

LELAND PROCTER

Symphony No. 1 (1948)

POLISH NATIONAL RADIO ORCHESTRA,

Włodzimierz Ormicki, *conductor*

Recorded in Poland by Polskie Nagrania

GEORGE TREMBLAY

Symphony in One Movement (1949)

HAMBURG SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA,

Frederic Balazs, *conductor*

LELAND PROCTER was born in Newton, Massachusetts in 1914, but within two years his family moved to New York state. Most of his childhood was spent in Pleasantville.

Pursuing a musical education at the Eastman School of Music, he studied with Howard Hanson and Bernard Rogers. After graduation in 1938, he accepted a teaching position in Oklahoma, and completed work for his Master's degree at the University of Oklahoma, where he studied with Spencer Norton. In 1951 he received a fellowship from the Fund for the Advancement of Education for a year's study and composition at Harvard. His published works include piano and choral music and a book, *Tonal Counterpoint*. He has also composed for instrumental ensembles and has completed a one-act opera, *Eve of Crossing*.

SYMPHONY NO. 1 was written between 1946 and 1948, while Procter was teaching at the New England Conservatory of Music. It was first performed by the Eastman-Rochester Symphony Orchestra in 1948. Subsequent performances include a nation-wide broadcast by the Oklahoma City Symphony under Victor Alessandro. Listeners have noted its qualities of directness, exuberance and spaciousness.

The work is in four compact movements marked: Moderately fast, Slowly, Moderately fast, and Fast. The composer writes the following words about the music:

"Although at the time the symphony was written, I was aware only of trying to write music of strength, vitality, sincerity, and exuberance which was symphonic in scope, I realize now that I can recognize my own attitudes clearly. Foremost of these is the firm conviction that the 'peak-experience' communications in art feel as though they flow directly from the subjective unconscious, and while these must be acted upon and shaped into form by the conscious intellect, the intellect must not conspicuously force its ego-centered imprint on the natural, spontaneous flow of basic creativity. In other words, art is most perfect when it ceases to be art -- when there is an impression of artlessness. I do not underestimate the importance of artfulness or craft, but the greatest impact is achieved when the craft of musical composition is relatively inconspicuous, except to the analyst.

"This is necessarily an over-simplification, but it expresses the trend of my thinking."

For those who find it helpful to have a suggestion of some extra-musical philosophy that may have been in the composer's mind, Mr. Procter quotes Walt Whitman's Preface to the 1855 Edition of *Leaves of Grass*.

"The art of art, the glory of expression and the sunshine of the light of letters is simplicity. Nothing is better than simplicity . . . nothing can make up for excess or for the lack of definiteness. . . . The greatest poet has less a marked style and is more the channel of thoughts and things without increase or diminution, and is the free channel of himself. He swears to his art, I will not be meddlesome, I will not have in my writing any elegance or effect or originality to hang in the way between me and the rest like curtains. I will have nothing hang in the way, not the richest curtains. What I tell I tell precisely for what it is. Let who may exalt or startle or fascinate or soothe, I will have purposes as health or heat or snow has, and be as regardless of observation. . . . You shall stand by my side and look in the mirror with me."

GEORGE TREMBLAY, who was born in Ottawa, Ontario in 1911 and now lives in Encino, California, was a student of his father, Amédée Tremblay, and of Arnold Schoenberg. Most of his music is serially organized, but his application of the 12-tone method is a personal one. David Raksin describes Tremblay's struggle to bend the technique to his purposes:

"His solution was to assert his right to 'harmonize' each tone of his row with a chord of its own, consisting of the other six tones of its diatonic major scale, which he called a 'block row'; this made available a system of chordal harmony particular to the piece, since it was determined by the basic row and its permutations. He also ventured to restore the use of the octave, to emphasize a specific tone, or to 'double' a line of music for greater sonority".

The SYMPHONY IN ONE MOVEMENT was composed in Chatsworth, California during the last years of the Second World War, the final score being completed in the spring of 1949. Mr. Tremblay writes:

"Like all of my major works to date, it is composed in a serial technique, unique and especially created for its particular realization. For this piece I evolved a definite harmonic system from subsidiary aspects of the basic tone row. The melodic lines are often diatonic in intention and in function. The row is sometimes treated as a block sound rather than in a numerical series. Certain tones of the basic series may be repeated indefinitely within the block without regard for the specific designated number of the note in the series."

The overall structure of the "Symphony" may be divided into the three classic sections: exposition, development, and recapitulation. The exposition is preceded by a rather lengthy introduction containing all of the basic material of the piece. The exposition proper is like a first movement of a sonata without recapitulation, terminating instead on a note of expectation. The section that follows is a fugue in three parts with intermezzos between the fugal sections. In the second section of the fugue various themes from the exposition are heard as countermelodies against the basic subject. The final section, the recapitulation, is a variation of the exposition, and the coda is an inversion of the introduction.

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)