

KAREL HUSA

LANDSCAPES (1977)

Northern Woods

Northern Lakes

Voyageurs

Western Brass Quintet (Donald Bullock, Stephen Jones, trumpets; Connie Klausmeier, horn; Russell Brown, trombone; Robert Whaley, tuba)

KAREL HUSA (b. Prague, 1921) has been an American citizen since 1959. Among his teachers were Arthur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, the conductors André Cluytens, Eugène Bigot, and Jean Fournet and the Czech composer J. Rídký. In 1954 Husa was appointed to the Music Faculty at Cornell University as Professor of Composition and Conducting and in 1973, as the Kappa Alpha Professor of Music. In 1974 he was elected associate member of the Royal Belgian Academy of Arts and Sciences, and in 1976 received an honorary degree of Doctor of Music from Coe College. He received Czech Academy and Lili Boulanger Prizes, Koussevitzky and UNESCO commissions, among many others, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and won the 1969 Pulitzer Prize in composition for his *String Quartet No. 3*.

Husa's music has been performed at such important centers as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Berlin, Prague, Paris, Donaueschingen, Frankfurt, Brussels, Washington, New York and Tokyo. He has conducted numerous recordings, among them the first European recording of Bartok's *Miraculous Mandarin*, his own *Fantasies for Orchestra*, and *MOSAIQUES FOR ORCHESTRA* (CRI 221), *SYMPHONY NO. 1* together with *SERENADE FOR WOODWIND QUINTET AND ORCHESTRA* (CRI 261), and *Music For Prague 1968*, which has had over 4000 performances and has become part of the standard repertory of orchestras and concert bands.

LANDSCAPES for Brass Quintet was commissioned by and dedicated to the Western Brass Quintet. It was composed in 1977 in Ithaca, New York, and the world premiere performance was given by the Western Brass Quintet in Kalamazoo, Michigan in October 1977, at the Great Lakes Regional Convention of Phi Mu Alpha. Donald Bullock has supplied the following notes:

“About LANDSCAPES, Karel Husa has said, ‘The titles are self-explanatory, though not descriptive. The work reflects our time with view of majestic, mysterious nature embellished by travelers such as northern geese and spaceships exploring the universe.’ Although the composer insists that the music is not programmatic, the listener will readily agree that the concept is romantic. Even the structure of each movement represents those open-ended forms which composers of the previous century frequently used to work out their fanciful, if not sentimental ideas, and the virtuosic demands which the music makes on the performers is also congruent with the ideals of that age.

“The first movement, ‘Northern Woods’ is a fanfare which reflects the grandeur and majesty of the forests of North America. The composer suggested in comments he made at the premiere performance that the music could also be considered as reflective of the magnificence of the scientific discoveries which have come to bless contemporary lives.

“The second movement is set in three-part song form. The A section of ‘Northern Lakes’ is serene, not unlike the tranquility of a remote aquatic setting which has not been spoiled by intruders. The B section digresses from the tranquil mood, becoming immediately and totally violent, perhaps reflecting those catastrophic events in nature such as a landslide, or the killing of a whale. The A section returns, but in altered form, its serenity tempered by the experience and knowledge of the catastrophe.

“‘Voyageurs’ is a *perpetuum mobile*. The composer indicated his interest in creating a single, continuously sustained, crescendo, on the order of Ravel’s *Bolero* or Honegger’s *Pacific 231*. By his ingenious use of mutes and special effects the composer is successful in creating the long voyage which anticipates with each passing measure the arrival at the final destination. The music may not be descriptive, but the composer has most certainly brought about a successful amalgamation of elements from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.”

HERBERT HAUFRECHT

SYMPHONY FOR BRASS AND TIMPANI (1956)

Dona Nobis Pacem

Elegy

Jubilation

Brass Ensemble Society of New York; Simon Karasick, conductor

HERBERT HAUFRECHT (b. 1909, New York City), has gained renown as the composer of highly effective orchestra-and-narrator scores for children, in particular his setting of the Munro Leaf classic, *The Story of Ferdinand*. However, his substantial contributions to the re-discovery of American folksong just before World War II are also well remembered.

Haufrecht has been active in editorial capacities for such prominent music publishers as Mills Music, Inc., Associated Music Publishers, and Broadcast Music, Inc. He has also edited and arranged a number of highly successful folksong collections, and has been Musical Director for Young Audiences, Inc., a national organization devoted to the sponsorship of professional chamber music performing groups as part of school assembly programs throughout the country.

The American folksong element is strong in much of Haufrecht's music. The *SQUARE SET* (1941) for string orchestra (CRI 111) was written under the spell of folksong collecting and performing. The *SYMPHONY FOR BRASS AND TIMPANI* represents the composer fifteen years more mature and stands as perhaps the most substantial of his purely instrumental scores.

He writes:

"The *SYMPHONY* was composed between 1953 and 1956. That was a time when, after a long period of wars, all mankind yearned for peace. This theme is reflected in the *Symphony* and in the titles of its movements. Beyond that the work has no program.

"It may seem paradoxical that I have chosen an instrumental combination commonly associated with the military and war to plead the cause of peace. An answer to this might be found in the lines from *Isaiah*, 'And they shall beat their swords into plowshares . . . ' By bringing out the expressive qualities of the brass instruments alongside their somber and clangorous aspect, I have sought to endow them with more human utterance.

"The first movement, *Dona nobis pacem* (con moto) has two main ideas; a chorale-type melody which has the quality of supplication, and a second, more militant theme. The form of the movement is determined by the interchange of these two ideas. The first theme is treated canonically over an ostinato bass. On each recurrence the imitation comes as a closer stretto. Towards the middle of the movement this theme is inverted and broadens in augmentation.

"The second movement, *Elegy* (andante), is basically a passacaglia. Its middle section (poco animato) and the recapitulation of the passacaglia defines the movement's basic A-B-A pattern.

"The finale, *Jubilation* (allegro), has a fanfare introduction in which the main theme of the first movement, transformed by way of tempo and diminution, is briefly recalled. The ensuing themes and their treatment are suggestive of folksong, folk dance, and fanfares expressing joy and the heralding of peace."

WALTER MOURANT

ARIA FOR ORCHESTRA (1960) "Harper's Ferry, W. Va."

Hamburg Symphony Orchestra; Frederick Balazs, conductor

WALTER MOURANT (b. 1910, Chicago) has, like Haufrecht, opted for the world of practical music as against the academic, but Mourant had been associated with the world of pop and dance band music long before he undertook serious academic study at the Eastman School of Music and later at Juilliard. The greater part of his career has been devoted to composing and arranging for broadcasting and films; the *AIR AND SCHERZO* and *VALLEY OF THE MOON*, which have been heard on radio and television are recorded together with the *SLEEPY HOLLOW SUITE* on CRI 157. The *ARIA FOR ORCHESTRA* stands among the most poetic and deeply felt of Mourant's symphonic scores.

In 1963 he wrote:

“About seven years ago an automobile trip took us into Harper’s Ferry. I remember it was a quiet, warm summer’s day and the deserted town (actually a ghost town) had an air of quiet beauty and timelessness that was completely enchanting. The scene itself, at the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers, had its own intimate grandeur, which, along with the historic associations of the place, afforded us an extremely beguiling afternoon. To add to our pleasure a freight train, its sound echoing between the cliffs on both sides of the river, came booming down the valley and sped through the town, over a bridge, and into a tunnel in a mountain on the other side. As an incurable romantic, I was led to promise myself that some day I should manage to commemorate the occasion with an orchestral memento of some kind.

“It was some two years later that I stumbled upon the opening chords of the Aria and was puzzled and intrigued by them. Confronted with a positive case of an aural *déjà vu*, it suddenly struck me that this was the beginning of my Harper’s Ferry piece. With this in mind, the piece worked itself out almost as a kind of diary (though not a travelogue, please) of our visit to the town. Not consciously so, however — the only deliberate piece of association business is the near-literal quote of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, which I used simply because it seemed to belong in that particular spot. If I were in the music appreciation racket, I would also identify the ancient graveyard of the town as being represented in the slowest section of the piece, remembered children’s games in the scherzo-like section, etc., but I distrust this easy kind of programmatization, particularly since it was in operation on a purely subconscious level if at all.”

The WESTERN BRASS QUINTET, whose members are on the faculty of Western Michigan University, has performed extensively throughout the country, with performances for the Composer’s Forum on National Public Radio, the Composer’s Forum in New York City, invitational performances for Tuba University Brotherhood Association and the International Trumpet Guild, as well as Carnegie Recital Hall. The Quintet has committed itself to promoting contemporary brass music with the goal of establishing this repertoire in the nation’s chamber music halls. The ensemble has presented premiere performances of numerous compositions.

SIMON KARASICK is an Eastman School graduate, and has played in the trombone sections of many of New York’s leading orchestras in the concert, opera, ballet, theater, broadcasting and recording fields. Since 1953 he had been director of brass ensembles at the Mannes College of Music in New York.

FREDERIC BALAZS is widely known not only as conductor, but as violinist and composer. Born and trained in Budapest, Balazs came to the United States during World War II. As guest conductor he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic and major symphonic organizations in Chicago, Los Angeles, Dallas, Mexico, Canada and Europe. Among his compositions are an American Symphony, Divertimento for String Orchestra, and *TWO DANCES FOR FLUTE AND ORCHESTRA* (CRI 157).

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)

