

NIGHT MUSIC I... George Crumb

CHAMBER CONCERTO ... Robert Erickson



CRI
COMPOSERS
RECORDINGS
INC. CRI USD 218
UNIVERSAL STEREO

GEORGE CRUMB

Night Music I (1963)

LOUISE TOTH, *soprano*

PAUL PARMELEE, *piano and celesta*

DAVID BURGE, *percussion I*

THOMAS MacCLUSKEY, *percussion II*

Conducted by the composer

GEORGE CRUMB was born in 1929 in Charleston, West Virginia, and began his musical studies with his father. His mature musical training took place under Ross Lee Finney and in Germany under a Fullbright Fellowship. He has received a Rockefeller grant, under which he worked at Buffalo's Center for the Creative and Performing Arts during 1964, the same year he received a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation. In 1967 he received awards by the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Institute of Arts and Letters: he has been performed by leading symphony orchestras. He now teaches composition at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

NIGHT MUSIC I was composed during the spring of 1963, when Crumb was living in Boulder, Colorado. He recalls that he had started it as a purely instrumental composition, but that it only came into focus when he decided to include two verses by the modern Spanish poet, Federico Garcia Lorca. It is scored for soprano, piano-celesta and percussion.

The composition is in seven movements, called nocturnes (notturmi). The third and fifth nocturnes contain the poems, and the composer describes them as "buttress points" in the arch of the whole musical structure. Both poetic settings are enhanced by Crumb's use of a highly colored chromaticism and unusual juxtapositions of timbre, register and rhythmic patterns. The first poem, *La Luna Asoma* ("The Moon Rises"), is labeled "lyrical, fantastic," the second, *Gacela de la Terrible Presencia* ("Gacela of the Terrible Presence"), "shadowy, hesitant, almost without movement."

The sound-world of NIGHT MUSIC I is part of Crumb's increasingly personal idiom. It makes use of a wide variety of sounds produced by direct manipulation of the strings of the piano. Perhaps the most hauntingly beautiful sound is that of a water-gong glissando, which is used as an eerie framework for *La Luna Asoma*. The effect must be heard to be appreciated. Perhaps it is just as well that it cannot be seen by listeners to this record; it is produced by lowering the vibrating gong slowly into (or raising it slowly out of) a tub of water, an operation that has moved live audiences to inappropriate giggles.

The Moon Rises (La Luna Asoma)

When the moon rises,
the bells hang silent,
and impenetrable footpaths
appear.

When the moon rises,
the sea covers the land,
and the heart feels
like an island in infinity.

Nobody eats oranges
under the full moon.
One must eat fruit
that is green and cold.

When the moon rises,
moon of a hundred equal faces,
the silver coinage
sobs in the pocket.

Gacela of the Terrible Presence* (Gacela de la Terrible Presencia)

I want the water reft from its bed,
I want the wind left without valleys.

I want the night left without eyes
and my heart without the flower of gold.

And the oxen to speak with great leaves
and the earthworm to perish of shadow.

And the teeth of the skull to glisten
and the yellows to overflow the silk.

I can see the duel of the wounded night
writhing in battle with noon.

I resist a setting of green venom
and the broken arches where time suffers.

But do not illumine your clear nude
like a black cactus open in the reeds.

Leave me in anguish of dark planets,
but do not show me your cool waist.

(*Note: Gacela is an Arabic poetical form)
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English translations by Richard O'Connell and James Graham-Lujan

NIGHT MUSIC I	18' 35"
Mills Music, Inc. (ASCAP)	
CHAMBER CONCERTO	21' 00"
American Composers Alliance (BMI)	

*This recording of George Crumb's NIGHT MUSIC
was made possible by a grant from the
Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, 1967.*

COVER BY DONG KINGMAN, JR.

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ROBERT ERICKSON

Chamber Concerto (1960)

HARTT CHAMBER PLAYERS

Ralph Shapey, conductor

ROBERT ERICKSON was born in 1917 in Marquette, Michigan, into a family that made music regularly and frequently. By the age of seven he was playing piano, by nine the violin, by 15 he was beginning to compose, and by 20 he had given up playing in favor of composing.

Erickson's compositional style immediately started passing through several phases. His early production was the student's traditional counterpoint, but he favored an atonal style which led him to studies with Ernst Krenek starting in 1936. Despite the fact that Krenek was known as a 12-tone composer, Erickson says that the distinguishing characteristic of his own style of those years was rather of rigorous, imitational counterpoint. This phase was brought to an end when he wrote a book, "The Structure of Music: A Listener's Guide to Melody and Counterpoint" (Noonday Press, 1955), which, he feels, purged him of his contrapuntal obsession.

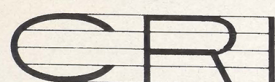
After another rather traditional phase, Erickson again moved into the atonal area, but now with a preoccupation about shifting rhythms in an attempt to achieve an "organized but unmechanized ebbing, racing, fluid, rhythmic entity." His concept of rhythm, he says, "reflects motions more biological than mechanical, like the motions of the body or the flight of birds."

The most recent of Erickson's musical preoccupations is improvisation, which he limits and controls by a framework of fully-composed accompaniment. He feels, in general, that he is more of an intuitive than an intellectual composer; his use of controlled improvisation extends into the hands of the players themselves.

Erickson received his BA and MA in music at Hamline University, St. Paul, Minnesota, under Krenek; he studied with Roger Sessions at Berkeley, and was head of the Theory and Composition department of the San Francisco Conservatory. He has received grants from Yaddo, the Ford Foundation and the Guggenheim Foundation. In June 1967 he took up his duties as Professor of Music at the University of California at San Diego.

CHAMBER CONCERTO calls for an ensemble of 17 players. It was first performed by the Wesleyan Chamber Ensemble in 1962. After a performance by the Hartt Chamber Players at a concert of the International Society for Contemporary Music the following year in New York, Alan Rich wrote in the New York Times that the music was "substantial and rewarding;" he described the music as taking its point of departure from Webern's Op. 10 orchestra pieces, adding that Erickson "has proved, as few other proponents of the Webern style have, that this kind of music can be writ large and succeed."

—CARTER HARMAN



COMPOSERS RECORDINGS, INC.

170 West 74th Street, New York, N. Y. 10023

This recording has been processed in UNIVERSAL STEREO. For best results, it should be played on stereophonic equipment, but it may also be played satisfactorily on modern monaural machines.

1. George Crumb: *Night Music I* (1963) (18:35)
 Louise Toth, soprano
 Paul Parmelee, piano and celesta
 David Burge, percussion I
 Thomas MacCluskey, percussion II
2. Robert Erickson: Chamber Concerto (1960) (21:00)
 Hartt Chamber Players
 Ralph Shapey, conductor

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(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP jacket)