

NWCR842

Walter Winslow

Concertati Veneziani and Other Works



<i>Concertati Veneziani</i> (1996)	(29:57)
1. I. Briosio	(6:37)
2. II. Intermezzo – Andante espressivo	(2:30)
3. III. Scherzo – Vivace; Trio – un poco tranquillo; Danza Macabra-Allegro vigoroso; Scherzo-Vivace	(7:02)

4. IV. Finale: Tranquillo Quarter note=c.126; Adagio molto con profonda espressione	(13:35)	
Curtis Macomber, violin; Linda Quan, violin; Nancy Wilson, violin; Mark Zaki, violin; Lois Martin, viola; Charles Forbes, cello		
5. <i>A Voice from Elysium</i> (1995)	(13:27)	
Jayn Rosenfeld, flute; Diane Bruce Sinclair, violin; Charles Forbes, cello; Meg Bachman Vas, piano		
6. <i>Mirror of Diana</i> (1991)	(7:18)	
Jean Kopperud, clarinet		
<i>Six Paripari</i> (Tahitian District Songs) (1995)		(15:19)
7. I – Matahiti I	(3:20)	
8. II – Matahiti II	(1:21)	
9. III – Hitiaa-Faaone	(3:17)	
10. IV – Tautira	(1:01)	
11. V – Mataiea	(3:35)	
12. VI – Punaauia	(2:32)	
Margaret Anne Butterfield, soprano; Paul Wesley Hofreiter, piano		

Total Playing Time: 66:23

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Notes

Concertati Veneziani was composed in the summer of 1996. Though the piece was not a commission, the title was chosen to commemorate the Venetian Republic, which according to historic tradition lasted a thousand years until it was extinguished by Napoleon in 1797. Nineteen seventy-seven marks the bicentennial of this sorry event. The connection is appropriate, since the piece is dedicated to Patricia Fortini Brown. Central to her work as an art historian, the city remains a focal point for both our lives.

The instrumentation, four violins, viola, and cello, is unusual for a string sextet. It allows me to play off two violin soloists against a string quartet group, as happens in the Finale, and allows for solo treatment of the group of violins as well.

In *Concertati Veneziani*, I allowed myself a full range of thoughts encompassing several hundred years of Western music. The risk in such a project is losing one's personal musical style, but one I thought worth taking, given that my style is well-formed, mature, and evolving. Besides, considering the uncertainties of my health, it was possible that this would be my last musical composition. I felt a need to honor the musical tradition which has made my life rich beyond measure. Thus the need to sum up, the need to speak in a somewhat broader language.

Concertati Veneziani contains no attempt to imitate other ("historical") composers' styles, nor does it attempt to

reconstruct the musical language of any historical period ("Baroque," "Classical," etc.), even in small snatches. It does make use of various compositional devices, such as a kind of chorale variation in the Adagio that ends the Finale, and structural outlines ("forms" would be going too far) from the Renaissance to the present.

For example, the first movement could be diagrammed as Sonata-Allegro with Introduction, but the harmonic language generally becomes less stable throughout the movement, and true themes are not to be found. All this occurs in a musical language that treats tonality (diatonic and chromatic), modality, atonality, and dodecaphony as if they were all inhabitants of the same universe. However, the proportions used of these pitch languages should not be taken as commentary on their validity. With these last remarks I leave you to enjoy this adventure!

A Voice from Elysium (1995) was written for the New York Camerata. The Latin text is an extensive inscription from an ancient Roman tomb. It takes the form of a dialog between a young, recently deceased woman and her husband, who is still living, crazed with grief. There is also a third person, a traveler who happens by, reads the inscription, and comments on it briefly. The traveler may represent posterity, or the public in general. His appearance is a convention frequent in inscriptions of this kind.

In *A Voice from Elysium*, the listener faces a semi-theatrical situation (though there is no stage action) in which the thoughts and feelings of the characters must be fleshed out and made clear in the music. The desperate, self-destructive mood of Atimetus, the husband, is underlined by the instrumentalists, who shout out a punctuation of the singer's line. Atimetus's is the world of the living, full of turmoil, and it is characterized by musical textures which are densely chromatic and frequently harsh. Interestingly, the world beyond the grave has music which is largely diatonic, and keeps circling about one chord.

This music introduces the wife, Homonoea, who appears slowly out of ethereal textures, her voice gradually coming into focus like an other-worldly vision. The music reappears in the traveler's commentary. After Atimetus threatens to kill himself, Homonoea rebukes him, then sings a tender song which ends with her voice fading away until it blends with the instruments and disappears. In the ascending spirals of flute and piano, the listener may hear a fusion of the chromatic (now reduced to filigree) and the diatonic, as the worlds of light and shade join for a strange moment, seemingly frozen in time.

Mirror of Diana (1991) was inspired by a trip to Lago Nemi (also called Nemus Dianae), a small round lake in an extinct volcano in the Alban hills. It was written for David Keberle, a composer and clarinetist who lived nearby in Rome, partly as thanks for making possible my first visit to the lake. In ancient times, a priest of Diana lived near a sacred grove and temple by the lake. Anyone who wished to succeed him in his duty had to be a runaway slave who could tear a branch off a certain tree. This act entitled him to challenge the current priest to single combat. If he killed the incumbent, he became the priest, until such time as he, too, was successfully challenged. Such bloody-minded thoughts probably don't occur to the lake's visitors, who see its peaceful, shining waters nestled in beautiful wooded surroundings. There are small farms on the floor of the crater where strawberries are grown, so many that there is a strawberry festival each June.

All in all, an isolated place of striking beauty with overtones of mystery and violence.

—Walter Winslow

Six Paripari [Tahitian District Songs] (1995) are contrapuntal chants based upon the texts and inspired by the poetic devices of *paripari*, an ancient genre of Tahitian choral music. In early times *paripari* were sung by village groups during an annual festival in July and later on were incorporated into Protestant church services. According to a missionary dictionary a *paripari* is "a song about the transactions and qualities of a place ... the spray breaking on the shore or a canoe." Each valley, waterfall or mountain had its own *paripari*.

A visitor to Tahiti in 1920 described a church service which featured the *paripari*: "The music is quite indescribable. A group of men and women form a *himene*, a trained choir. One woman will take up the main musical theme. After a note or two the other women join in counterpoint. Other parts are woven in by the men sitting in the pew immediately behind. I do not recognize any of our intervals—the dominant, tonic, or thirds. And there must be many quarter tones. It is not at all like any Eastern or Arabic music which I know. Much closer to our own ... Negro church music as I have heard it in the South, where the thematic line is taken up, embroidered, played on by other voices. In this Tahitian music the several parts seem to mingle, rise and fall, intertwine in such perfect and pulsing rhythm that I can almost feel the building vibrating. It both stirs me and leaves me restless and nervous. I think how certain sounds will make a dog howl. I recall the vibration of the cicadas' song on a hot summer's night. I used to listen to them as a child and wonder whether two insects were singing or a thousand. I would try to localize and separate the sounds. I would become confused. It was as if the whole world were shaking in a crescendo rhythm." [George Biddle, *Tahitian Journal*, St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1968]

—Patricia Fortini Brown

Text:

A Voice from Elysium

Text translation by Professor Michael Putnam

(verba Homonoeae)

tu, qui secura procedis mente, parumper sistergradum, quaeso, verbaque puaca lege: illa ego, quae claris fueram praelata puellis, hoc Homonoea brevi condita sum tumulo; cui formam Paphie, Charites tribuere decorum, quam Pallas cunctis artibus erudiit. nondum bis denos aetas mea viderat annos, iniecere manus invida fata mihi. nec pro me queror hoc: morte est mihi tristior ipsa maeror Atimeti coniugis ille mei.

(verba viatoris)

sit tibi terra levis, mulier dignissima vita, quaeque tuis olim profuerere bonis.

(verba Atimeti)

Si pensare animas sinerent crudelia fata, etposset redimi morte aliena salus, quantulacumque meae debentur tempora vitae, pensassem pro te, cara Homonoea, libens. at nunc, quod possum, fugiam lucemque deosque, ut te matura per Styga morte sequar.

(verba Homonoeae)

parce tuam, coniux, fletu quassare iuventam fataque marendo sollicitare mea! Nil prosunt lacrimae nec possunt fata moveri: viximus; hicromnis exitus unus habet. parce! ita non unquam similem experiare dolorem, et faveant votis numina cuncta tuis, quodque mihi eripuit mors inmatura iuventae, id tibi victuro proroget ulterius.

(words of Homonoea [Greek for Concord]):

You who make your way with mind untroubled, stay your step a brief while, I beseech you, and read these few words. I, that Homonoea who was preferred to girls of renown, am buried in this narrow tomb, I to whom Venus gave beauty, the Graces charm, whom Athena refined in all the arts. My life span had not yet seen twice ten years. The envious fates thrust their hands on me. Nor do I utter this groan on my own behalf. Sadder to me than death itself is that grief of my husband Atimetus.

(words of the traveler):

May earth rest lightly upon you, woman most worthy of life, who once enjoyed to the full your good fortune.

(words of Atimetus):

If the cruel fates were to allow souls to suffer ransom and life could be brought back by someone else's death, whatever little span of life remains my due I would gladly offer in exchange on your behalf, dear Homonoea. And now, as it is in my power, I shall flee both life and the gods above so that I might follow you across the Styx in timely death.

(words of Homonoea):

Husband, leave off troubling your youth with grief and disturbing my destiny by mourning. Your tears avail naught nor can the fates be moved. We have lived our life. This one outcome possesses all. Leave off! So that you might never share a kindred grief and that the gods might look kindly on your prayers: what untimely death has snatched from my youth, may this prolong your life in days to come.

Six Pariipari (Tahitian District Songs)

1. Matahiti I

Tōrīrī te ua i Fa'apuna
nā tahatai au te haere,
ta'u taera'a mai Paepaeroa ra e.
tiare Hītoa te ne e;
e tiare Hītoa nō ta'u 'āi'a
tāhiri te hau'a no'ano'a e;
tāhiri noa mai te hu 'a Hītoa na te hupe
ia i 'āfa 'ie.

2. Matahiti II

Apirimaue i tō na taura'a,
Vaipātōtō tei ta'i e.
Te vahine tara iti nō Fare-ahu
e i ni'a i te tahua Amura te vāhi orira'a,
Te vahine tara iti ho'i mai e.

1. Matahiti I

As the fine rain falls at Fa 'apuna
I go along the seashore there.
When I arrived at Paepaeroa
The Hītoa was in bloom.
Hītoa, flower of my homeland
Wafting its fragrant scent away
The fragrant Hītoa comes to me
Scent without end on the mountain breeze

2. Matahiti II

The little fish clings to the rocks
Of the torrent Vaipatoto.
O water-nymph of Fare-ahu
Near Amura, place for walking
O water-nymph, come back tome!

3. Hitiaa-Faaone
 Haere ho'i au i te vai puna ra
 E inu i te pape hōpuna e.
 E tahua ti'ara'a te ara'a 'o Pere.
 'Ua 'amu i te fara 'aupara e:
 Tei Araau iti tei Avaavarau,
 Punipuni-tōrea-hia vau e,
 Tei e rua iti tā'u tāpunira'a
 Tā'oto'otoāhia vau e.

*Pere: goddess of fire and volcanos, **fara: Pandanus fruit, ***torea and petea: varieties of snipe

4. Tautira
 Haruru noa mai te Rua-I-anoano,
 E metua i te vao e rota.
 Ahu-viri e, Ahu-vara e,
 Piarere i te vai e hī.
 4. Tautira

5. Mataiea
 'Ia hi'o noa mai Teri'irere e,
 ta'u fenua iti 'o Mataiea e,
 Te mou'a rā ho'i Tetūfera nei e,
 te pape i Vaite e.
 Terā ra ua e, 'a 'iriti 'a'e na iā vai noa
 mai te mou'a rahi e
 Auē te pape Vaihiria e,
 piri iti tu'iro'o e.
 Tōpatapata ua te vai uta ra,
 te vāhi tūhia e te anuanua,

6. Punaauia
 Topa te maru i tā'u Fa'atea e,
 tē hi'o nei au i Atuara,
 Tei vai noa mai e, tei mana'ohia e au e,
 Tau i ta'i mai te manu iti,
 Ta'i petea navanavae e

The harmonious song of the petea.***

3. Hitiaa-Faaone
 I go to the spring to drink the water
 In the plain where Pere* was overcome
 Where she ate some unripe fara.**
 At Araau, at Avaavarau
 I camouflage myself as the torea***
 Withdraw into my hideaway
 And give myself up to dreams.

Roaring always is the Rua-I-anoano
 It is my refuge in the solitude of the woods.
 O Ahu-viri, o Ahu-vara
 It is the water which gushes forth.

Teie ta'u mea e ta'i nei e,
 e mea aroha rahi te fenua e.
 5. Mataiea
 Teri'irere beholds my small land of Mataiea
 The mountain Tetufura and the river Vaite
 O distant rain, draw back and uncover the
 great mountain.
 Alas, lake Vaihiria, well-known enigma
 Where falls the rain and where rises the rainbow
 Land that I mourn and love so much!

6. Punaauia
 The shadows fall in my shining alley
 I see the flame-red of Atuara,
 Always in my thought, rising before me
 Here is the song of the little bird

Walter Winslow (1947-1998) was an American composer whose life was cut short by cancer at age 50. As the works on this disc display, his eloquent music was influenced not just by the history of music gone before, but also by legends and relics of European antiquities and by the beauty and solitude of nature.

Born and raised in Salem, Oregon, Walter Winslow was drawn to music as a young child, and began composing at the age of eight. At nineteen, when he was attending Oberlin College and Conservatory of Music he wrote the first of two string quartets. Graduating summa cum laude with degrees in musical composition and Russian in 1970, he went on to pursue graduate studies at the University of California at Berkeley with Edward Dugger, Andrew Imbrie, and Olly Wilson, and earned a Ph.D. in music in 1975.

Winslow pursued a teaching career in musical composition during the decades that followed, with positions at Berkeley, Oberlin, Reed College, and Columbia University, and finally at the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey where he was a teacher of piano from 1990 to 1997. Composer Mario Pelusi, his colleague at Lawrenceville, once observed: "Taking a music lesson with Walter was often like looking into the soul of music itself."

An accomplished pianist, Winslow played in recitals throughout his life. Deeply committed to twentieth-century music, he won his first piano competition in 1965 with Shostakovich's Second Piano Concerto. He had broad musical tastes, and the

programs of his recitals read like a short history of Western music, with works by Scarlatti, Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart, Chopin, and Schubert, as well as his own works and pieces by Schoenberg, Boulez, and Mario Davidovsky.

Diagnosed with cancer in December 1994, Winslow was given about a year and a half to live. He defied that initial bleak diagnosis by continuing to write music, to perform and to teach for another three years. He performed Bach's *Goldberg Variations*, one of the most demanding pieces in the piano repertoire, in two recitals in the Fall of 1997, just months before he died—an extraordinary testimony to his strength, character and passion!

By the time of his death in 1998 at the age of fifty, Winslow had already earned a substantial reputation as a composer with works performed across the United States and in Canada, Belgium, Denmark and Italy.

In the course of a distinguished career cut short, he composed over sixty works of music in a variety of genres, including songs, chamber music, works for solo instruments, vocal ensembles, orchestral music, works for chamber orchestra, works for chorus and orchestra, a musical theatre piece, and a composition for electronic tape. Many of these works were commissioned and performed by some of the finest contemporary musicians and ensembles including the Earplay Ensemble, the Gregg Smith Singers, Speculum Musicae, Cygnus Ensemble, the New York New Music Ensemble, and the New York Camerata.

