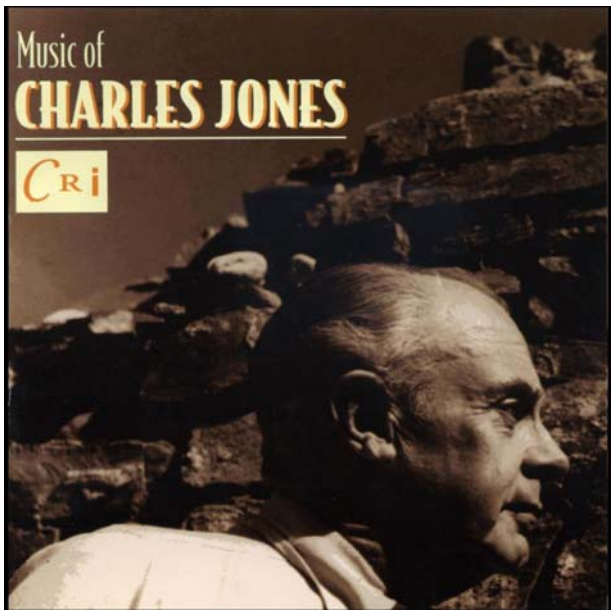
NWCR819

Charles Jones



Sonata da Camera (1966) ..... (12:12)

1. I. Moderato ..... (2:58)
2. II. Andante ..... (4:58)
3. III. Allegro ..... (4:17)

Curtis Macomber, violin; Blair MacMillan, piano; Nardo Poy, viola; Joyce Hammann, viola; Josh Gordon, cello; Jeffrey Carney, double bass; Tomm Roland, David Macdonald, percussion; George Tsontakis, conductor.

4. *Psalm* for Piano (1976) ..... (8:55)

Neal Kirkwood, piano.

The Seasons (1959) ..... (18:30)

5. I. Spring: Con moto ..... (1:53)
6. II. Summer: Moderato ..... (4:59)
7. III. Autumn: Allegro ..... (2:01)
8. IV. Winter: Andante ..... (2:32)
9. V. 1. Winter: Con moto ..... (0:45)
10. VI. 2. Winter: Comodo ..... (6:20)

Jacqueline Horner, soprano; Gregory Purnhagen, baritone; Jacqueline Leclair, oboe; Martin Kuuskmann, bassoon; Brent Dodson, trumpet; Ah-Ling Neu, viola; Josh Gordon, cello; Neal Kirkwood, harpsichord; George Tsontakis, conductor.

11. *String Quartet No. 6* (1970) ..... (11:05)

The New York String Quartet: Paul Zukofsky, violin; Timothy Eddy, cello; Jean Dupouy, viola; Romuado G. Teco, violin.

Sonatina for Violin and Piano (1942) ..... (6:46)

12. I. Allegro ..... (1:49)
13. II. Larghetto ..... (2:46)
14. III. Allegro deciso ..... (2:18)

Paul Zukofsky, violin; Gilbert Kalish, piano.

15. *Emblemata for Organ* (1994) ..... (3:54)

Justin Bischof, organ.

Total playing time 63:58

Notes

Charles Jones: An Appreciation

He was always *Mister* Jones: I never thought he'd actually have minded it if we called him "Charles"—particularly once we had grown out of our apprenticeship and into what passed for full maturity. But something about his presence, gracious and supportive as he inevitably was, prompted an observation of old-world manners. Mr. Jones he was—and, so far as I'm concerned, Mr. Jones he will remain.

Those of us to have called him our teacher would make our way to 311 East 58th Street down Second Avenue or, perhaps, wander over from the subway stop beneath Bloomingdale's. Suddenly confronted with what still seems a fairy-tale house, we would unlatch the picket fence (in midtown Manhattan!), ring a loud, old-fashioned doorbell, and suddenly Mr. Jones would appear, ushering us into his living room, greeting us, artist to artist, with a warm "Ah, yes! Come in, come in...".

How many others among his students date their artistic coming of age to those late winter afternoons seated at Mr. Jones's Steinway? Our meetings would combine aesthetic advice, score reading, historical analysis, delicious anecdotes and a nurturing, near-parental warmth, for he was always aware of just how lonely New York City could be for a newcomer.

I would arrive drunk on Steve Reich one week, on Olivier Messiaen the next, and on the late works of Richard Strauss the week following. He would listen to what I had written (pretty eclectic stuff in those days!), size up whatever strengths and weaknesses it might have had, and make suggestions that were inevitably both compassionate and of enormous practical help. Even when he actively disliked the works of a given composer—Shostakovich and Sibelius were two *bete noirs*— he was always keenly interested in the reasons his students had somehow taken to this music.

In short, he was a thoughtful, creative, and extraordinarily stimulating guide for young people. Moreover, he was amazingly generous with his time and friendship. He seemed to know everybody—at one East 58th Street party, I recall scanning the room and spotting Roger Sessions, Elliot Carter, Vittorio Rieti, Virgil Thomson, and Ned Rorem—and he always made sure his pupils were introduced all around.

Then there were the concerts arranged by his students. Listening to these events, I was always fascinated by a central parado. On the most basic level, we were all writing in on our own individual manners and seemed to have little in common with one another. Later on, I realized that this was what made Mr. Jones a great teacher—this very refusal to drill any single musical language into our systems against our will. Rather, he believed in building our knowledge, sharpening our ears, and allowing us to emancipate the composer within.

His own music is stirring, concentrated, sometimes tempestuous, and deeply expressive. The *Sonata da Camera* (1966) was a piece of which Mr. Jones was particularly proud. With its arching melodies of violin, the complex but curiously transparent writing for piano, and the sheer muscular energy of the whole endeavor, the Sonata attains a rare synthesis of neo-classicism and expressionism, two elements that tugged throughout Mr. Jones output.

I was studying with Mr. Jones when he wrote the *Psalm* (1976) for solo piano and vividly remember hearing it for the first time. (Whenever he finished a work, he would play a tape for his students, and we would follow along with the score, breathlessly interested.) The *Psalm* struck me then—and continues to strike me today—as a remarkably forceful, challenging but never forbidding piece, one that makes the listener work for just a little but provides ample reward for the study.

The cantata *The Seasons* (1959), to texts by five English poets of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, is, by comparison to the rest of the program, a relatively early piece. Yet it is still highly characteristic: Mr. Jones always went out of his way to find texts of genuine literary merit, and he had a gift for matching music and imagery. Unlike many composers of his era, he also respected the capacity of the human voice and never tried to turn it into a surrogate instrument. (All those song cycles by other composers from the 60s and 70s that nobody could ever really sing!) Here, too, we find that mixture of the modern and the timeless that looks forward to his later settings of William Langland and Henry James.

The *String Quartet No. 6* (1970) was among his best-known pieces, due in part to the recording on the CRI label. Mr. Jones always referred to his quartets as musical "journals"—he felt they contained his most intimate music—and this tautly compressed one-movement work is indeed highly personal and persuasive.

Finally, we have *Emblemata* (1994), a late composition and a splendid and idiomatic contribution to the modern organ repertory. Although Mr. Jones was never a fierce colorist—one sometimes had the sense that his music, like Bach's, could be played on many different instruments and still make its effect—he worked hard to exploit fully the resources of his chosen vessel.

For those of you who have never heard Mr. Jones' music before, this recording will provide an excellent introduction. For those of us who knew and loved the man, it will remind us that Mr. Jones' distinctive, heartfelt, and affecting music is still very much in our midst.

—Tim Page
(adapted from a program essay for the
Charles Jones Memorial concert)

From 1972 (CRI SD 283):

"The six string quartets which I have written might be considered as a musical diary which I have kept through the years. The first one dates from student days, the second (1944) is already concerned with the special sonorities possible in this medium, the third (1951) is more complex in texture and probably the most dissonant, the fourth (1954) is more simple and lyrical, and the fifth (1961) again is much taken up with special sonorities.

"I feel that in a large and general way, two diverse elements are juxtaposed in the Sixth Quartet (1970). One is the element of fanfare (or other somewhat stirring sounds) and the second is a kind of lyricism normally associated with the voice. As both of these elements are, in a sense, foreign to the nature of the strings, it was necessary to translate them into the medium of the quartet. The fanfare-lyric juxtaposition is evident in the first movement. In this section, use is made of left hand *pizzicato* (plucking of the string), returning on the part of the second violin; and the movement ends with only the sound of the first violinist's fingers dropping on the strings.

"There is a unifying or punctuating element marking off the various sections, which are played without pause. This is made up of eight-part chords, related to a canonic passage which recurs throughout the quartet, and which is used as a formal beacon or guideline in tying the various parts together. The second section (calm, 3/4 time) is in a three-part form, having a quicker-moving Trio section before a short return of its first part.

"There is clearly recognizable slow movement in 12/8 time which is connected to the finale by the chords already mentioned, differently laid out and played pizzicato. In the last movement, use is made of the canonic figure, and the texture is mostly that of a reference (only as regards texture) to the first part with left hand pizzicato, harmonics and *col legno* (striking the strings with the wood of the bow) passages.

"The *Sonatina* for Violin and Piano was written in California in 1942 and had its first performance at the International Society for Contemporary Music in Berkeley, California that summer. The performers then were Sascha Jacobsen, violin and Maxim Shapiro, piano."

—Charles Jones

Charles Jones (1910–1997) was born in Tamworth, Canada on June 21, 1910. At the age of ten, he moved to Toronto where he studied the violin and theory. In 1928, he went to New York and studied at the Institute of Musical Art with Sascha Jacobsen. He graduated in 1932 with a degree in violin.

In 1935, Jones entered the Juilliard School on a fellowship. He studied with Bernard Wagenaar and graduated in composition in 1939. He then was sent by Juilliard to teach at Mills College, California, where he met a fellow teacher, the French composer Darius Milhaud. This began a thirty-year collaboration between them, first at Mills College, then at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, and finally at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. Milhaud retired from teaching in America in 1969 and Jones continued at the Aspen Festival as composer-in-residence until 1989.

In 1946, he and his wife moved from California to New York. He began teaching at the Juilliard School in 1954 and later at the Mannes College of Music. Two short periods were spent teaching at the Salzburg Seminar in Austria and at the Bryanston School in England. Jones died on June 6, 1997.

In spite of teaching, Jones considered himself first and foremost a composer. He wrote some ninety works including four symphonies, nine string quartets, vocal scores and many other combinations. He has had music played by the New York Philharmonic; the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; the BBC; the National Symphony Orchestra; and the San Francisco, St. Louis, and Dallas Symphonies among many others.

The Seasons

I. By Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547)

The sweet season, that bud and bloom forth brings,
With green hath clad the hill, and eke the vale;
The nightingale with feathers new she sings;
The turtle to her mate hath told her tale.
Summer is come, for every spray new springs,
The hart hath hung his old head on the pale;
The buck in brake his winter coat he flings;
The fishes flete with new repaired scale;
The adder all her sloth away she slings;
The swift swallow pursueth the flies smale;
The busy bee her honey now she mings;
Winter is worn that was the flower's bale.
And thus I see among these pleasant things
Each care decays, and yet my sorrow springs.

II. By Edmund Spenser (1552–1599)

It fell upon a holy eve,
hey ho holy day,
When holy fathers wont to shrieve;
now beginneth this roundelay.
Sitting on a hill so high,
hey ho the high hill!
The while my flock did feed thereby,
the while the shepherd self did spill;
I saw the bouncing belli-bone,
hey ho boni-bell!

III. By Thomas Nashe (1557–1601)

Autumn hath all the summer's fruitful treasure;
Gone is our sport, fled is poor Corydon's pleasure.
Short days, sharp days, long nights come on apace.
Ah, who will hide us from the winter's face?
Cold doth increase the sickness will not cease.
And here we lie, God knows, with little ease.
From winter, plague, and pestilence, Good Lord, deliver us.

London doth mourn, Lambeth is quite forlorn;
Trades cry, woe worth that ever they were born.
The want of term is town and city's harm;
Close chambers we do want to keep us warm.
Long banished must we live from our friends.
This low-built house will bring us to our ends.
From winter, plague, and pestilence, Good Lord, deliver us.

IV. By Thomas Campion (1567–1619)

Now winter nights enlarge the number of their hours,
And clouds their storms discharge upon the ayrie towres.
Let now the chimneys blaze, and cups o'erflow with wine;
Let well-tun'd words amaze with harmonie divine.
Now yellow waxen lights shall waite on hunny love,
While youthfull revels, masks, and courtly sighs,
Sleep's leaden spels remove.

This time doth well dispence with lover's long discourse;
Much speech hath some defence, though beauty no remorse.
All do not all things well; some measures comely tread;
Some knotted riddles tell; some poems smoothly read;
Though love and all his pleasures are but toyes,
They shorten tedious nights.

V. By Alexander Pope (1688–1744)

I.

While silent birds forget their tuneful lays,
Oh sing of Daphne's fate, and Daphne's praise!
Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along.
And bade his willows learn the moving song.
This charge the dying Daphne gave,
And said, "Ye shepherds, sing around my grave!"
Sing while beside the shaded tomb I mourn,
And with fresh bays her rural shrine adorn.

II.

Yet gentle Muses, leave your crystal spring,
Let Nymphs and Sylvans cypress garlands bring;
Ye weeping love, the stream with myrtles hide,
And break your bows as when Adonis died;
And with you golden darts, now useless grown,
Inscribe a verse on this relenting stone;

"Let nature change, let heaven and earth deplore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and love is now no more!"
'Tis done, and Nature's various charms decay,
See gloomy clouds obscure the cheerful day!
Now hung with pearls the drooping trees appear,
Their faded honours scatter'd on her bier.
See where, on earth, the flowery glories lie,
With her they flourish'd, and with her they die.
Ah, what avail the beauties Nature wore?
Fair Daphne's dead, and beauty is no more!
No more the mounting larks, whild Daphne sings,
Shall, listening in mid-air, suspend their wings;
No more the birds shall imitate her lays,
Or, hush'd with wonder, hearken from the sprays;
No more the streams their murmurs shall forbear,
A sweeter music than their own to hear;
But tell the reeds and tell the vocal shore,
Fair Daphne's dead, and music is no more!

But see! where Daphne wondering mounts on high
Above the clouds, above the starry sky!
Eternal beauties grace the shining scene,
Fields ever fresh, and grows forever green!
There while you rest in Amaranthine bowers,
Or from those meads select unfading flowers,
Behold us kindly, who your name implore,
Daphne, our goddess, and our grief no more!

Production Notes

Executive Producers: Neal Kirkwood and David Macdonald.

Recording
Digitally remastered by Robert Wolff, engineer, at Sony Music Studios, New York City.

Sonata da Camera: Engineered by Ben Rizzi and David Merrill. Recorded May 5, 1998 at Mastersound, Astoria, New York.
Psalm: Engineered by Silas Brown. Recorded September 16, 1998 at Recital Hall, SUNY, Purchase, New York.

The Seasons: Engineered by Ben Rizzi and David Merrill. Recorded May 15, 1998 at Mastersound, Astoria, New York.

Emblemata : Engineered by Silas Brown. Recorded December 7,1998 at St. Peter's Church, New York City.

Sonata da Camera, Psalm, The Seasons, and Emblemata: digital editing by Bill Kinslow at Studio K, New York City.
The newly-recorded pieces were performed at the Charles Jones Memorial Concert, April 23, 1998 at St. Peter's Church, New York City.

From CRI SD 283:
Sonatina and *String Quartet* No.6: Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by David Hancock. Original recording was made possible by grants from the Alice M. Ditson Fund and the Ford Foundation.

Publishing

Sonatina and String Quartet No. 6: Henmar. All other works: Estate of Charles Jones (ASCAP).

Special thanks to Sally Jones, Thomas Schmidt, St. Peter's Church, Gordon & Lillian Hardy, Joseph and Dana Bloch, Dr. Seth Wissner, Paul Sperry, William and Nannette Harry, and the Friends of Charles Jones.

This recording was made possible with generous support of private individuals through the Locrian Chamber Ensemble.