

**american historic**

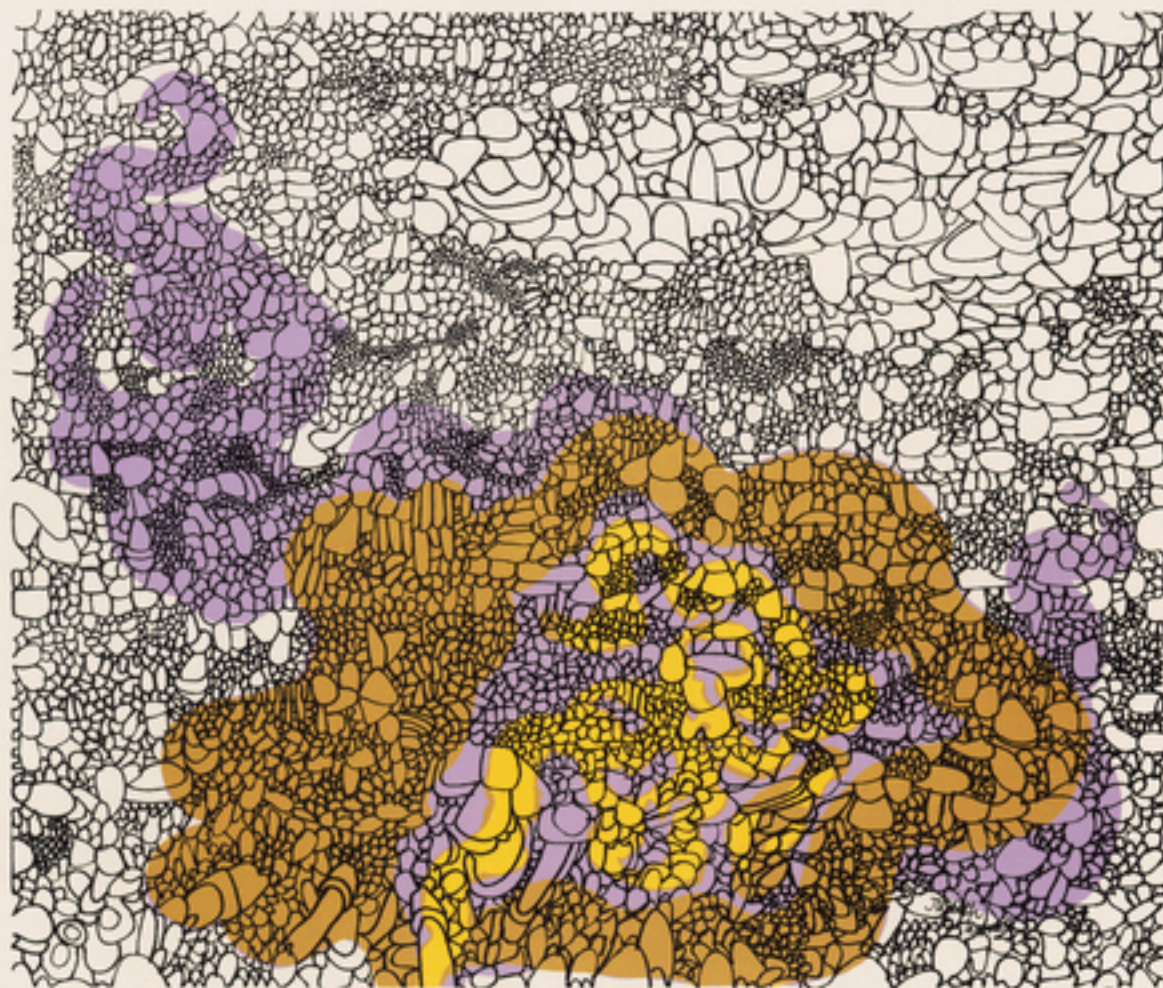
# **the koussevitzky legacy**

**the double bass concerto  
with gary karr**

**piston's concerto for string quartet,  
wind instruments and percussion**

**cowell's hymn and fuguing tune no. 2**

**CRJ**  
**248**  
**(78)**  
**STEREO**



## IN MEMORIAM, OLGA KOUSSEVITZKY (1901-1978)

Olga Koussevitzky spent the last part of her life carrying on the work of SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY — notably via the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, which continues to commission new works, and the American International Music Fund, Inc., which furthered the cause of new music on records. When she died on Jan. 5, 1978, CRI decided to honor her memory along with that of her husband, a record that would highlight various facets of the Koussevitzky legacy.

#### SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA (1902)

Gary Karr, bass; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra;  
Alfredo Antonini, conductor  
Allegro, Andante, Tempo 1

Koussevitzky, whose achievements as conductor of the Boston Symphony were legendary long before his death in 1951, and whose championing of new American music has never been equaled by other conductors, began his career as a performer on the largest member of the viol family, the double-bass. He was only 14 when, as a scholarship pupil in Moscow, he chose to study this bulky instrument, and only 20 when he replaced his teacher at Moscow's Philharmonic Conservatory. In 1908 he appeared as double-bass soloist in Berlin, immediately bestedelling himself in the historical procession begun by Domenico Dragonetti, a century before, and followed by Giovanni Bottazzi, half a century later. Koussevitzky played on one of the three instruments made by the celebrated 17th century violin maker, Amati.

Traveling as a recognized virtuoso, the young Koussevitzky soon left the double-bass for his first instrument as a soloist and created some. In addition to transcriptions of music written for other instruments, he composed several short original works, and in 1902, completed his CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA. He first performed the concerto in Moscow, then in Berlin and Leipzig under Nikolski, in Dresden under Schuch, in Paris under Colonne. In 1905, the young virtuoso turned his energies to conducting, and in 1910 founded his own Symphony Orchestra in Moscow. In 1924, following three years of conducting activities in Europe, he was appointed conductor of the Boston Symphony.

In America, Koussevitzky's instrumental virtuosity remained a legend until he received an Honorary Doctorate of Music from Brown University (1908), at which point he felt greater confidence in his playing than in his speaking voice and resorted to a solo. He appeared again at several best performances in 1928, in New York and in 1929 in Boston (when he made his only recording as a bassist, for Victor), and then put his Amati aside forever.

The only manuscript score of the CONCERTO remained for years in Koussevitzky's personal library, until Alfredo Antonini re-discovered it and, with his customary thoroughness, set about making it ready for sale.

When searching for a soloist equal to the task of performing the Concerto on his CBS-TV program, he immediately thought of GARY KARR, the young Cellist whom he had obtained special permission to use Koussevitzky's own treasured Amati.

#### WALTER PISTON CONCERTO FOR STRING QUARTET, WIND INSTRUMENTS AND PERCUSSION (1976)

Emerson Quartet (Eugene Drucker, Philip Selzer,  
Lawrence Dutton, Eric Willard); Juilliard Or-  
chestra; Sixten Ehrling, conductor  
Cantucco, Largo, Allegro energico

WALTER PISTON (b. 1894, Rockland, Maine, d.1978, Belmont, Mass.) was one of the most skillful of American composers, a gifted teacher, a brilliant theoretician, author of textbooks from which generations of musicians learned their craft, and a two-time recipient of Koussevitzky commissions. When he was ten years old, his family moved to Boston, where he later studied mathematics and then art, but after some experience as a saxophonist in a cafe and in an army band during the First World War, he turned to music and entered Harvard College at the age of twenty-five. Following his graduation he studied composition for two years with Nadia Boulanger in Paris, returned to Harvard as a member of the faculty in 1918, and remained there until his retirement in 1959.

Despite the great amount of time Piston spent on his theoretical works and in his classrooms at Harvard, he composed a formidable amount of music — almost all for orchestra or instrumental ensemble. This CONCERTO, one of his last works, was written for the string quartet of the Portland (Maine) Symphony Orchestra. He said, "after they gave me the final performance of my Fourth Quartet that I ever heard ... I had a wonderful time writing it ... in most concertos for quartets, the soloist is teamed by the strings of the orchestra, so wrote music for winds and percussion only." It is in one compact movement that was described by the composer as "a set of variations, in a way, with the themes growing out of one another." The music falls into three principal sections, in the last-of-last sequence of the classical concerto.

Most of the Concerto was written in 1976, while Piston was hospitalized with a broken hip. He was unable to stand the first performance, which was given on October 26, 1976, and less than three weeks later, in his eighty-third year, he died.

The CONCERTO was recorded following a performance by the Juilliard Orchestra that was dedicated to the memory of Olga Koussevitzky.

This record was made possible by the kind assistance of the Koussevitzky Foundation and the Alice M. Dixon Fund of Columbia University. Produced by Carter Herman. Cover by Judith Levin. KCSB/SD/248 — Baxley and Hawkins (ASCAP) 21 min. Recorded in Des. May, 1976. © 1976. Reissued in New York, May 1978. By David Hancock.

CONC. — AMP (884) — Reissued by RCA Victor, April 27, 1949. LC#s: 78-70538  
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#### HERNY COWELL HYMN AND FUGUING TUNE NO. 2 Boston Symphony Orchestra; Serg Koussevitzky, conductor

HERNY COWELL (b. 1867, Menlo Park, Calif., d. 1965, Shady N.Y.) was as well known for his explorations into indigenous American music as he was for his study of the music of non-Western cultures. Over the course of his long career he composed a series of 18 pieces for various combinations of instruments, each one of which he called Hymn and Fuguing Tune. The name comes from his studies of early American music, specifically the fuguing tunes of William Billings and the folk hymns of William Walker. The thapsodic HYMN AND FUGUING TUNE NO. 2 was written in 1944, and recorded by Cowell's Symphony No. 14, and the strings of the Boston Symphony. The record was never released, and CRI, after subjecting the tape to modernizing techniques, is privileged to present it here for the first time.

Cowell's HYMN AND FUGUING TUNE NO. 9, for cello and piano, appears on CRI SD 385.

GARY KARR was born in Los Angeles in 1941 and started studying bass with his grandfather when he was nine. He soon became a famous prodigy. By the age of 20, he was dazzling U.S. and Canadian audiences as a bass virtuoso, and since then has become an international star. He has been on the music faculties of the University of Wisconsin, the Juilliard School and the New England Conservatory of Music. He and Misha Antonov were touring Europe at the same time, in the spring of 1969, and met in Oslo. To record the Koussevitzky CONCERTO, ALFREDO ANTONINI was born in Aleksandria, Italy, and studied at the Royal Conservatory in Milan, playing in the La Scala orchestra under Toscanini as a student. In 1941, after moving to the U.S., he became conductor and in 1952 Musical Director for the Columbia Broadcasting System. There he directed numerous performances of new music, research/development, as guest conductor with many important orchestras. He has participated in many CRI recordings.

SIXTEN EHLING joined the Juilliard School in 1972 as head of Orchestral Conducting. Following his 12-year affiliation with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Born in Malmo, Sweden, he held the post of Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Royal Opera at Stockholm. In 1970 he was knighted by the Finnish Government, receiving the Order of the White Rose for his activities on behalf of the music of Sibelius. In 1975 he was awarded Sweden's honorary title Premiere Conductor of the Orchestra Royal. The first time it had been given in fifty years. During a debut at the Metropolitan Opera book place in 1972 when he conducted Peter Green's. In recent seasons, he has also conducted Die Meistersinger, the Ring cycle and Bartok's Woodrucker's Opera. The EMERSON STRING QUARTET, winner of the 1978 Naumburg Chamber Music Award, was formed under the tutelage of Robert Mann, in 1972, while its members were students at the Juilliard School. After rehearsing and performing only in the New York area, the string quartet decided to expand its range. Recent performances in other major cities have been greeted with high acclaim.

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**SERGE KOUSSEVITZKY**

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**Gary Karr, bass; Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra; Alfredo Antonini, conductor**

*Allegro, Andante, Tempo 1*

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Traveling as a recognized virtuoso, the young Koussevitzky soon felt the shortage of music for his rare instrument, so he created some. In addition to transcriptions of music written for other instruments, he composed several short original works, and, in 1902, completed his CONCERTO FOR DOUBLE BASS AND ORCHESTRA. He first performed the concerto in Moscow, then in Berlin and Leipzig under Nikisch, in Dresden under Schuch, in Paris under Colonne. In 1905, the young virtuoso turned his energies to conducting, and in 1910 founded his own Symphony Orchestra in Moscow. In 1924, following three years of conducting activities in Europe, he was appointed conductor of the Boston Symphony.

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*Confuoco, Lento, Allegro energico*

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*(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket)*