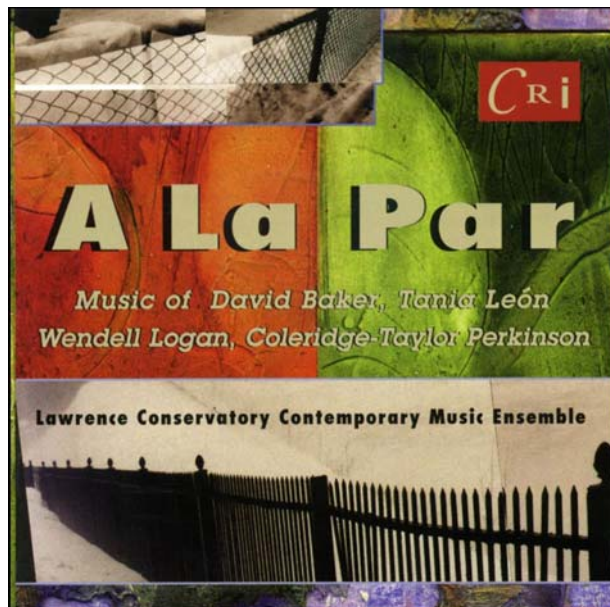


NWCR823

A la Par

Music of David Baker, Tania León, Wendell Logan,
Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson



Wendell Logan

Runagate, Runagate (1990) (19:16)

- I.(8:08)
- II.(11:08)

William Brown, tenor; Samuel Breene, violin; Lori Hamburg, cello; Barbara Paziouros, flute; Suzanne Hickman, clarinet; Roseanna Cannizzo, piano; Jason Roberts, percussion; Bridget-Michaele Reischl, conductor

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

- Toccata (1953) (2:26)
Michael Kim, piano

Tania León

A la Par (1986) (13:23)

- I. (2:03)
- II. (5:06)
- III. (6:14)

Kathleen Murray, piano; Dane Richeson, percussion

Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson

Statements, Sonata No. 2 for Piano (1975) (17:01)

- I. Sonata Allegro (5:56)
- II. Theme & Variations (5:43)
- III. Rondo (5:22)

Anthony Padilla, piano

David Baker

Through This Vale of Tears (In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.) (1988) (19:40)

- I. Thou Dost Lay Me in the Dust of Death (1:36)
- II. If There Be Sorrow (1:30)
- III. My God, Why Hast Thou
- Forsaken Me? (2:58)
- IV. Parades to Hell (1:51)
- V. Deliver My Soul (3:28)
- VI. Sometimes I Feel Like a
- Motherless Child (4:06)
- VII. Now That He Is Safely Dead (4:11)

William Brown, tenor; Anne Shih, violin; Janet Bond-Sutter, violin; Matthew Michelic, viola; Janet Anthony, cello; Brandt Fredrickson, piano; Performances by members of the Lawrence Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble

Total Playing Time: 71:46

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Notes

Established in 1992, the **Lawrence Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble** (LCCME) comprises faculty and students from the Conservatory of Music at Lawrence University in Appleton, Wisconsin. The ensemble performs works composed within the last decade, and strives to expose students and listeners to an array of styles and genres associated with contemporary literature. The ensemble ranges from small chamber group to full orchestra, and is under the direction of Bridget-Michaele Reischl, director of orchestral studies at Lawrence University.

The Lawrence University Conservatory of Music, in its second century of educating students for careers in music, is a nationally recognized conservatory devoted exclusively to the education of undergraduates within a distinguished college of the liberal arts and sciences. Recent graduates and current students have won significant honors, including the Metropolitan Opera Competition, the Vamos Competition, the MTNA Solo and Chamber Music Competitions, the Carmel

Chamber Music Competition, and Down Beat magazine's Outstanding Jazz Composition Award and Outstanding Jazz Solo Performance Award, among others. Conservatory alumni are members of symphony orchestras, opera companies, and conservatory faculties; others are writing soundtracks or designing software applicable to music. The Conservatory of Music retains a superb faculty of performers, composers, scholars, and teachers, and prides itself on the individual attention given to more than 300 music majors who pursue their undergraduate degrees at Lawrence.

This disc is drawn from a 1997 concert program of the Lawrence Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble commemorating the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. with works by composers of color.

The selections were made by Bridget-Michaele Reischl who had already conducted a performance of Wendell Logan's *Runagate, Runagate* while on the faculty of the Oberlin Conservatory and knew it to be a major contribution. She was

encouraged by Kathleen Murray and Dane Richeson to consider *A la Par* by Tania León, who had coached the duo for a performance at the Ravinia Festival. Having worked previously with tenor William Brown, Reischl included a work written specifically for his voice: David Baker's *Through This Vale of Tears*. To round out the program, she scheduled music by Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson, whose Toccata under the fingers of Michael Kim elicited an explosive reaction from the audience and stimulated the inclusion of Perkinson's second sonata, *Statements*, performed by Anthony Padilla.

Thus each of these pieces is unique and has proven to be attractive to performers and audiences alike. Taken as a whole, the repertoire adds to the growing awareness of the major contributions of outstanding African-American composers.

—Dominique-René de Lerma,
Lawrence University

Runagate, Runagate

The chamber version of *Runagate, Runagate* was first performed at the National Black Arts Festival in Atlanta in 1990. Subsequently, it has been performed by the Oberlin Conservatory Contemporary Music Ensemble, the Cleveland Institute Contemporary Music Ensemble, the Ensemble of the Center for Black Music Research, Today's Artists (San Francisco), and by members of the Saint Louis Symphony. The orchestral version was premiered by the Savannah Symphony in 1994, followed by a performance with the Dallas Symphony. Both of the latter performances were conducted by Kay George Roberts, with William Brown, soloist.

Of *Runagate, Runagate*, Logan writes:

The text and title of my composition are based on Robert Hayden's collage poem "Runagate, Runagate," which was taken from the collection *Angle of Ascent* (1975). (The word "runagate" refers to a fugitive, a runaway slave.) This poem and others from the collection ("Middle Passage," "O Daedalus," "Fly Away Home," "The Ballad of Nat Turner," and "Frederick Douglass") represent a kind of historical chronicle of the Afro-American journey towards freedom.

My primary concern in attempting a musical setting of "Runagate, Runagate" was to capture some of its inherent musical qualities: the frenetic "beat" of a train (symbolic of the Underground Railroad); the unmistakable melodic character, resulting from repetition of lines and phrases and the use of lines from spirituals ("Mean, mean, mean to be free" and "And before I'll be a slave, I'll be buried in my grave"); and finally, the imagery of the poem, from which sprang many creative ideas about drama, pacing, sound, texture, and so forth.

Wendell Logan (b 1940) was educated at Florida A & M University, the American Conservatory, Southern Illinois University, and the University of Iowa. He is presently chairman of the Department of Jazz Studies at the Oberlin Conservatory. As a composer, his works reveal an equal interest in both written and improvised idioms and include a wide variety of mediums, ranging from jazz ensembles to electronic media and symphony orchestra. He has received numerous awards and grants from such agencies as the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, ASCAP, the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund, the John Simon Guggenheim Foundation, commissions from the Meet the Composer/Reader's Digest Fund, and is a winner of the Cleveland Arts Prize for music. His compositions have been performed in this country and abroad by such groups as the Boston Musica Viva, Synchronia, Thamyris, the Center for New Music at the University of Iowa, the Dallas Symphony, members of the Atlanta and Saint Louis Symphonies, the Cleveland Chamber Symphony,

the Savannah Symphony, the Black Music Repertoire Ensemble, and numerous others. Recordings of his music have been released on the Orion, Golden Crest, and Argo labels.

Toccata

This Toccata (literally from Italian *toccare*, to touch, with reference to the touching of keys) is written in an imitative contrapuntal style. While this work is patterned after the Italian perpetuum mobile-type composition of the eighteenth century, it does utilize mild twentieth-century dissonances and a few jazz-like riffs (or phrases). Playful in character, the pianism required for its execution is (to be sure) virtuosic but certainly accessible for both performer and listener. Composed circa 1953, this piece is dedicated to Samuel Dilworth-Leslie.

Statements, Sonata No. 2 for Piano

This sonata for piano in three movements employs as its structural basis three classic forms: Sonata Allegro, Theme & Variations, and Rondo. For its thematic and motivic material a series of twelve notes (tone row) and a paraphrase of a folk melody are utilized. *Statements*, Sonata No. 2 for Piano, while nonprogrammatic, is a reflection and synthesis of styles as well as ideas, all of which have contributed to the musical growth and heritage to be found in our culture.

First Movement (Sonata Allegro)

My Sonata Allegro form has some conceptual differences from a definite Sonata Allegro form. It employs only one theme as opposed to two, and because of the ordering of the materials, it has a compulsory repetition of the development section. The musical fabric itself dictates this type of formal logic in much the same way as it makes mandatory the exclusion of the multiple permutations of the tone row as a further unifying factor. Consequently, the sum total of statement and development of motivic ideas is limited to the basic original, inversion, retrograde, and retrograde inversion forms of the twelve note series. After the development section and an abbreviated return of the main item there is a short coda which leads without pause to the...

Second Movement (Theme & Variations)

The theme of this movement is based on a paraphrase of the folk tune "Another Man Don' Gone." The variations are structured by either the melodic and harmonic implications of the folk tune or related (transposed) permutations of the original tone row. Some variations employ both. There are eight variations.

Third Movement (Rondo)

The last movement begins with a fughetta, has a second theme that is derivative of the main idea of the first movement, and a third theme which is a restatement of the folk tune from the second movement. It ends with a coda summarizing all these materials. With few exceptions, the main fabric of the composition is linear, and despite the use of serial techniques and their applications there is (without strict harmonic implications) a tonal center of D. The organization of the tone row for this composition is D, C#, E, Ab, G, F#, F, Eb, B, C, Bb, A.

Commissioned for the Bicentennial by the Washington Performing Arts Society.

Composer and conductor **Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson** (b 1932; d 2004) was trained both in the United States and abroad. His teachers in composition include Vittorio Giannini and Charles Mills at the Manhattan School of Music, and Earl Kim at Princeton University. Teachers in conducting include Lovro von Matacic, Jonel Perlea, Franco Ferrara, and Dean Dixon.

While versatility best describes his talents and involvement to date, Perkinson has been associated with new movements in music in both New York and Hollywood. He has composed for the ballet as well as conducted (he was music director for Alvin Ailey's 1968-69 season and the 1978 twentieth anniversary season). As composer-in-residence for the Negro Ensemble Company, he wrote several scores for their productions including *Song of the Lusitanian Bogey*. Perkinson also composed and conducted scores for numerous award-winning theatrical, television and documentary films including *Montgomery to Memphis* (Martin Luther King), *Bearden on Bearden* (Romare Bearden), *A Woman Called Moses* (Cecily Tyson), and *A Warm December* (Sidney Poitier).

A la Par

Tania León has written: *A la Par* "is my first attempt to express the dichotomy between the folk-music traditions of my native Cuba and the Classical European training I received at the Havana Conservatory."

A la Par (1986), a powerful duet for piano and a wide range of percussion (including mallet instruments, bells, bottles, and drums of every variety), translates as "going together." "Think of it as like the rails of a train," the composer says. "In the distance they look like one. And as they come toward you, they are in sync; if they take a curve, they take it together."

Those rails might as well be Tania León's two different musical heritages, moving in sync for the first time. The first movement, dissonant in harmony, jagged in contour, plunges us into a frenzy of rhythm, its unrelenting pulse enlivened by unpredictable accents and metric shifts. In the middle of the eerie, shimmering second movement, a rumba *guaguancó* emerges from the haze. León gradually builds up a dense polyrhythmic texture that includes an obsessive rumba ostinato in the left hand of the piano, angular chromatic interjections in the right hand, and tricky cross-rhythms in the drums. (No literal appropriation of the folk idiom, this *guaguancó* has clearly been filtered through a modernist sensibility.) The third movement returns to the propulsive rhythmic drive of the first, now coupled with a gradual *accelerando* and granitic harmonic stasis.

—Robert Schwarz

Tania León (b 1943) has earned international acclaim as a composer and a conductor. She was born in Cuba, proudly claims an ancestry that is French, African, Spanish, and Chinese, and has lived and worked in the United States for the past thirty-two years. She was the founding music director of the Dance Theatre of Harlem and has worked extensively with acclaimed director Robert Wilson. Their most recent collaboration was Wilson's staging of León's first opera, *A Scourge of Hyacinths*, based on the novel by Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka, a Nobel prize author. In addition to her own compositions which include orchestral, choral, and chamber works, León's influence on the field has been broad through appointed positions that include the Revson composer with the New York Philharmonic and the Latin American music advisor to the American Composers Orchestra for its annual *Sonidos Latin America* festivals. Her music can be heard on three CRI compact discs, including her full-length disc *Indígena* (CD 662), the Jubal Trio performing *Journey* (CD 738) and the Voices of Change ensemble performing *Pueblo Mulato* on the Grammy-nominated 1999 disc "Voces Americanas" (CD 773).

Through This Vale of Tears (In Memoriam: Martin Luther King, Jr.) (1986)

Through This Vale of Tears was commissioned by and written for tenor William Brown. It is the first of a series of works that I have written as companion pieces to classical compositions which have posed programming problems by virtue of their unusual instrumentation and the lack of similar pieces with which to pair them. This song cycle shares its instrumentation—tenor, piano, and string quartet—with Ralph Vaughan Williams's *On Wenlock Edge*. Other pieces in this series include *Life Cycles*, a companion to Benjamin Britten's *Serenade* for tenor, horn, and strings, and *Homage à l'histoire*, designed for pairing with Stravinsky's *L'Histoire du soldat*.

Through This Vale of Tears is a social commentary on the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., a realistic if somewhat cynical appraisal of his death and its impact on all of us. The texts for the seven-section work were drawn from diverse sources. "Thou Dost Lay Me in the Dust of Death," "Deliver My Soul," and "My God, Why Hast Thou Forsaken Me?" were taken from the 22nd Psalm. "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child" is a traditional Negro spiritual/sorrow song. Three of my Indianapolis friends provided the poetry for the remaining songs: "If There Be Sorrow" by Mari Evans; "Parades to Hell" by Solomon Edwards, a childhood friend and collaborator in other works; and "Now That He Is Safely Dead," a devastatingly powerful poem which I have set several other times, by Carl Hines.

Composer **David Nathaniel Baker, Jr.** (b 1931) is a native of Indianapolis, Indiana and currently holds the position of distinguished professor of music and chairman of the Jazz Department at the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana. A virtuosic performer on multiple instruments and top in his field in several disciplines, Mr. Baker has taught and performed throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, Scandinavia, New Zealand, and Japan. He is also the conductor and musical director of the Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra.

Mr. Baker received both bachelor's and master's degrees in music education from Indiana University and has studied with a wide range of master teachers, performers, and composers including J.J. Johnson, Bobby Brookmeyer, Janos Starker, George Russell, William Russo, Bernard Heiden, and Gunther Schuller, among others. A 1973 Pulitzer Prize nominee, Mr. Baker has been nominated for a Grammy Award (1979), honored three times by *Downbeat* magazine (as a trombonist, for lifetime achievement, and most recently (1994) as the third inductee to their Jazz Education Hall of Fame), and has received the National Association of Jazz Educators Hall of Fame (1981) from Indiana University, the Arts Midwest Jazz Masters Award (1990), and the Governor's Arts Award of the State of Indiana (1991).

Mr. Baker has been commissioned by more than 500 individuals and ensembles, including Josef Gingold, Ruggiero Ricci, Janos Starker, Harvey Phillips, the New York Philharmonic, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Beaux Arts Trio, the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the Louisville Orchestra, the Ohio Chamber Orchestra, the Audubon String Quartet, and the International Horn Society. His more than 2,000 compositions range from jazz and sonatas to film scores.

Production Notes

Publishing:

Logan: *Runagate, Runagate*: composer (ASCAP)

Perkinson: *Toccata & Statements*: composer (ASCAP)

León: *A la Par*: Peer-Southern Music Co., Inc. (ASCAP)

Baker: *Through This Vale of Tears*: MMB Music, Inc. (BMI)

Engineer: Larry Darling, director of recording at Lawrence University.

Recorded live on January 15, 1977 at the Lawrence Memorial Chapel in Appleton, Wisconsin, except for *Statements* which was recorded on December 14 and 15, 1998 and *A la Par* which had additional recording time on April 3, 1997.

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