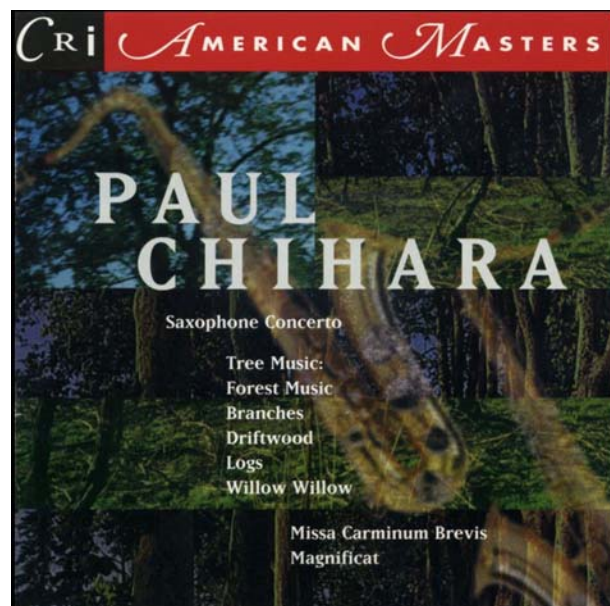


NWCR815

Paul Chihara



- Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra (1980) (13:25)
1. I – Andante (1:58)
 2. II – Moderato (2:45)
 3. III – Allegro comodo (8:41)
 - IV – Sprightly and
Harvey Pittel, saxophone; The Louisville Orchestra; Akira Endo, conductor
4. *Forest Music* for Orchestra (1970) (12:53)
The Louisville Orchestra; Akira Endo, conductor

5. *Willow, Willow* (1968) (10:17)
Sheridon Strokes, bass flute; Roger Bobo, tuba; Kenneth Watson, percussion; Karen Ervin, percussion; Paul Chihara, percussion; Craig Kupka, Robert Ose, Kenny Sawhill, trombones
 6. *Logs* (1969) (6:05)
Bertram Turetzky, string bass
 7. *Branches* (1966) (6:32)
Arthur Weisberg, bassoon; Donald MacCourt, bassoon; Kenneth Watson, percussion
 8. *Driftwood* (1968-69) (7:28)
The Philadelphia Quartet: Veda Reynolds, violin; Irwin Eisenbergm, violin; Alan Iglitzin, viola; Charles Brennand, cello
- Missa Carminum Brevis (Folk Song Mass)* (1972) (12:39)
9. I – Kyrie – Sally Gardens (4:36)
 10. II – Benedictus – the Houlihan (2:49)
 11. III – Agnus Dei – I once loved a boy (5:15)
 12. *Magnificat* (1965) (5:52)
Chorus of the New England Conservatory; Lorna Cooke deVaron, conductor

Total playing time: 75:11

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Notes

Music Before Hollywood

The music on this album represents various stages in my compositional development in the years before the worlds of Ballet, Broadway, and Hollywood changed my musical style and life forever. The transition was for me gradual, inevitable, occasionally triumphant, and a great deal of fun—as well as agonizing and frustrating with tears and failure along the way. Some of my earliest published music, as well as some recent larger works were conceived while at Tanglewood (in 1965–68) with Gunther Schuller (shortly after my years of schooling at Cornell, Paris, and Berlin). The *Tree Music* series began there, as a study in timbral and time interaction, inspired no doubt by the idyllic natural setting of the Berkshire Mountains and my desire to write something Japanese. Each of the tone pictures in the series was conceived as a separate musical moment in the group. Much like traditional Japanese ukiyo-e (woodprints), I constructed each piece to be approximately the same size (ie. about eight minutes in duration). I worked on them in Tokyo during the three years (1967–69) I participated in the contemporary music series “Crosstalk,” which was created by Roger Reynolds, with Yuji Takahashi, Joji Yuasa, and Toru Takemitsu. The concluding work in the series is the orchestral work *Forest Music*, which incorporated elements from all of

the previous compositions, and was first performed by Zubin Mehta and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in 1971.

The *Mass* and *Magnificat* reflect my years as a choral conductor at UCLA. From 1970–1973, I served as music director of the Women’s Choral Society, and occasionally conducted the UCLA Chorus. At the time, it amused me to think that Johannes Brahms held a similar position with the Frauenchor at Detmold and Hamburg early in his professional life. I had learned choral conducting from Lorna Cooke deVaron at Tanglewood, and subsequently studied composition and counterpoint with Ernst Pepping in Berlin. My first published composition (1967) was the *Magnificat* for six part women’s chorus. This was the period of the late sixties, and Pop culture ruled. Folk Rock, Heavy Metal, Motown, as well as the gentler ballads of Simon and Garfunkel, and a thousand others invaded the creative processes of “serious musicians,” most of whom were at universities and often rigidly deterministic in their compositional approach. This counter-culture influence had its strongest expression in my *Missa Carminum* (“Folk Song Mass”) which incorporates a different folk song as cantus firmus in each movement. It was written for

Roger Wagner, whose Chorale first performed it in 1974. That year, I left my teaching position at UCLA and ventured

into the freelance world of composition. After a few months of insecurity and unemployment, a miracle happened. Two “angels” called—almost simultaneously: Michael Smuin, then newly appointed as co-artistic director of the San Francisco Ballet, commissioned me to compose the score for his Japanese ballet *Shinju*, and Roger Corman hired me to write the music for his futuristic feature *Death Race 2000*. The first of these projects led directly to my becoming composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Ballet, a position I held for ten years. At the same time, *Death Race 2000* eventually became the first of my eighty or so films for theatrical and TV presentation. It had yet another consequence: the saxophone player on that movie score was Harvey Pittel, who later became a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra. On January 29, 1981, he premiered my Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra with the BSO at Symphony Hall, Seiji Ozawa conducting. All of these projects eventually led me to Broadway (*Sophisticated Ladies*, *On Your Toes*, *Shogun The Musical*)—but that is another story.

I now find myself, as I write this, back at UCLA as a visiting professor of music and ethnomusicology, and at the Disney Studio as a music supervisor. It seems strange to reflect back on such a long and winding road since I feel I am still travelling it *in medias rei* as the ancient epic poets would say. But crossing the line between classical and popular music so often renders the distinction between them purely academic. And brings adventure and fun back into the journey.

—Paul Chihara, Los Angeles, November 29, 1998

Notes from the LP releases:

It was at U.C.L.A. in 1974 that Chihara and the distinguished saxophonist Harvey Pittel conferred on the creation of a concerto, though Chihara did not complete Concerto for Saxophone and Orchestra until 1980. Mr. Pittel was the soloist at the first performance of the work in Boston on January 29, 1981, Seiji Ozawa conducting the Boston Symphony. Audiences at that performance were doubtless fascinated by the fact that Pittel played three separate saxophones during the piece—alto, soprano, and soprano. Though Chihara does regard the saxophone as an instrument “of American Personality that cannot be disassociated from the blues and jazz,” his highly original scoring demonstrates the range of serious possibilities for the instrument—not unlike what Mozart accomplished for the clarinet in his famous concerto, K.622. David Dempsey, writing in *Saxophone* called the concerto “a large work in every sense of the word. It requires a full orchestra with a large percussion battery, much rehearsal time, and perhaps most important, the solo part is difficult throughout.” Difficult and challenging, perhaps most of all because in the work Chihara has combined two worlds—classicism and jazz—in an arresting and intriguing third world uniquely his own.

Forest Music is the seventh and concluding work in a series of tone pictures dealing with trees. The others, in order of composition, are *Tree Music* for three violas and three trombones (1966), *Branches* for two bassoons and percussion (1966), *Redwood* for viola and percussion (1967), *Willow*, *Willow* for amplified bass flute, tuba, and three percussionists (1968), *Logs* for string bass and electronic tape (for Bertram Turetzky, 1969), and *Driftwood* for violin, two violas, and cello (1969). *Forest Music* was first sketched in the winter of 1966, then gradually enlarged, developed, and revised as the other pieces (after *Branches*) in the series were composed. It incorporates elements from all of them, and is based on many of the same tonal materials, including the same family of tone

rows, used throughout the series. It was completed in December 1970.

Willow, *Willow* is basically a soliloquy for bass flute, with percussion tapestry surrounding it. Except in the fourth section (called “Rock Dance”), there is little direct interaction among the parts. The tuba, like the ghost of Hamlet’s father, haunts the music and comments on it (sometimes with music, sometimes with words), but remains detached and aloof throughout.

Logs is a meditation and exercise in nuance, suggested to the composer by the Zen breathing exercises in the *Art of Archery*. The music is derived from a single phrase (two variants on it) and a group of nine contrasting sub-phrases. These units are repeated or combined continuously, making larger periods. Each repetition represents a slight deviation from all the others: in vibrato, accent, emphasis, or micro-tonal adjustment in pitch. All normal methods of expressive playing are used such as: *pizzicato tremolo*, *sul tasto*, *sul ponticello*, *col legno tratto*, *col legno battuto*, *glissandi*, etc. The piece begins and ends softly with a “sighing” ostinato figure on low E.

In *Branches* the principal sound source is a set of chromatically tuned tenor drums (pitched G, A, B, C#, D, D#, E, and F) that initiates the action and shapes the contour of the piece. The two bassoons, like branches blown by the wind, follow and react to the motion of the drum sound.

Driftwood is dominated by the sonority of the two violas, whose rich, middle-range color the composer is especially fond of. (It is also published as a normal string quartet, with an alternate second violin part replacing the second viola.) Lyric, contrapuntal passages emerge occasionally from quiet textures of trance-like, almost incantatory motion, only to dissolve into them again.

The Kyrie to *Missa Carminum Brevis* was composed in November of 1972. The idea of combining popular with liturgical music was consistent with other compositional experiments I was involved with at the time: namely, that of transforming seemingly disparate musical materials into strange and new configurations, much as in dreaming or in reverie. I was pleased with the results of the Kyrie, and decided to complete the Mass, using a different folk song as cantus firmus in each movement, while combining it with the Gregorian incipits from the *Missa Deus Genitor Alme*, whose well known melodies run like sinews through the body of the work. Furthermore, the identification of sacred with profane love seems to me, as C.S. Lewis pointed out in *The Allegory of Love*, a transformation which heightens religious devotion, and as such is a peculiarly beautiful and Catholic experience. Though I love the choral works of the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic eras, the models for my Mass were chosen from an earlier period: the great masses of the High Renaissance, and especially those of Palestrina. This influence is evident, not so much in the use of triadic harmony, as in the deliberate use of texture and density as a compositional and structure-determining resource.

Most of the songs I have used sing of love, and tragic love at that. Texts, as well as music, were important to me, and they are often set against each other to heighten my interpretation of the Mass. Several examples may illustrate:

“Kyrie, Sally Garden, my love and I did meet.”

“Qui sedes ad dexteram Patris, miserere nobis, He bid me take life easy,

as the leaves grow on the tree.”

“Kadosh Adoni, who comes in the name of the Lord.”

“We’re goin’ to Montana, Hosanna!”
“For I was young and foolish and now...whether he loves me
or
loves me not, I will walk with my love now and then...Agnus
Dei,
dona nobis pacem.”

Texts:

Missa Carminum Brevis (“Folk Song Mass”)

I. Kyrie—*Sally Gardens*

Kyrie eleison
Christe eleison
Kyrie eleison
Down by the Sally Garden,
My love and I did meet
But I was young and foolish
And now am full of tears.

II. Benedictus—*The Houlihan*

Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini Hosanna in excelsis.
I ride an old Paint. I lead an old Dan,
We’re goin’ to Montana to do the houlihan.
Bill Jones had two daughters and only a song.
So one went to college. The other went wrong.
His wife was devour’d in a free for all fight
and still he keeps singing from morning til night.
We work in your town, we work in your farms
and all we have to show is the muscle in our arms
and the blisters on our feet, and callow on our hands.
So ride around little doggies.
Kadosh Adonai,
ts’vaot M’lochol ha-aretz K’vodo
Adonai, Baruch ha’ba B’shem Adonai
Who comes in the name of the Lord.
We’re goin’ to Montana or maybe Alabama, Hosanna, Hosanna,
We’re goin’ to Montana or maybe Louisiana.
Hosanna.

III. Agnus Dei—*I Once Loved A Boy*

Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi Miserere nobis.
I once loved a boy, and a bold Irish boy.
I would come and would go at his request.
And this bold bonnie boy was my pride and joy.
And I build him a bower in my breast.
And this girl who has taken my bold bonnie boy
May she make of it all that she can
For whether he loves me or loves me not,
I will walk with my love now and then.

Seattle-born composer **Paul Seiko Chihara** received his D.M.A. from Cornell University in 1965. In addition to studying with Robert Palmer at Cornell, his principal teachers were Nadia Boulanger in Paris (where he won the Lili Boulanger Memorial Award), Ernst Pepping in Berlin, and Gunther Schuller in Tanglewood. With Toru Takemitsu, he was composer-in-residence at the Marlboro Music Festival of 1971.

Mr. Chihara’s prize-winning concert works, which include symphonies, concertos, chamber music, choral compositions, and ballets, have been performed to great acclaim both nationally and internationally. His works are concerned with the evolution and expression of highly contrasting colors, textures, and emotional levels, which are often dramatically juxtaposed with one another. His works have been

The *Magnificat* was composed in Berlin in 1965 while I was on a post-doctoral Fulbright Fellowship, studying choral composition with Ernst Pepping. The Gregorian hymn *Ave Maria* in the Dorian Mode underlies the textures of the six-part women’s chorus.

commissioned by the Guggenheim Foundation, the Fromm Foundation, the Roger Wagner Chorale, the Naumburg Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He also has received commissions from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Boston, Seattle, St. Louis, Houston and London symphonies, as well as the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, the New Japan Philharmonic, and the Cleveland Orchestra. He served as the first composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra under Neville Marriner. As composer-in-residence with the San Francisco Ballet for ten years, he composed *Tempest* and *Shinju*, among his well-known ballet scores.

In addition to the many concert works Chihara has composed music for over eighty motion pictures and series for television. He has worked with directors Sidney Lumet, Louis

Malle, Michael Ritchie, and Arthur Penn. His movie credits include *Prince of the City*, *The Morning After*, and *Crossing Delancey*; his television credits include *China Beach*, *Noble House*, and *Brave New World*. On Broadway, he served as musical consultant and arranger for Duke Ellington's

Sophisticated Ladies, and was the composer for James Clavell's *Shogun the Musical*.

Mr. Chihara is professor of music at UCLA, and a music supervisor at the Buena Vista (Walt Disney) Studios.

Production Notes

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

From CRI SD 269: *Willow, Willow*: engineered by Les Remsen.

Logs: tape realized at UCLA electronic studio, on Moog and Buchla synthesizers. The bass music derives from materials from *Branches* and *Willow, Willow*, Lewis Prines, technician. *Branches* and *Driftwood*: Recorded July 1970. Engineered by Glen D. White, Jr. at Audio Visual Services, Seattle, Washington. Produced by Carter Harman. Original recording of CRI SD 269 was made possible by a grant from the University of California at Los Angeles.

From CRI SD 409: *Missa Carminum Brevis* and *Magnificat*: Recorded by David Hancock, Boston, January 1979. Electronic transformations at Big Apple Studio (New York) by

Michael Riesman. Original recording of CRI SD 409 was made possible by a grant from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

From Louisville 788: *Forest Music*: Originally released on Louisville First Editions licensed permission of The Louisville Orchestra, Inc.

From Louisville 781L Saxophone Concerto. Original released on Louisville First Editions licensed permission of The Louisville Orchestra, Inc.

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