

PETER GRIFFITH: One String Quartet

GEORGE EDWARDS: String Quartet (1967)

ROBERT POLLOCK: Movement and Variations

LESLIE THIMMIG: Seven Profiles

THE COMPOSERS STRING QUARTET

Matthew Raimondi, Anahid Ajemian, Jean Dupouy, Michael Rudiakov

The four quartets presented on this recording were selected from over one hundred which were entered in the First Annual Composers String Quartet Composition Contest, sponsored by the New England Conservatory in conjunction with the Composers String Quartet.

Scores were submitted to the contest from all areas of the United States, as well as from Canada, Mexico, and from American composers studying in England and Belgium.

After careful consideration, which included actual playing of the quartets submitted, these four award-winning quartets were selected by a panel of judges consisting of Mr. Elliott Carter, Mr. Hugo Weisgall, Mr. Thomas Dunn, Mr. Matthew Raimondi, and Mr. Donald Harris.

In addition to the present recording, two of the four string quartets were selected by the jury to receive publication by the E. C. Schirmer Company, Inc., (ASCAP) Boston, or their B.M.I. affiliate, Lone Press, as well as two cash awards of \$200.00 each. The New England Conservatory, as well as the Composers String Quartet, wishes particularly to express its gratitude to the E. C. Schirmer Company and to Composers Recordings, Inc., without whose participation this First Composers String Quartet Composition Contest would not have been possible.

The present recording was recorded in Jordan Hall of the New England Conservatory on May 16, 1970.

PETER GRIFFITH, born in Ann Arbor, Michigan in 1943, is the first guitarist ever to be admitted to the University of Michigan Music School, and the first guitar instructor at the Interlochen Arts Academy. His prize-winning composition was written after his teacher, Ross Lee Finney, suggested that he expand a little sketch which was originally conceived as a compositional exercise. The first part of the string quartet is reminiscent of the idea of the original sketch. Mr. Griffith is presently completing his Master of Arts degree at the University of Michigan. He writes:

“ONE STRING QUARTET's most important feature is its single movement, with a one-and-one relationship between the instruments and their medium. The solos are the finality of expression within this quartet. All else that exists is on levels surrounding their aloofness. While the order of notes is based on source sets from rows, there is little here that resembles 12-tone. Given a series of anything, a composer can use whatever notes he wants at whatever time in whatever manner. Thus while I use rows for the order that they offer, an improvisational aura assimilates my facility, thus ordering the use of the notes. It all works quite well.”

GEORGE EDWARDS was born in Boston in 1943. He studied composition with Richard Hoffmann at Oberlin College, and with Milton Babbitt and Earl Kim at Princeton. In 1967 he was the recipient of the Koussevitzky Prize at Tanglewood. Since 1968 he has been a member of the Theory Faculty of the New England Conservatory. He writes:

“In my *STRING QUARTET* (1967) I wanted to create a continuous and gradual unfolding of ideas from beginning to end, focusing on long-spanned gestures rather than on dramatic contrasts in detail. I came to think of the medium primarily as a unified ensemble, not as four distinct individuals. Thus the dominant register is that shared by all four instruments, within which lines pass almost imperceptibly from part to part, the composite result of an intricate, constantly shifting polyphony.”

ROBERT POLLOCK was born in New York City in 1946. He studied composition with Claudio Spies at Swarthmore College, from which he graduated in June of 1968. He is presently working for a Master of Fine Arts degree in composition at Princeton University, where he has also studied with Edward T. Cone and Peter Westergaard. Mr. Pollock's string quartet was composed during the summer of 1967. He writes:

“*MOVEMENT AND VARIATIONS* consists of a movement, roughly in the form ABCA, and five motivic variations which use materials of the previous movement from the following areas and in the following order: A B C B A. The large scale form of the piece could thus be considered as one of rounded form followed by fragmentary reflections of that form.”

LESLIE THIMMIG was born in Santa Maria, California in 1943. He received his Bachelor of Music degree from Eastman School of Music in 1965, and his Master of Arts degree from Yale in 1969. He comes from a broad background in performance and composition. As clarinetist and bass clarinetist he has performed with the Eastman Wind Ensemble, the Philharmonic Orchestra, and the New Haven Symphony. As a jazz saxophonist he has played extensively in the Chicago and New York areas, and made a State Department-sponsored tour of Poland in 1963 with his quintet. Mr. Thimmig has studied with John LaMontaine, Bülent Arel, and Mel Powell. His compositions have been performed in such widely disparate situations as the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, and National Radio of Kenya. He writes:

“The basic intention of *SEVEN PROFILES* was twofold: to deal with the problem of creating 'miniatures', and also to deal with the monochromatic nature of the string quartet medium in a contrapuntal manner. With respect to the former, a miniaturized time world was sought; one where, say the gestures of a five minute piece were compressed into one minute. The result is that each of the movements has a distinct and individual identity ('profile'), and the set is heard more easily as seven separate pieces played successively than as the seven integrated movements of a single work. Within the set a wide variety of contrapuntal types is articulated; for example the simultaneous projection of four tempi (III), of four periods or phrase lengths (II), of four kinds of music (VI). The work is dedicated to Bülent Arel.”

The *COMPOSERS STRING QUARTET* is widely known and admired for its superb musicianship and for its devotion to the principle of playing modern music well. It is currently in residence at the New England Conservatory. It may be heard on CRI SD 257.

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)