

NORMAN DELLO JOIO  
MEDITATIONS ON ECCLESIASTES  
The Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra  
Alfredo Antonini, conductor

NORMAN DELLO JOIO, whose star as one of the United States' most successful young composers ascends higher each year, has found inspiration for a not inconsiderable portion of his musical output in religious and historical-religious themes. His opera, *The Trial at Rouen*, based on the ordeal of Joan of Arc, was received with acclaim at its 1956 premiere by the NBC Television Opera Theatre. This work, in turn, stemmed from an earlier conception and an earlier treatment of the same story: a symphony entitled *The Triumph of Joan*. The latter, although a purely symphonic composition, had the added dramatic element of design and choreography by Martha Graham for its premiere in Louisville, Kentucky. *The Psalm of David*, first performed in 1951, was another work of religious inspiration, as was the orchestral *Magnificat* and the *Lamentation of Saul* for baritone, woodwinds, strings and piano.

The *Meditations on Ecclesiastes* (originally called *Variations On a Theme*), is intended as a musical interpretation of the verses opening Chapter III of the Biblical book of Ecclesiastes. In a continuous composition, demarcated formally into twelve sections, the composer has called upon the most deeply expressive body of instruments in the orchestra to mirror the verses' inner meanings. The sections are broadly conceived, with ample room for smaller nuances of feeling within the twelve large parts. Unification is achieved by utilization of the variation form. The melodic interval of a downward-moving minor third is heard in myriad relationships. As the first-stated gesture of the *Meditations'* principal theme (apposite to the words "a time to be born"), it flows on into a lyrical melody of modal flavor. From thence, through many permutations, it acts as a cohesive force within the layered instrumental texture. Finally, in the work's closing *Semplice* section, the theme in its entirety emerges, broadened, changed in its implications, and dressed in the technical garb of nine-part *divisi* writing. Through this evanescent texture one hears a solo cello, wending its way to the gentle conclusion.

## INTRODUCTION (Largo)

### THEME (Adagio con sentiments)

Solenne

Soave, e leggiro

Grave, con rividezza Larghetto, con leggerezza

Animato

Adagio, con intensità

Spumante

Adagio liberamente

Con brio, molto deciso

Semplice

To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven,

A time to be born,

And a time to die;

A time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;

A time to kill,

And a time to heal;

A time to break down, and a time to build up;

A time to weep, and to mourn,

A time to dance, and to laugh;

A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;

A time of hate, and of war,

A time to love, and a time of peace.

-Ecclesiastes III: 1.8

the composer . . .

Norman Dello Joio was born in New York City on January 24, 1913. At the age of 19, he entered the Institute of Musical Art, where he studied piano and organ with Gaston Dethier. In 1939 he was given a fellowship by the Juilliard Graduate School to study composition with Bernard Wagenaar. During the years of 1940 and 1941, he studied composition with Paul Hindemith at Tanglewood and at the Yale School of Music. In 1942, he won the Town Hall Composition Award for his orchestral work, *Magnificat*. In the successive years 1944-45 and 1945-46, he was awarded two Guggenheim Fellowships; and in 1946 he received a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His *Variations, Chaconne and Finale* was given the New York Music Critics' Circle Award as the best new orchestral work presented in New York during the season 1948-49. He has also been awarded commissions by the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation for his *Trio for Flute, Cello and Piano* and his *Lamentation of Saul*.

## FRANK WIGGLESWORTH

### SYMPHONY NO. 1

The Vienna Orchestra

F. Charles Adler, conductor

“WELL, I LIKE A GOOD TUNE; there's no question about it!” Composer Frank Wigglesworth said this in 1956, and it was obviously just as true in 1953, when he was composing his First Symphony at the American Academy in Rome. In hardly a measure of the four-movement work here recorded, is the lilt of melody of less than prime importance. From the opening measures' announcement of a bustling, dance-like tune, to the fourth movement's Presto jig, every pulse beat maintains its frank, forward-moving energy; and cheery tunefulness is never for a moment left behind.

In a textural sense, there is a similar consistency to Wigglesworth's writing. The melodies are frequently treated to an almost baroque series of contrapuntal entrances. Full orchestral tuttis are rare, as are long note values. Themes bounce hither and thither from strings to woodwinds, to brasses; duo and trio passages abound in a milieu of bright, clean-cut voice leadings and carefully administered counterpoint. Actual solos occur less frequently, for the composer has an eager eye for energetic counter-melodies. But the fabric of sound remains transparent. Each voice is a solo unto itself, cooperating with its neighbors, but maintaining its independence at the same time.

According to the composer, the First Symphony was undertaken with the conviction that “any composer worth his salt should be able to write a symphony, not in the ‘modern’ sense, but in the classical, where four movements were involved and the standard forms were honored. This is not a ‘classical’ Symphony in the manner of Prokofieff; but at the same time, in the formal sense, it could easily be considered one. (The first movement, as an example, is cast in a classical Sonata-Allegro form, with careful demarcations of the melodic groups, development, recapitulation and coda). The scoring is generally light, so that the work might be played by either a large or small orchestra.” Its requirements are: woodwinds in pairs, two trumpets and tenor trombones, tuba, percussion and strings.

the composer . . .

Frank Wigglesworth was born in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 3, 1918, After his years of schooling, which brought a B.S. degree from Bard College (N.Y.) and Columbia University and an M.A. from Converse College at Spartansburg, South Carolina, he spent the years from 1942 to 1945 in the United States Air Force. He has subsequently taught on the faculties of Columbia University, the Greenwich House Music School, Queens College, the East Woods School and the New School. Among honors accorded the composer have been the Alice M. Ditson Award (1943) and the Institute of Arts and Letters Award (1951). From 1947 until 1951, he was editor of the New Music Edition and, concurrently, a member of the Board of Governors of the American Composers Alliance. Since 1960, he has been General Manager of the New York Composers Forum.

-Notes by LESTER TRIMBLE

*(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*