

CRI 261

KAREL HUSA: Symphony No. 1 for Orchestra
PRAGUE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, KAREL HUSA, conductor

Serenade for Woodwind Quintet with Strings, Harp and Xylophone
Foerster Woodwind Quintet
Prague Symphony Orchestra, Karel Husa, conductor

Nocturne, from Fantasies for Orchestra
ORCHESTRE DES SOLISTES DE PARIS, KAREL HUSA, conductor

KAREL HUSA is a Czech-born composer who is internationally known as a master of the grand tradition of symphonic writing. Although his composition makes use of elements first isolated by the Schoenberg school, it is more notable for its grand gestures, its sweeping power, its eloquent orchestration and its sometimes romantic expression. The music is frequently programmed, and as frequently is described as "powerful," "exhilarating," "brilliant" and "well-formed."

Husa was born in Prague in 1921 and studied there until 1946, when the French government granted him a five-year scholarship under which he studied composition with Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger and conducting with Eugene Bigot, Jean Fournet and Andre Cluytens. His reputation grew to international scope, and in 1954 he joined the music faculty at Cornell University, where he has remained ever since, making annual trips abroad to conduct. His STRING QUARTET NO. 3 won the Pulitzer Prize in 1969.

SYMPHONY FOR ORCHESTRA was composed in Paris during 1952-53 where the composer lived for more than eight years before coming to this country. Although its form resembles the classical symphony, its construction is based more on contrasts and large designs. The three movements can be very distinctly recognized (the third follows the second without interruption) but they are all united by the same constant pulse from the beginning to the end. A large symphony orchestra is used. The movements are marked:

- I. Adagio misterioso — Allegro assai
- II. Grave *attacca*
- III. Poco piu vivo. Con Moto. Maestoso

The first performance of this work was given by the Belgian Radio and Television on March 4, 1954, conducted by Daniel Sternfeld. The first performance in the United States took place in Baltimore in April 1965 under the Rockefeller Foundation project with the composer conducting the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra.

NOCTURNE is the last of three FANTASIES FOR ORCHESTRA (1956) which were commissioned by the Friends of Music at Cornell. It is an atmospheric movement in which the composer specifically set out to explore new colors and other new possibilities in orchestration.

SERENADE for woodwind quintet with string orchestra, harp and xylophone, was composed for the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra in 1963 and, following its premiere the following January, it was performed by many European orchestras, and by the New York Woodwind Quintet with the Cornell Symphony Orchestra on the Cornell campus. It is divided into three movements: The Mountain, The Night, and The Dance. It opens in a bright conversational manner, as solo instruments take turns playing. After a calm, restrained section, there is a spirited finale, with a peppering throughout by the xylophone.

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Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket