Music Center.

Production Notes

CD digitally re-mastered by Joseph R. Dalton and Robert Wolff, engineer at Sony Music Studios, New York, NY.

Madam to you, *The Face of War*, and String Quartet No. 3, from CRI/SD416 originally released 1979; recorded by David Hancock in New York, December, 1978 and June, 1979; sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Ways of Love, and *Langston Hughes Songs*, recorded September 4, 1984, in the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress, Washington, DC; 1977. Both from CRI/SD 532 originally released 1986; produced by Carter Harman; recorded and edited by Curt Wittig; original recording made possible by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

Publishers:

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