

**CRI SD 252**

**LOU HARRISON Suite for Percussion**

**JULIA PERRY Homunculus, C.F. for 10 Percussionists**

**THE MANHATTAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE**

**PAUL PRICE, Conductor**

**ELIZABETH GYRING Piano Sonata No. 2**

**MITCHELL ANDREWS, Piano**

LOU HARRISON was born in Portland, Oregon on May 14, 1917. He is today one of the most important of America's Pacific Coast composers. Two of Harrison's most prominent teachers have been Henry Cowell and Arnold Schoenberg. Like John Cage, another of Cowell's students, he became fascinated by strange and unorthodox sonorities, and incorporated such curious sounds as those vibrating from automobile brake drums, lengths of plumber's pipes, galvanized wash-tubs, glass bowls and the like. As early as 1944, he devised a method for composing on the "photo-phonograph" a precursor of tape-recorder music.

Lou Harrison has held a great variety of positions. He has taught at Mills College, at the University of California at Los Angeles, Reed College in Portland, Oregon and Black Mountain College in North Carolina. From 1945 to 1948 he was a music critic on the New York Herald Tribune and for a number of years he wrote articles for Modern Music. He has at times worked as a florist, a librarian, a forest firefighter and has devoted much of his time to caring for animals in the Animal Hospital of Santa Cruz. He lives in Aptos, California.

He has received many fellowships and awards: a grant from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the National Institute of Arts and Letters; a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1952 (a second in 1954); a Fromm Foundation award and a commission from the Louisville Orchestra, both in 1955. SUITE FOR PERCUSSION (1940) is a late work of his "San Francisco period."

Lou Harrison's SYMPHONY ON G appears on CRI 236 and his SUITE for violin, piano and small orchestra on CRI 114.

JULIA PERRY, twice Guggenheim recipient and winner of the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters award (1964) that made this recording possible, received her early training in violin, voice and piano. She studied theory, harmony and composition at Westminster Choir College at Princeton, N.J. where she obtained a Master of Music degree in composition. Later she taught herself other orchestral and band instruments. In addition to her studies in America she received training in Italy and France, where she has also been guest conductor.

Miss Perry writes:

"HOMUNCULUS, C.F., FOR TEN PERCUSSIONISTS was composed in Akron, Ohio, during the summer of 1960 in my apartment situated on the top floor of my father's (physician and surgeon) office, equipped with all the necessary facilities except a piano. These clinical surroundings evoked memories of the medieval laboratory where Wagner, youthful apprentice to Faust, made a successful alchemy experiment, fashioning and bringing to life a creature he called homunculus. Having selected percussion instruments for my formulae, then maneuvering and distilling them by means of the Chord of the Fifteenth (C.F.), this musical test tube baby was brought to life. The chord of the fifteenth was created from a succession of superimposed thirds:

E,	G#,	B,	D#,	F#,	A#,	C#,	E#,
1,	3,	5,	7,	9,	11,	13,	15

“The first twenty measures of this pan-tonal composition proceed at moderate speed, punctuated with subtle rhythmic nuances. Snare drum anticipates wood block in imitation. In the succeeding twenty measures, juxtaposed dynamics between the wood block's medium-loud intensity against the cymbals' dynamics marked a trifle softer with the bass drum's intensity still softer, create a complexity of timbre and dynamics. The triple kettle-drum entry on G#, D# and F# is marked very, very soft, increasing its intensity to medium loud; and it is the kettledrum that establishes E as the fundamental tone of the chordal structure in the subsequent duet with harp. The xylophone pivots in the transmutation of material. Superimposed thirds increase in dynamic intensity reinforced with vibraphone, celesta, harp and piano.”

PAUL PRICE is a pioneering percussionist and teacher of percussion, as well as organizer and director of the MANHATTAN PERCUSSION ENSEMBLE. Largely through his efforts, the percussion instruments have emerged from their primitive state, where they served as mere punctuation (or exclamation) marks, and are now autonomous and sensitive members of the orchestral family. The ENSEMBLE was organized in 1957 and has had a distinguished career that includes a State Department tour of 20 cities throughout Europe and the Middle East. It also appears on CRI 141. Its members on this recording are: Richard Allen, bass drum; Norman Bergen, celesta-piano; Barbara Bondelid, harp; Wayne Brotherton, suspended cymbals, washtub, thundersheets; Edward Burnham, snare drum, brake drums, bells; Fred Eckler, timpani; Richard Fitz, vibraphone, brake drum, triangles, temple blocks; Thomas Maguire, wood blocks; Alan Silverman, cymbals, brake drums, clockcoils; Howard Zwickler, xylophone, bass drum, tam-tam, gongs.

ELIZABETH GYRING received her musical training in Vienna, where she was born. Her early works had concert and radio performances in Vienna And Berlin by members of the Vienna and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras. She came to the U. S. in 1939, is an American citizen, and lives in New York. Her choral works and orchestra pieces, as well as chamber music, organ and solo works have been played in Town Hall, in Carnegie Recital Hall, Judson Hall, in St. Thomas Church and in numerous Library concerts in New York; at New York University, Redlands and Texas University; and in Vermont, Delaware, Arkansas and Pennsylvania.

Elizabeth Gyring's PIANO SONATA No. 2 was composed in 1957. It is in the traditional four movements, the first being a modified sonata form, the second a scherzo, the third a songlike slow movement and the finale a rondo. The composer says that, as in all of her music, the inspiration was the melodic idea and that all the counterpoint and harmonization should be considered merely accompaniment.

The work was premiered by Mitchell Andrews in New York in 1958, where the correspondent for **Neues Oesterreich** described it as “strongly rhythmic,” and “expressive in its dancing flow . . . This is highly spiritual music . . . that again and again concentrates in dramatic climaxes.”

This recording was made possible by grants from the American Academy and National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the American Composers Alliance.

*(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket)*