

DURING A SEMINAR on modern music conducted by Edgar Varèse in 1948, Robert Ward made the following statement: “The composer in my generation is working in the aftermath of a great musical revolution, a period in which the apple cart of the past has been magnificently spilled by men such as yourself, Bartok, Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Ives. Slowly, however, since the First World War, those principles which are of perhaps eternal value have re-asserted themselves . . . Hence . . . my generation will have the task of re-working the materials which the revolution has given us while at the same time reapplying the basic principles which have again been clarified.”

The four composers represented on this recording were born within a span of seven years—1916 to 1923; the pieces recorded were written in 1946, 1954, 1957 and 1960. It is provocative, then, to approach the music in light of Mr. Ward’s statement. The “materials” have been reworked or the basic principles clarified, according to each composer’s personal expression.

## **ROBERT WARD**

### **Jubilation, an Overture**

**Vienna Symphony Orchestra William Strickland, conductor**

ROBERT WARD (b. 1917, Cleveland, Ohio) studied composition with Bernard Rogers, Edward Royce, and Howard Hanson at the Eastman School of Music, and with Frederick Jacobi at Juilliard Graduate School. At the Berkshire Music Center he worked with Aaron Copland. He taught at Columbia University and at the Juilliard School, and was Director of the Third St. Music Settlement in New York City. His opera, *The Crucible*, with the libretto by Bernard Stambler from Arthur Miller’s play, was commissioned by the Ford Foundation and premiered in October 1961 at the New York City Center. He is Vice-President and Managing Editor of Galaxy Music Corp. and Highgate Press.

*Jubilation, An Overture* (1946) is a reflection “of the optimistic feeling we all had about the imminent end of the War and subsequent return to civilian life.” It was written for the most part during the campaigns of Leyte and Okinawa, when Ward was Leader of the Seventh Infantry Division Band. The musical preoccupation is jazz, a natural result of the composer’s activity at the time with a large swing band. The interest is, indeed, an outright joyful lilt, vitally exuberant. It is lucidly assembled in a sonata form. Jivey, with passages of piano plunking and nice whimsical melodies, it is, above all, tasteful.

## **LESTER TRIMBLE**

### **Closing Piece**

**Imperial Philharmonic of Tokyo William Strickland, conductor**

LESTER TRIMBLE (b. 1923, Bangor, Wisconsin) studied composition with Nikolai Lopatnikoff at the Carnegie Institute of Technology and with Milhaud at Tanglewood and in Paris, during which sojourn he also worked with Arthur Honegger. In 1959 he received the Berkshire Music Center’s Samuel Wechsler Commission. He was recipient of a National Institute of Arts and Letters Award in 1961. Former music critic of *THE NATION* and (guest) reviewer for *THE NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE*, he has acted in many advisory capacities. Presently he is General Manager of the American Music Center.

CLOSING PIECE (1957) was premiered in 1958 by William Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, who commissioned the work. It demands high admiration for the craft of a solid traditionalist in contemporary sounds. The use of concerted and homophonic sonorities invite a sustaining interest. Externally and internally energetic, the work is concisely constructed. Dynamic rhythmic writing, compelled by the timpani, paces and ends the piece; melody, epitomized in lovely solo passages, shapes the development.

## **PHILIP BEZANSON**

### **Rondo-Prelude**

**Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra**

**Oivin Fjelstad, conductor**

PHILLIP BEZANSON (b. 1916, Athol, Massachusetts) received degrees from Yale University and the State University of Iowa. He studied composition with David Stanley Smith, Richard Donovan, and Philip Greeley Clapp. In 1953 he received the Fromm Foundation Award for his Piano Sonata. The same year, Dimitri Mitropoulos commissioned a Piano Concerto, which was performed by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. *The Golden Child*, an opera, was televised in 1960 on the NBC-Hallmark "Hall of Fame". Since 1947 Dr. Bezanson has been Associate Professor in charge of composition at the State University of Iowa.

The composer's serious concern with orchestral organization, manifest in the *Rondo-Prelude* (1954), emanates from a concern with the musical validity of each structural element. Note the character of the dance-like "B" (in triple meter) and "C" (in 4/4) sections—contrastingly expressive, yet quite convincingly worked into a cleanly wrought form. Some sounds are immediately reminiscent, though superficially so. For example, the Bartokian nature of the opening theme, its statement by the low instruments, and its successive entrances culminating in massive, wild runs. Restatements of the "A" section are equally bold.

## **FORREST GOODENOUGH**

### **Elegy for Orchestra**

**Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra Oivin Fjelstad, conductor**

FORREST GOODENOUGH (b. 1918, South Bend, Indiana) studied at Butler University, DePauw University, and the Eastman School of Music. In 1948 and 1949 he received grants from the Woodstock Foundation of Arts. His *Chorale Fantasy for Orchestra* received a Performance Award of the Austin Symphony Orchestra and has been performed in Lima, Peru and Santiago, Chile. He is presently on the faculty of the Texas (Austin) School for the Blind.

The beauty of Goodenough's *Elegy* (1960) is in the combination of a steadiness of pulse and a fluidity of essentially undeveloped melody. (There is not a break of sound in the piece!) The melodic conception is of modal line, stemming from a minor triad and moving within characteristically small tonal areas. Between cadential punctuation, the melodic seed mounts sequentially in luscious appoggiaturas, intensifies to a climax with the timbre of cymbals, and recedes to unison. The result is both frustrating and peaceful—the effect somewhat mystical.

—Notes by MARTHA GERHART

*(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*