

CRI SD 253

BARNEY CHILDS

Music for Two Flute Players HARVEY and SOPHIE SOLLBERGER

Duo for Flute and Bassoon PETER MIDDLETON and LESTER WEIL

RAOUL PLESKOW

Movement for Oboe, Violin and Piano

JOSEF MARX, oboe; THOMAS MOORE, violin; HOWARD ROVICS, piano

ARTHUR CUSTER

Two Movements for Woodwind Quintet

INTERLOCHEN ARTS QUINTET: NORMAN SCHWEIKERT, GARY SIGURDSON, ERNEST ORMAND, ROBERT MORGAN, LEWIS LIPNICK

Permutations

BONNIE DOUGLAS, violin; GARY GRAY, clarinet; DOUGLAS DAVIS, cello

BARNEY CHILDS was born in 1926 in Spokane, Washington. He was largely self-taught as a composer until his late twenties, when he studied with Leonard Ratner, Carlos Chavez, Aaron Copland (the last two at Tanglewood), and Elliott Carter. Until recently he supported himself as a teacher of English, the subject of his academic training at the University of Nevada and Oxford University (which he attended as a Rhodes Scholar). He is co-editor, with Elliott Schwartz, of the book *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music*, and he has published a number of articles. He serves on the advisory board of the American Society of University Composers.

Childs' first contact with new music was his discovery of the *New Music Quarterly* scores while he was in high school. In a way his lack of early formal training and his geographical and stylistic isolation have shaped his musical stance to parallel those of such *Quarterly* composers as Ives, Ruggles, Becker, Brant, Strang, and Harrison, whose music he admires. He is not concerned with public taste and international styles. His output is almost totally chamber music, much of it written for particular performers.

Both the works recorded here, played by the artists for whom they were written, were composed in 1963, the *DUO* in June in Tucson and *MUSIC FOR TWO FLUTE PLAYERS* in September at the MacDowell Colony. The works are similar in admitting silence as a structural element and in the use of indeterminacy, through performer choice, to animate large fixed structures. *MUSIC* does so more extensively; the piece involves not only choices of articulation, as the *DUO*, but also, from time to time, choice of pitches, choice among pre-composed alternative passages, and improvised cadenzas. Both pieces therefore demand, in addition to instrumental virtuosity, a close teamwork often requiring one player's decision to be made on what—and when—the other plays.

One player in *MUSIC* doubles alto flute, the other piccolo. Each player's part presents (1) the same sections in different order, the sections determined by the kind of music played and how it is played, rather than on melodic or harmonic considerations, and (2) passages in which both players are concerned with the same kind of material at the same time. These "ensemble" passages often involve a variety of canonic treatments: isorhythmic, isomelodic, crab, troped, etc.

The *DUO* starts with a solo for each instrument, material from which (rhythmic, motivic, registral) is then developed in a loosely kaleidoscopic fashion.

RAOUL PLESKOW was born in Vienna and educated in New York. A graduate of Queens College and Columbia University, Mr. Pleskow is at present Associate Professor of Music, and Chairman of the Music Department of C. W. Post College of Long Island University. His compositions include a work for orchestra, several works for varied instrumental ensembles and pieces for solo instruments. His music is frequently performed and highly praised both in the U. S. and Europe.

Mr. Pleskow writes:

"MOVEMENT FOR OBOE, VIOLIN AND PIANO was written in the summer of 1966. I was concerned with writing a piece of constant and rapid changes. The musical materials are dispersed among the three diversified instruments as a mobile, constantly shifting and realigning manner. The shapes move between the containment of a phrased and periodized syntax and one of an interruptive and asymmetrical setting among an ever-changing texture. The pitch material is ordered into short segments that freely circulate and are the source of the melodic-harmonic materials. The formal aspect of the piece is involved with realizing the basic pitch material in these varied registral, rhythmic, dynamic and timbral projections."

The work was written for Josef Marx and received its first performance by the Group for Contemporary Music at Columbia University in December 1966.

ARTHUR CUSTER has enjoyed a series of careers in and about the music business, several of them rare. He spent, for instance, three years as supervisor of music for the U. S. Air Force's school system in Spain. At the same time, he lectured and wrote (in Spanish) and kept tabs on touring music programs for the USIA. His first academic degree was not in music at all, but in science. More conventionally, he holds a B.A. from the University of Connecticut, a Master of Music from the University of Redlands and a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa at Iowa City. On the other side of the advanced-educational fence, he has served as Dean of the Philadelphia Musical Academy and has taught at the University of Omaha, Kansas Wesleyan University and the University of Rhode Island. He is now (1969) Director of the Metropolitan Educational Center in the Arts in St. Louis.

Although he played around with jazz in his early days, Custer did not turn to serious musical studies until he was 23. His teachers include Paul Pisk, Philip Bezanson and Nadia Boulanger. He has composed widely in every medium except opera. His music, which is largely serially-ordered, has earned meaningful praise for its conciseness and vitality.

About his PERMUTATIONS, Arthur Custer writes:

"The music of the first movement is busy, virtuosic, and dramatic. Its structure is defined by three short cadenzas (one for each instrument), which serve to interrupt and retard the motion. The second movement is rhythmically (but not dynamically) static. An ostinato figure comes and goes, and finally becomes integrated into the melodic/harmonic gesture. The third movement is brisk, but its manner is more flowing than the first movement. The basic material (a repeated-note figure and a scale) alternate with aleatoric sections."

The composer comments on his woodwind piece as follows:

"The first of the *Two Movements for Woodwind Quintet* is rhapsodic. A contrapuntal duet for flute and bassoon gives way to horn and oboe. Clarinet and flute are then paired. A climax built on repeating patterns provokes a two-measure interlude of roudades for all the instruments. An attempt to continue the duet (oboe and bassoon) fails: the rapid figurations assert themselves. The two elements then function side-by-side, alternately coming into prominence before the quiet ending. The form of the movement is open and additive. The manipulation of the two gestures is handled in such a manner as to avoid repetitions of the material.

"The second movement employs motor rhythms whose energy is derived from motives and repeated-note figures. Breathing places in the form are provided by sections of sustained chords. These passages impart textural variety and plasticity, in spite of the steady *Takt* which lies beneath."

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(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket)