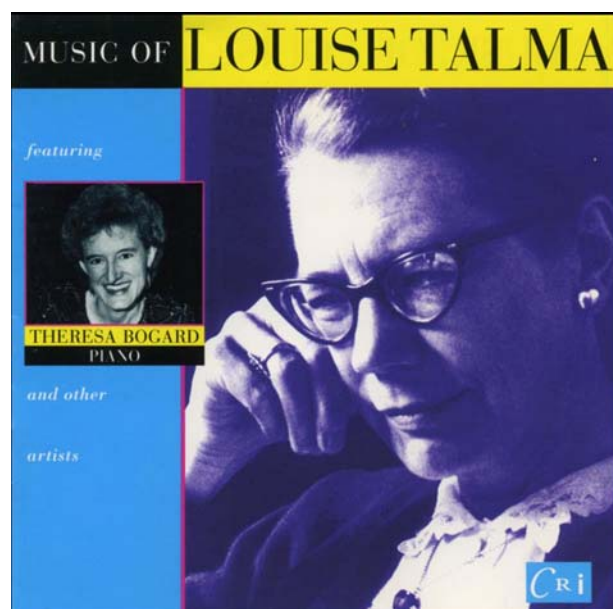


NWCR833

Music of Louise Talma (1906-1996)



Piano Sonata No. 1 (1943) (16:18)

1. I. Largo-Allegro (6:25)
2. II. Larghetto (5:47)
3. III. Presto (4:06)

- Six Etudes (1954) (14:50)
4. I. Allegro (2:23)
 5. II. Prestissimo (1:30)
 6. III. Allegro (1:52)
 7. IV. Allegro (1:12)
 8. V. Allegretto grazioso (1:53)
 9. VI. Molto adagio (5:56)

Three Duologues for clarinet and piano (1967) (12:09)

10. I. Lento (6:02)
11. II. Tranquillo (4:08)
12. III. Presto (1:58)

with Gregory Oakes, clarinet

Sonata No. 2 (1955) (11:24)

13. I. Allegro (5:07)
14. II. Tranquillo (4:09)
15. III. Allegro molto vivace (2:06)
16. IV. Allegro energico (3:37)

17. *Alleluia in Form of a Toccata* (1944) (5:12)

18. *Seven Episodes* for flute, viola, & piano (1987) .. (5:56)

with Rod Garnett, flute; James Przygocki, viola;

Theresa Bogard, piano

Total playing time: 70:07

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Notes

Louise Talma was one of the most eminent American composers of the twentieth century, and her work deserves a lasting place in the musical canon. At her death on August 13, 1996, two months before her ninetieth birthday, she left an *oeuvre* of more than forty major works spanning seven decades. They were well represented in the LP recording catalogues, and a few have appeared on CD. This recording by pianist Theresa Bogard presents four of Talma's most important solo piano compositions as well as two chamber works including *Seven Episodes*, which has not been previously recorded.

Louise Juliette Talma was born on October 31, 1906 in Arcachon, France, of American parents. Her father, a pianist, died when she was an infant. Her mother, Alma Cecile Garrigue, was an opera singer who appeared at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York and in companies in Europe. In the summer of 1914 they moved to the United States. Talma grew up in New York City, and lived there most of her life. She studied at the Institute of Musical Art (incorporated with the Juilliard School of Music in 1946) from 1922 to 1930, completed her bachelor of music degree (1931) at New York University and her master's degree (1933) at Columbia University.

Her original ambition was to become a pianist, and in 1926 she studied piano with Isidore Philipp at the Fontainebleau School of Music in France. It was at here she first came under the influence of Nadia Boulanger, who convinced her that she was a composer. She studied harmony, counterpoint, fugue, composition and organ with Boulanger at Fontainebleau every summer from 1926–1939, and for seven more summers between 1949 and 1976. Louise Talma was the first American to teach at Fontainebleau. From 1936 to 1939 she taught solfège, and in 1978, 1981, and 1982 she taught solfège,

analysis and harmony. She taught theory and ear training at the Manhattan School of Music from 1926–1928 and was on the faculty at Hunter College in New York from 1928-1979.

Talma was the recipient of numerous prestigious awards including two Guggenheim Fellowships (1946 and 1947), a Senior Fulbright Research Grant to compose the opera *The Alcestiad* (1955–56), the Sibelius Medal for Composition from the Harriet Cohen International Awards, London (1963), and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Humanities, Washington, D.C. (1966). In 1974, she became the first woman composer to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. The citation at her induction into the National Institute read in part: "Many of her admirers, who had grown accustomed to seeing or hearing her referred to as one of our foremost women composers, have noticed with pleasure in recent years that she is being referred to more and more often without qualification at all as one of our foremost composers."

Talma considered her compositions to belong to three major style periods: the works up to 1954 are neoclassical, tonal, and contrapuntal; those from 1954 to about 1960 are strictly serial; after 1960 the use of serialism is simpler and more relaxed. However, she always believed that the overtone series is basic to music, and her works incorporating serialism do not negate tonality. The works on this recording represent her most ambitious efforts in all of these periods, and illustrate both her tonal and serial styles.

Piano Sonata No. 1 (1943)

Talma's first piano sonata is a serious, large-scale work in three movements. It was composed during her first summer at the MacDowell Colony, and is dedicated to Mrs. Edward MacDowell. First performed by Talma herself at a League of

Composers concert in 1945, it received the North American Prize in 1947 and was published by Carl Fischer in 1948. In the first movement, Largo-Allegro, a short declamatory introduction presents the notes C, F, D, and G both melodically and horizontally, establishing a tonal center on C, and leading to a driving Allegro in a rhythmic ostinato figuration. The second movement, Larghetto, recalls the C, F, D, G motive in a serene melody, with homogeneous polyphonic texture, and quartal and quintal harmonies. The Presto provides a dramatic closing, with its toccata-like rhythmic ostinato and changing meters.

Six Etudes (1954)

This work was commissioned in 1952 by composer John Edmunds for the pianist of his new music group in San Francisco. The first performance, however, was by Beveridge Webster at Carnegie Hall in 1955. This is Talma's first use of serialism. Each of the etudes employs a different twelve-tone set, and presents a particular pianistic challenge. Each is dedicated to a different friend of Talma's. The first, Allegro, an etude for dynamic contrasts, is dedicated to the American playwright Thornton Wilder; the second, Prestissimo, for staccato *senza* pedal, is dedicated to a student of Talma's, Estelle Herschler; the third, Allegro, for sostenuto pedal, is to John Edmunds; the fourth, Allegro, for wide skips, is to composer Paul Nordoff; the fifth, Allegretto grazioso, for crossed hands, was inspired by the dedicatee's performance of the sonatas of Scarlatti, and is for Guiomar Novaes; and the sixth, Molto adagio, for increase of notes per beat, is to Beveridge Webster.

Three Duologues for clarinet & piano (1967)

The *Three Duologues* are dedicated to Beveridge and Michael Webster, who recorded them on Composers Recordings, Inc. in 1974. They represent a departure from Talma's typical harmonic structures and draw heavily on serial techniques. While the sound remains open and transparent, the intervals and textures are more varied, with highly disjunct melodic movement. The first movement is in three sections: Lento, meditative and lyrical, dominated by a melancholy reiterated falling half step motive; Allegro, mischievous and staccato; and *Più mosso*, excited and motoric. In the second movement, Tranquillo, clarinet and piano both spin out expansive melodies in wide intervals. The third movement, Presto, alternates pointillistic fragments with motoric, toccata-like flurries.

Sonata No. 2 (1955)

The Sonata No. 2, a four movement work that incorporates tonal and serial elements, is one of Talma's most important works for solo piano. It was begun in August 1944, but the bulk of the work was written in 1952, and it was finally completed on August 22, 1955 at the MacDowell Colony. The sonata was published by Carl Fischer in 1972. The second sonata illustrates many stylistic traits which can also be found in her other piano works: abrupt changes of material; virtuoso, toccata-like passages alternating with reflective, static chordal sections; wide registral spacing; short, contrasting sections; and use of neoclassical forms. It illustrates her blend of tonal style with serial elements. This sonata is dedicated to Thornton Wilder.

Alleluia in Form of a Toccata (1944)

The *Alleluia* was dedicated to composer Harold Shapero and his wife Esther, and was published by Carl Fischer in 1947. It was first performed by pianist Ray Lev on in Carnegie Hall on November 9, 1945. This joyous, one movement work is a staccato study with fresh, cheerful melodies and propulsive perpetual motion, requiring firm rhythmic control, agility and stamina. Its introductory clangorous call to worship illustrates the bell-like sound so typical of Talma's sonorities.

Seven Episodes for flute, viola, & piano (1987)

The *Seven Episodes* were published by Henmar Press (distributed by C.F. Peters) in 1988 as part of the Inter-American Music Awards Series from the music fraternity Sigma Alpha Iota, and are dedicated to Frank and Anabel Brief. A late work, the *Episodes* do not appear on most lists of Talma's works, and have never before been recorded. These short contrasting pieces look back to the harmonic palette of the second piano sonata, and alternate between Talma's two typical textures, toccata-like and flowing lyrical passages. They lead smoothly from one episode to the next without pause: Andante, Giocoso, Poco meno mosso, Doppio meno mosso, Poco più mosso, Più mosso, (quarter = 144). The fourth episode, Doppio meno mosso, is the most reflective, and the fifth and sixth become more and more energetic, leading to the climactic seventh episode.

—Helen Walker-Hill

Theresa Bogard received her undergraduate education at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in Australia where she studied piano with Elizabeth Powell, and at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She then attended the Eastman School of Music where she completed a master's degree in piano performance. She earned her doctor of musical arts degree in piano performance at the University of Colorado. Dr. Bogard has taught piano at Truman State University in Missouri and West Chester University in Pennsylvania. She is currently an associate professor at the University of Wyoming where she has been coordinator of keyboard studies since 1992.

Dr. Bogard is interested in historical performance practice and early pianos, and received a Fulbright grant in 1988 to study fortepiano with Stanley Hoogland at the Royal Conservatory of the Hague in The Netherlands. In 1989, she was a top-prize winner in the International Mozart Fortepiano Competition in Bruges, Belgium. She has edited two volumes of fortepiano etudes by the French composer Hélène de Montgeroult published by Vivace Press (1999).

Dr. Bogard is an avid performer of music by women composers. She has given critically acclaimed concerts of works by women composers in New Zealand and Australia, and has presented lecture/recitals on music by American women composers at several symposia on women in music. She performs numerous solo and chamber music recitals throughout the U.S. each year. Since 1996, Dr. Bogard has added traditional Balinese gamelan music to her special interests and has studied extensively in Bali, Indonesia.

Gregory Oakes, clarinet, is an enthusiastic proponent of contemporary music. Between 1996 and 1997, he played as a fellowship member of the Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, the resident new-music ensemble at the Aspen Music Festival. He is currently a member of the contemporary group Non Sequitur, and performs regularly with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra and Central City Opera.

Rod Garnett, flute, has performed and recorded extensively as a classical, jazz and folk flutist. He currently travels and performs as a member of the Irish folk ensemble Colcannon and the classical guitar and flute duo Komodore and Garnett. He teaches flute and world music at the University of Wyoming in Laramie.

James Przygocki, viola, is associate professor of music at the University of Wyoming. He serves as principal violist with the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra and is also on the faculty of the Indiana University Summer String Academy. Przygocki is active as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral player and has played in Brazil, Spain, Canada, and around the U.S.

Production Notes

Producers: Theresa Bogard & Stephan Cavarra.

Recording Engineers: Stephan Cavarra, Dave Wilson.

Digital Editing and Mastering: Stephan Cavarra, SGC Music Producers.

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Publishing information. *Alleluia in the Form of a Toccata*, Piano Sonata No. 1, and Piano Sonata No. 2: Carl Fischer. *Seven Episodes*: C.F. Peters, Inc. *Six Etudes for Piano*: G. Schirmer, Inc. *Three Duologues* for clarinet and piano: Edition Musicus. All pieces BMI.

CRI Production Manager: Allison Wolf

Executive Director: Joseph R. Dalton