

## WALLINGFORD RIEGGER

### Concerto for Piano and Woodwind Quintet

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. Allegro molto

Harriet Wingreen, piano      The New Art Wind Quintet

ONLY in recent years has Wallingford Riegger, born in 1885 in Albany, Georgia, begun to gain recognition as one of America's most individual and stylistically interesting composers. Throughout his life he has independently followed his own musical inclinations, unaffected by prevailing trends and "isms" and turned out works of great originality and distinction. His music is brilliantly contemporary, marked always by a constant search for new and often startling resonance, great rhythmic vitality, and a serious preoccupation with formal structure. The work recorded here was commissioned by the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and composed in 1953. It had its first performance at the Library of Congress in February of the following year, played by Rosalyn Turek and the New York Woodwind Quintet, when it was acclaimed by audience and critics alike.

The *Concerto* is a work of great animation, admirably condensed in form and highly interesting throughout for its unusual instrumental colors. The piano writing is thin and brilliant, organic at all times and standing out in sharp relief against the winds. The first two movements are atonal in idiom. The finale, though essentially diatonic in character, ends atonally. In this work Riegger is as preoccupied with terseness of form as he is with resonance. A brief outline of the first movement will give some clue to the composer's structural methods. The main thematic material for the movement is found in the quiet opening phrase, sounded by the piano alone.



This opening phrase is immediately taken up by unison winds, while the piano continues the melodic line. A brief flourish for the piano leads to a restatement of the opening theme in inverted form by flute and bassoon, followed by an inverted restatement by the piano. A short passage in which piano alternates with winds forms a bridge to an extended contrapuntal episode for winds alone, when the opening theme is broadly developed. A middle section containing new material growing out of the opening phrase corresponds to a development section. There is a gradual return

to the beginning of the movement that ends with an energetic coda. Every note in the movement counts; has its logical place in the structural organization.

The second movement is more free in structure, commencing quietly for winds alone but soon taking the form of a vigorous dialogue between piano and ensemble. The finale is a diverting and lively march that at times sounds almost Eastern in its modal color and rhythmic complexities. After reaching a brilliant climax the movement ends in a faint echo of the motif with which the work began.

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THE New Art Wind Quintet was organized in 1947 with the specific desire to further appreciation and understanding of woodwind chamber music in America. Since that time, the group has performed throughout the United States presenting music by contemporary Americans and Europeans, music commissioned by and written for them and the little-known woodwind masterpieces of the 18th and 19th centuries. Among the many recordings by the Quintet is the album: *American Woodwind Symposium* featuring music by Elliott Carter, Roger Goeb, Wallingford Riegger, Vincent Persichetti and others.

HARRIET WINGREEN was a fellowship student of the late Olga Samaroff-Stokowski at the Juilliard Graduate School and subsequently received her degree at the Juilliard School of Music. She has performed extensively in the field of chamber music, both in this country and abroad, with such groups as the *Collegium Musicum*, the Chamber Music Circle, the New York Chamber Soloists and her own newly formed ensemble, The New York Quintet.

THE New York Woodwind Quintet, formed in 1948, has had a remarkable success in the eleven years of its existence. In addition to its many United States tours, the group was selected by the American National Theatre and Academy (ANTA) and the U.S. State Department to perform throughout South America in 1956 and, in 1958, they were invited to perform at the Brussels World's Fair. The Quintet has been in residence at the University of Wisconsin for six summers where they act in the dual capacity of teacher-performers. In addition, they have recorded many contemporary works including *Summer Music* by Samuel Barber, Alvin Etler's *Quintet for Winds* 1955, Ingolf Dahl's *Allegro and Arioso*, *Kleine Kammermusik, No. 2* by Hindemith and Jean Francaix' *Quintette*.

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**EZRA LADERMAN**

**Theme, Variations and Finale for Four Winds and Four Strings**

**The New York Woodwind Quintet and**

## The Saidenberg Chamber Players

Samuel Baron, conductor

EZRA LADERMAN was born in New York June 29, 1924, and is fast becoming one of America's most prolific younger composers. His chief work in composition was done at Columbia University, where he studied with Otto Luening. His music includes various works for orchestra, a considerable number of chamber works, and several compositions written especially for the dancer-choreographer, Jean Erdman. He has also written three works for the stage, as well as a television opera entitled *Sarah*, which had a CBS performance in November, 1958, and of which *Variety* wrote . . . "a vibrant, sweeping score . . . with voices pouring out fervor and grief, a music that is both modern yet ancient with its overtones of the East." Laderman's music has won him many commissions and two Guggenheim Awards, 1956-57 and 1958-59. He is at present composing in Rome, after several months spent in Israel.

The *Octet* was composed in 1957, and is written for flute (and piccolo), clarinet, bassoon, horn, and string quartet. It is a work of warmth and lyric grace, well designed and imaginatively scored. Especially in the quiet passages the ensemble has a delicate resonance and subtle coloring that holds great charm. The work is divided into three sections: A. *Theme*, B. *Variations*, and C. the *Finale*, a rondo in which all the elements are further variations of the *Theme* that is stated in simple unison at the opening of the work.



The following variations are brief and to the point, finely contrasted and becoming more involved as the work progresses. At the end of the *rondo* the *Theme* is heard once more in its opening form, followed by a short and brilliant passage for all instruments which brings the work to a close. The variations, forming the main body of the work, occur in the following order:

1. Allegro vivace
2. Moderato
3. Allegretto
4. Adagio
5. Andante con moto
6. Moderato
7. (*Finale*) Allegro vivace.

Of the tonal idiom of the work the composer has this to say: "Although there is no key *per se* the piece has a certain inner tonal structure which comes from the repetition of certain chords and motives. There is a tonality without resolution and without modulation, but with greater and lesser tension and with the use of the third as a basic interval of the piece together with a descending minor and then major second."

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IN 1952, Daniel Saidenberg, selecting a group of key players from his well-known Saidenberg Little Symphony, created the Saidenberg Chamber Players dedicated to presenting the cream of the chamber music literature for which no permanent ensemble had heretofore existed. The group was designed with a flexibility that permits any one of several combinations to perform, each retaining the cohesiveness and personality of one organization. Since its inception the Chamber Players have toured and recorded extensively.

SINCE his graduation from the Juilliard School of Music with honors, Samuel Baron has pursued two careers in music: as a flutist and as a conductor. In the first category, he is ranked with the finest recitalists, particularly in the field of chamber music and is known for his work with the New York Woodwind Quintet and the New York Chamber Soloists.

As a conductor, Baron's activities are divided among concerts, recordings and film music. His special interest is contemporary music and he has conducted for the League of Composers, Composer's Forum and the Rothschild Foundation in New York City. In the area of film score conducting, he has recently completed *The Sand Castle* with a score by Alec Wilder.

Notes by Colin McPhee

*(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*