

CRI 263

HENRI LAZAROF

ESPACES

Los Angeles Chamber Ensemble, conducted by the composer

OCTET

Members of the UCLA Wind Ensemble, conducted by the composer

ROBERT HALL LEWIS

TOCCATA FOR SOLO VIOLIN AND PERCUSSION

Gabriel Banat, violin; Saul Goodman, timpani and percussion; Walter Rosenberger, percussion

DIVERTIMENTO FOR SIX INSTRUMENTS

Aeolian Chamber Players: Lewis Kaplan, Erich Graf, Lloyd Greenberg, Jonathan Abramowitz, Walter Ponce

HENRI LAZAROF was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1932. He studied at the Academy of Music in Sofia; the New Conservatory of Music in Jerusalem, Israel; and at the Music Academy "Santa Cecilia" in Rome, Italy, where he was a student of Goffredo Petrassi. In 1959, he received a Master of Fine Arts degree from Brandeis University. He has received many commissions and awards, including First Prize, International Competition of Monaco, 1962; and First International Prize, City of Milan, La Scala Award, 1966. He is a prolific composer in all media including pre-recorded tapes, and his music has been widely published, performed and recorded. He is currently an Associate Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles.

ESPACES (dedicated to his wife, Eleanore Lazarof) was composed for the Monday Evening Concerts of the Los Angeles County Museum, where it was premiered in October, 1967, with the composer conducting.

This five part work is conceived for two flutes, clarinet, bass clarinet, two violas, two cellos, and two pianos. It is a chamber concerto organized in three Actes with two Entr'actes. Though the five divisions flow from one to the other the plan is readily apparent by instrumental usage: Acte I Tutti; Entr'acte I — two pianos; Acte II — Tutti; Entr'acte II — Woodwinds and Strings; Acte III — Tutti. This is a "concerto grosso" in which each instrument may be called upon to function in the ripieno, in the concertino, or in a solo capacity.

With the completion of ESPACES, Henri Lazarof began immediately to compose the OCTET for flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, C trumpet, horn, and trombone. The first performance was given for the International Society for Contemporary Music, Los Angeles, in January 1969. Since that time it has been performed in Barcelona, Spain, Oslo, Norway, at the University of Chicago by the Contemporary Chamber Players, and at the University of California at Los Angeles by members of the UCLA Wind Ensemble with the composer conducting.

Lazarof molds his materials into two sets of strictly controlled variations. Variations I consists of a four measure exposition of chordal material and is followed by eleven variations. The primary emphasis is vertical. The eight instruments are divided into three groups regulated by timbre. Forward motion is assured by continuous increase in tempo markings. This increasing motion is assisted by controlled silence between the variations: the time lapses begin with five seconds and gradually decrease to one second.

The second set of Variations employs the instruments as a "double quartet," built upon the high and low register of the instruments. The materials of the second set are essentially horizontal and consistently in two different tempi.

from notes by Dr. Robert Tusler.

ROBERT HALL LEWIS is a musician of impressive attainments, being a conductor, instrumentalist (trumpet, both jazz and classical, and piano), author and teacher, as well as a distinguished composer. Although this is his first recording, he has a long list of performances in America and Europe, by outstanding musicians including those on this record.

He was born in Portland, Oregon in 1926 and studied at the Eastman School, the Paris Conservatory and the Vienna Academy of Music, among, several others. His principle teachers were Bernard Rogers and Hans Erich Apostel. He is now a resident of Baltimore, where he is musical director of the Baltimore Chamber Music Society and on the faculties of Goucher College and Johns Hopkins University.

TOCCATA FOR SOLO VIOLIN AND PERCUSSION was composed for a concert of contemporary music sponsored by Goucher College in February, 1963. Since its premiere, it has appeared on programs in Philadelphia, Marlboro, London and Munich, as well as on concerts of the Los Angeles and New York chapters of the ISCM. While the composition contains much virtuosic material for the violin, the ensemble is treated essentially as a trio of equal importance. The percussionists sometimes share basic motives and phrases with the violin, creating a two- or three-part contrapuntal design. At other moments, more diverse situations occur.

There are three principle sections, connected by two cadenza-like interludes, the first for the two percussionists, a portion of which is a rhythmic canon. A slower, more lyrical central section leads to a second interlude for violin solo, in which new aspects of former ideas are presented. A closing Allegro of vigorous character eventually recalls violin motives from the first part, modified rhythmically in duet style with the timpani.

Mr. Lewis composed his DIVERTIMENTO with the old-time meaning of the title in mind: that is, to divert and amuse listeners and give his performers a chance to display their virtuosity while playing advanced musical material. In the composer's words, "the music embodies several antitheses: continuity-discontinuity, complexity-simplicity and the juxtaposition of static sound with gestures of more intense rhythmic activity."

The work is in one movement, subdivided into six clearly contrasting sections. The first section begins with a brief flash of sound, which is followed by more sustained harmonic and melodic material, concluding with a solo cadenza for the violin. The situation is quite different in the second section, which is faster, consisting of rapidly shifting musical gestures. Several disparate elements are stated in close succession, producing an almost kaleidoscopic impression, until the instruments finally unite and coalesce.

There follows a short section in which thematic elements are presented in more continuous fashion, using instrumental colors which have not been heard as yet. A more flexible, freely organized slow section follows in which single players appear to emerge from the ensemble, assuming new roles and characteristics. At other moments, the instrumentalists unite in dramatic, stentorian fashion.

Part five may be viewed as a higher level of development and evolution, presenting musical tendencies from previous areas in new forms of timbre, rhythm, dynamics and texture. Following a climax, the cellist introduces the closing section with a cadenza.

DIVERTIMENTO FOR SIX INSTRUMENTS was commissioned by Randolph S. Rothschild and the Chamber Music Society of Baltimore on the occasion of its 20th anniversary concert season, and premiered by that organization in November, 1969.

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Produced by Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)