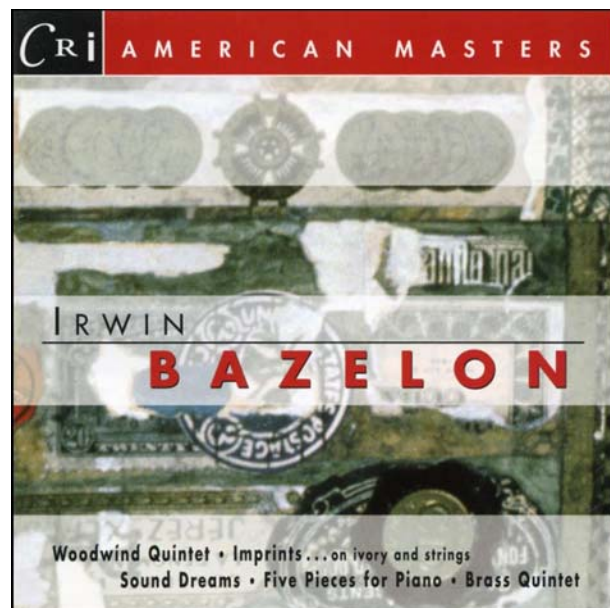


NWCR871

# Irwin Bazelon

## The Music of Irwin Bazelon



Woodwind Quintet (1975) .....	(18:46)
1. I. Lively .....	(6:49)
2. II. Slow .....	(6:34)
3. III. Lively .....	(5:23)
Boehm Woodwind Quintette: Susan Stewart, flute; Phyllis Bohl, oboe; Don Stewart, clarinet; Joseph Anderer, horn; Richard Vrotney, bassoon	

4. <i>Imprints... on Ivory and Strings</i> , for piano (1978) .....	(16:12)
Wanda Maximilien, piano	
5. <i>Sound Dreams ... In Memory of James</i> <i>Jones</i> , for chamber ensemble (1977) .....	(11:49)
Collage New Music Chamber Ensemble: Randolph Bowman, flute; Robert Annis, clarinet; Frank Epstein, percussion; Christopher Oldfather, piano; Joel Smirnoff, viola; Martha Babcock, cello; Gunther Schuller, conductor	
Five Pieces for Piano (1950) .....	(8:00)
6. I. Moderate .....	(1:27)
7. II. Slow .....	(1:40)
8. III. Moderate .....	(1:47)
9. IV. Moderate .....	(1:35)
10. V. Fast .....	(1:23)
Wanda Maximilien, piano	
Brass Quintet (1963) .....	(17:38)
11. I. Fast, Driving .....	(5:33)
12. II. Moderate .....	(3:48)
13. III. Slow .....	(4:04)
American Brass Quintet: Raymond Mase, trumpet; Louis Ranger, trumpet; Edward Birdwell, horn; Herbert Rankin, trombone; Robert Biddlecome, bass trombone	

Total playing time: 72:36

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## Notes

In his early years in New York, **Irwin Bazelon** (b Evanston, IL, 4 June 1922; d New York City, 2 Aug 1995) supported himself by scoring documentaries, art films, and theatrical productions. During the 1950s and 1960s he composed more than fifty scores of this kind, which proved to be an invaluable preparation for his orchestral music. As a valedictory of sorts, he wrote *Knowing the Score: Notes on Film Music*, published in 1975 and widely used as a college textbook. As guest composer, Bazelon frequently lectured at leading universities and music schools throughout the United States and England. Young people were especially drawn to his feisty spirit and no-nonsense approach to earning a living by applying compositional talents to the commercial world without sacrificing integrity.

Bazelon's works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, solo instruments, and voice have been performed throughout the United States and Europe. He conducted his music with such orchestras as the National Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Kansas City Philharmonic, and the Orchestre Nationale de Lille. He received grants and commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Koussevitzky Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Kansas City Philharmonic, the New Orleans Philharmonic, the American Brass Quintet, the Boehm Quintette, and the Royal Northern College of Music.

Bazelon was a long-time horseracing enthusiast: one of his best-known works, *Churchill Downs* (Chamber Concerto No. 2) (CRI 623), is named for the home of the Kentucky Derby, and his Ninth Symphony (subtitled "Sunday Silence for the Winner of the 1989 Derby") is dedicated to a horse. In a small way, the racetrack helped launch Bazelon's symphonic career. With money from a big win at Aqueduct, he recorded a concert ballet with sixteen members of the New York Philharmonic, the tape of which led directly to his conducting his *Short Symphony* ("Testament to a Big City") with the National Symphony in Washington, D.C., in 1962. This performance was his major orchestral debut.

David Harold Cox, chair of music at University College, Cork, Ireland, and author of *Irwin Bazelon, a Bio-Bibliography* (Greenwood Press, August 2000) said in a tribute to him, "The quality I shall always remember about Bud was his integrity, the integrity between his individuality as a person and his unique musical personality. There seemed to be a perfect unity between the man and his music. It was a unity based on a breadth of vision—both his personality and his musical language were strong, wide-ranging, and powerful, pulsating with energy and life. These qualities will ensure that the music will survive."

With this compact disc, a reissue from LPs, CRI continues its commitment to presenting and preserving the work of a gifted

and uncompromising composer whose music is remarkable for its originality, range, and variety of expressive language.

In Bazelon's own words, "Prominence of musical line depends on dynamics, impact accents, phrasing, rhythmic propulsion, color, and contrast. There are certain twelve-tone and jazz elements present, neither strict nor formal. And, the triplet is my musical heartbeat."

Composer's Comments:

While the Woodwind Quintet is cast in a familiar three-movement mold (fast-slow-fast), the development and organization of its musical materials is not based on nineteenth-century techniques. My thinking in putting together my "own sounds" is totally divorced from the associations of traditionalism.

The members of the ensemble function in dual capacities—they are part of the whole, but, more significantly, they are also soloists in the true sense of the word; they are sometimes protagonists, but on occasion I let them fight it out for themselves. The dynamic markings in the score indicate which instrument attains prominence. It was my intention to break up the normal order of the winds (flute on top, followed by oboe, clarinet, horn, and bassoon). The instruments crisscross each other, disturbing the regular arrangement of voice placings—sometimes the flute is low, while the clarinet or bassoon is high. This gives special emphasis to a particular line or phrase. Groups of notes are broken into different kinds of markings—slurs, staccato or half-staccato attacks, sudden *sforzando*, short rhythmic punctuations, special notations, interlocking patterns, skips from one register to another in a wide variety of rhythmic juxtapositions. The Quintet contains both twelve-tone and jazz elements, neither formal nor strict.

I believe a composer cannot escape his roots. I have lived all my life in the Big City. The rebellious mutterings, cross-rhythms, and nervous tension and energy of the city are in my music. You cannot have life without a pulse beat, and you cannot have music without rhythm.

*Woodwind Quintet* was written expressly for the Boehm Woodwind Quintette. Its first performance was May 22, 1975, in Alice Tully Hall, New York City.

In composing *Imprints*, I have attempted to utilize the entire keyboard range with total freedom, and, in the process, avoid the practice of one hand following the other (up and down the keys) and old-style octave virtuosity.

The use of spatial rhythmic notation and performing on the piano strings (including cluster notes played with the palm of the hand) are not intended merely to be effects. I have interpolated them into the score as logical expansions of musical ideas: an alternate way to perform and alter pitches, convey color, accent individual notes, and/or bring out harmonic overtones.

Prominence of musical line is secured through dynamic markings, phrasing, color contrast, and the general character of the music. Rhythmic progression and propulsion serve to bind the musical ideas together as part of the whole, connecting one section to another and revealing the intervallic relationships of the piece.

*Imprints* was commissioned by Rebecca LaBrecque. Its first performance was on February 10, 1981, in Carnegie Recital Hall, New York City.

Author James Jones, who died in 1977, once remarked in a conversation with me, "You composers live in a world of sound dreams." His perceptive comment led me to use the title *Sound Dreams* for this score dedicated to his memory. While the music is not programmatic—nor an attempt to describe Jones's personality or the power of his literary works—

it does express (in whatever way music can) my feelings about the man.

*Sound Dreams* is scored for six players divided into three groups: flute and clarinet, viola and cello, and piano and percussion. The performers function both as soloists and ensemble members; at some moments they accompany one another and at others they are antagonists. Despite sustained lyrical statements—instruments often fade into and out of each other's sound to produce a variety of colors, textures, and shadings—the work is marked by dramatic interjections that accentuate the natural tension between rhythmic and lyrical elements.

*Sound Dreams* was commissioned by the Collage New Music Chamber Ensemble. Its first performance with Gunther Schuller conducting was on November 13, 1977, in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

The Five Pieces for Piano are miniature solo compositions; their contrapuntal style was part of my musical language at the age of twenty-eight. They are dramatic and lyrical in their contrasting dynamics and phrasing.

The first performance of *Five Pieces for Piano* was given on April 1, 1951, by pianist Ruth Strassman in McMillan Theatre, Columbia University, New York City.

The Brass Quintet, scored for two trumpets, horn, tenor, and bass trombone, is a dramatic work in four parts. Its inner two movements are in slow tempo, and evoke frequent color changes through the use of various kinds of mutes. They contrast sharply with the fast sections (parts 1 and 4), whose contrapuntal design is given form and shape by a driving rhythmic attack. Sudden *sforzando* accents, acting as false downbeats within the bar, serve as a means of launching musical ideas. In addition, the juxtaposition (and breakdown) of eighth- and sixteenth-note phrases, with triplet patterns of larger and smaller time values, set off one rhythmic group against the other in a continuous stream of clashing dialogue. As in all my music, certain twelve-tone techniques and jazz elements (neither strict or traditional) are present.

*Brass Quintet* was commissioned by the American Brass Quintet. Its first performance was on March 22, 1964, as part of Max Pollikoff's "Music in Our Time" series at the 92nd St. YMHA in New York City.

—Irwin Bazelon

The **Boehm Quintette** was formed in 1968 by clarinetist Don Stewart; the founding premise of the group was that the existing repertoire for wind quintet is far deeper and richer than conventional wisdom would have it. In addition to spotlighting underappreciated works, the Boehm Quintette has commissioned many new works by contemporary composers.

Born in 1946, **Wanda Maximilien** began studying the piano at the age of six in her native Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She received her master's degree in performance from the Juilliard School and has studied with Adele Marcus and Nadia Boulanger. She is professor of music at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. In 1991 Ms. Maximilien recorded Bazelon's *Trajectories* ..., for solo piano with orchestra, together with the London Philharmonic, under the direction of conductor Harold Farberman (Albany Records TROY 054).

**Collage** is a chamber music group composed principally of Boston Symphony Orchestra musicians dedicated to the performance of twentieth-century works. Its purpose is to provide an arena for complete musical involvement, a union of composer, performer, and concertgoer. Throughout its history, Collage has presented more than seventy-five

premieres and commissioned works. Its concerts have included full stage productions—music with dance, music with film, and music with extensive sophisticated electronic equipment. Collage's 2000–2001 season marks the group's twenty-ninth anniversary.

**Gunther Schuller** was president of the New England Conservatory from 1967 to 1977. He was elected president of the National Music Council in 1979. In 1975 his reconstruction and re-orchestration of Scott Joplin's *Treemonisha* opened on

Broadway with Schuller conducting. A leading composer in his own right as well as an authority on jazz, he has conducted most major orchestras both in America and Europe.

Founded in 1960, the **American Brass Quintet** has established itself as the recognized leader among brass chamber music ensembles. The Quintet has toured nationally and internationally, performing in the majority of the world's major chamber music concert halls.

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## Production Notes

CD mastered by Robert Wolff, engineer at Sony Music Studios, New York City.

Woodwind Quintet: Originally released on Orion Master Recordings ORS 78291, 1977. Produced by Max Wilcox; recorded by Ray Hall on June 16, 1977 in RCA Studio A in New York City.

*Imprints... on Ivory and Strings* for piano: Originally released on CRI SD 532, 1986. Produced by Eve Beglarian. Recorded and edited by David Hancock. Recorded at the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York City, December 6, 1985. The original recording was made possible by grants from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and by private donors.

*Sound Dreams*: Originally released on CRI SD 486, 1983. Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by Peter Storkerson, Boston, Massachusetts in March and May 1982. The original recording was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Additional funding was provided by the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, and by private donors.

Five Pieces for Piano: Originally released on CRI SD 532, 1986. Produced, recorded, and edited by David Hancock. Recorded at the Church of the Holy Trinity, New York City, May 2, 1986. The original recording was made possible by grants from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University and by private donors.

Brass Quintet: Originally released on CRI SD 327, 1974. Produced by Carter Harman. Recorded by David Hancock.

Publishing Credits:

Woodwind Quintet: Theodore Presser Company (ASCAP); *Imprints ... on Ivory and Strings*: Theodore Presser Company (ASCAP); *Sound Dreams*: Theodore Presser Company (ASCAP);

Five Pieces for Piano: Weintraub Music Company, a division of G. Schirmer (ASCAP); Brass Quintet: Boosey and Hawkes (ASCAP).

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