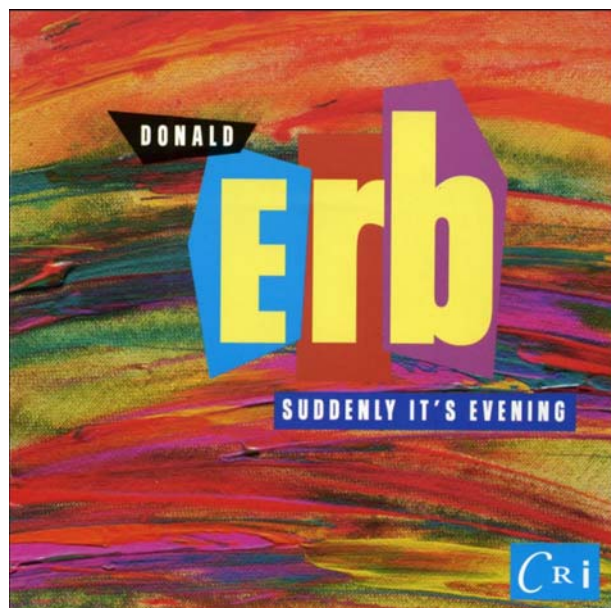


NWCR857

Donald Erb

Suddenly It's Evening



1. String Quartet No. 3 (1995) (22:24)
The Audubon Quartet: David Ehrlich, violin;
Akami Takayama, violin; Doris Lederer, viola;
Clyde Shaw, cello

- Suddenly It's Evening* (1997) (17:50)
2. I. Xanax in Xanadu (5:10)
 3. II. Interlude (2:18)
 4. III. Winter in My Heart (7:38)
 5. IV. Eyes of Flame (2:44)
Jeffrey Krieger, cello
- Three Poems for violin and piano* (1987) (17:11)
6. I. Together Forever (5:52)
 7. II. Toccata ("Rats feet over broken glass"
by T. S. Eliot) (5:44)
 8. III. Love Poem (5:35)
James Stern, violin; Audrey Andrist, piano
- Three Pieces for Double Bass Alone* (1999) (6:40)
9. I. A Quiet Song (3:47)
 10. II. A Scherzo (1:34)
 11. III. A Race for the Exit (1:19)
Bertram Turetzky, double bass

Total playing time: 64:05

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Notes

String Quartet No. 3 was written for the Audubon Quartet under a grant from the Koussevitzky Foundation and was completed on December 8, 1995 at the Atlantic Center for the Arts.

The quartet is in one movement which has within it several noticeable sections. It begins slowly with a short introduction containing an important melodic fragment in the viola part, followed by a violin melody which reveals the source material for the piece. This material is developed for some time with an increasing sense of energy. It arrives at a new, much slower section based on the same ideas, but more melodic in character. This also increases in speed and energy, introducing a long section of very fast and colorful music which segues into slow music still based on the same ideas. The fast music returns, this time becoming very wild before it crashes into a slow segment which is somber and reflective and quotes a hymn from my childhood, "Jesus Loves Me." This is my third use of the children's hymn in memory of those who died in the Oklahoma City bombing. A section of fast, loud music takes us to the end of the piece.

Suddenly It's Evening, a commission from the Fromm Foundation, was completed on December 5, 1997. It was written for Jeffrey Krieger who asked me to write it for his unique electronic cello. The title is taken from a poem by Salvatore Quasimodo, only three lines in length. The English translation is:

Each of us is alone on the heart of the earth
Pierced by a ray of sun

And suddenly it's evening.

The titles of the four movements are meant to give some insight into the character of each movement. The first movement "Xanax in Xanadu" is introspective, rather sad, with a chilly end to it. Interlude, the second movement which separates two slow movements, is fiery, virtuosic, and designed to show the cellist off as a dazzlingly good one. "Winter in My Heart" is sad music, written perhaps about the concerns of an old person, and "Eyes of Flame" which follows is fierce and fast and is, again, meant to be a showcase for the cellist.

Each of the three movements of *Three Poems* for violin and piano is based on a line of poetry or a poetic statement which caught my attention. "Together Forever" was engraved on my father and mother's tombstone at the direction of my father shortly before he died. He wasn't a poet by any means, but the statement touched me.

"Rats feet over broken glass" is a line from "The Hollow Men" by T. S. Eliot. It is really self-explanatory. The sound image is so vivid that when I read the poem many years ago the image remained with me. I had meant to use it in some way for years and the right moment finally arrived.

The last movement takes as its emotional springboard a quote from Don Marquis: "It is better to be a part of beauty for one instant and then cease to exist than to exist forever." The romanticism of this quote also touched me in a unique way

and I attempted to convey in the music the wonderful idealism in his words.

Three Poems for violin and piano was commissioned by the McKim Fund of the Library of Congress for Miriam Fried, violin and James Tocco, piano.

Three Pieces for Double Bass Alone is the most recent work on this disc and is composed for my old buddy Bert Turetzky. I hope that it is a piece which young double bass players may use for recitals and such, as it makes use of a variety of skills. The three short movements are: "A Quiet Song," "A Scherzo," and "A Race for the Exit," each dealing with a different quality of sound and a different playing technique.

Donald Erb was born January 17, 1927 in Youngstown, Ohio. A composer of fierce individuality and a man of strong loyalties, he was introduced to music at an early age by his great aunt, a Kansas school teacher who gave him trumpet lessons during summer vacations. He continued taking lessons when he came home to Lakewood, Ohio, and he launched his professional career playing jazz trumpet and arranging music for big bands.

Interested in the forward-looking music of the day, Erb received a rigorous education at Kent State University, the Cleveland Institute of Music, and Indiana University. The teachers who influenced him most included Harold Miles, Hugh Glauser, Kenneth Gaburo, Marcel Dick, Ward Lewis, and Bernhard Heiden. He also studied briefly in Paris with Nadia Boulanger.

For more than forty years, Erb divided his time between teaching and composing. He taught at Bowling Green State University, Southern Methodist University, Indiana University, and the Cleveland Institute of Music, where he headed the composition department until his retirement in 1996. A world traveler, he also served as resident composer at the American Academy in Rome, artist-in-residence at the University of Wollongong in Australia, and composer-in-residence with the Dallas and Saint Louis Symphony Orchestras and the Bakersfield, California school system.

Erb's bold and colorful music has been performed by leading orchestras, chamber ensembles, and solo artists such as Lynn Harrell, Richard Stoltzman, Miriam Fried, and Stuart Dempster. He has written more than one hundred works, won major commissions from the Chicago, Cleveland, Saint Louis, Baltimore, Dallas, and Houston Symphony Orchestras, received grants from the Rockefeller, Guggenheim, and Ford Foundations, and earned recognition from the International Rostrum of Composers, National Endowment for the Arts, Library of Congress, and American Academy of Arts and Letters.

Erb wrote the article on orchestration in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. In his orchestral music, he writes the book on late twentieth-century timbre and texture. Starting from the vast post-Romantic orchestra of Mahler and Strauss, he expands the instrumental palette with synthesizers, singing voices, water goblets, tuned wine glasses, harmonicas, police whistles, and a huge array of percussion. In Erb's scores, the piano is prepared with masking tape, the harp is stroked with a tuning key, strings are played with chopsticks or pencils, and brass instruments use a variety of mutes familiar to jazz artists.

Although extended techniques are required of the players, the vibrant sonorities in Erb's scores also stem from the inventive mixing of old and new sounds and the pushing of instruments to extremes of pitch and dynamics. The composer builds crescendos of cataclysmic power. He creates shimmering sonic spaces that gleam with extended trills and glassy

harmonics. He calls for expressive glissandos and snaking scale passages that zoom to the heights, then falls dramatically to rumbling depths. He stabilizes nervous rhythms with long pedal points. He punctuates phrases with explosive accents.

While Erb speaks an intense contemporary musical language, his structures are solidly rooted in tradition. Like Bartók, he weaves expansive canvases from small chromatic motives. Like Beethoven, he storms the heavens with insistent repetitions. Like Mozart, he strives for clarity and balance. Though his scores are crafted from zillions of notes, the generating musical idea shines through like a laser beam.

Though his statements are serious, he maintains a sense of humor. Fresh and immediate, his music makes an unforgettable impression.

—Wilma Salisbury

Founded in 1974, the **Audubon Quartet** achieved international recognition by winning top prizes in three major competitions: the International String Quartet Competition in Evian, France; the String Quartet Competition at the Festival Villa-Lobos in Rio de Janeiro; and the International String Quartet Competition in Portsmouth, England. It was the first American quartet to win the top prize in an international string quartet competition. Since that time the Quartet has performed in major concert halls throughout the United States, Europe, and the Middle East. In 1981 the Quartet made a three-week tour of China at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Culture, the first American quartet to visit the People's Republic of China. The Audubon has recordings on the Centaur, RCA, Opus One, and Telarc labels. Equally at home performing standard literature and contemporary music, the Quartet has premiered compositions by leading composers such as Ezra Laderman, David Baker, and Peter Schickele. Members of the Quartet are well-respected teachers and, since 1981, the Quartet has enjoyed a residency at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Award-winning performer **Jeffrey Krieger**—chamber musician, solo recitalist, and specialist in the performance of new music—plays the more conventional-looking cello as principal cellist of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. He is among the new generation of solo recitalists who have incorporated technology—the computer and video, as well as an electric cello built by Vermont craftsman Tucker Barrett—into performance. Mr. Krieger was a recipient of the 1993 Solo Recitalist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a 1996 State of Connecticut Commission on the Arts Artist Fellowship. Krieger's broad repertoire includes works by renowned composers including Louis Andriessen, John Cage, and Morton Subotnick, as well as music by numerous emerging composers. He has performed over forty premieres.

The **Stern/Andrist Duo**, American violinist James Stern and Canadian pianist Audrey Andrist, gave their first performances in New York City in 1987. Since then, this husband and wife team has been heard in recital throughout North America, performing at such prestigious venues as New York's Steinway Hall and the Ravinia Festival in Chicago. James Stern studied at the Juilliard School with Louise Behrend, Joseph Fuchs, and Lewis Kaplan. Stern's wide-ranging artistic endeavors include performances at the prestigious Marlboro and Bowdoin Festivals, the position of concertmaster of the New York Youth Symphony, numerous premieres of new music, and engagements throughout the country as a master class teacher. Audrey Andrist, also a

graduate of Juilliard, studied with William Moore in Canada and Herbert Stessin in New York. She is the winner of the San Antonio International Competition, the Juilliard Concerto Competition, and the Eckhardt-Gramatté contemporary music competition in Canada and is a frequent performer on CBC Radio. Former faculty members of the Cleveland Institute of Music, Stern and Andrist currently reside in Stockton, California.

Bertram Turetzky, M.A., Music History, University of Hartford, Contrabassist. Turetzky has been featured contrabass soloist in the music centers of the United States, Europe, Latin America, and Australia. More than 300 compositions have been written for, performed by, and

recorded by Turetzky, making him one of the few performers, in all of music history, to have created a large and impressive repertoire of music for his instrument. He is also an acclaimed scholar/researcher in the fields of jazz history and eighteenth-century chamber music and the author of many reviews, articles, and the now classic book *The Contemporary Contrabass*. He is also a published composer, editor, transcriber, and arranger of music for his instrument. Turetzky has also received many awards for composition from ASCAP plus grants from the NEA and Meet The Composer as well as many commissions. Bertram Turetzky is currently the senior professor of music at UCSD.

Production Notes

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Three Poems: Engineered by Carl P. Jordan at Sound Saver Services.

Three Pieces for Double Bass Alone: Engineered by Peter Sprague at Spragueland Recordings.