

PETER WESTERGAARD

Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos

VALARIE LAMOREE, SOPRANO; JACK D. LITTEN, TENOR; MEMBERS OF THE GROUP FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AT COLUMBIA, CONDUCTED BY HARVEY SOLLBERGER

GEORGE BALCH WILSON

Concatenations

CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS, UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CONDUCTED BY EDWIN LONDON

Exigencies

REALIZED AT THE ELECTRONIC MUSIC CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

RICHARD WILSON

Music for Violin and Cello

YOKO MATSUDA, VIOLIN; FRED SHERRY, CELLO

PETER WESTERGAARD was born in Champaign, Illinois, in 1931, received an A.B. from Harvard and an M.F.A. from Princeton, and has studied composition with Walter Piston, Darius Milhaud, Roger Sessions, and Wolfgang Fortner. He is now (1971) an Associate Professor of Music at Princeton University, where he is also conductor of the University Orchestra.

Westergaard created the libretto for MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS from the poem of the same name by Edward Lear, the nineteenth century English master of nonsense verse. The opera was completed early in 1966 just in time to go into rehearsals for the premiere in March 1966 by the performers on the present recording. It has since been performed by other groups in many parts of the country.

VALARIE LAMOREE, who may also be heard in the music of Allan Blank (CRI SD 250), is known among New York musicians and concertgoers both for her stunning musicianship and her beautiful voice.

JACK LITTEN has sung everything from Jaquino in *Fidelio* to Milton Babbitt's *Composition for Tenor and Six instruments*. He can be heard as tenor soloist on the Columbia recording of Stravinsky's *Les Noces* and is presently (1971) on the faculty of Southern Connecticut State.

GEORGE BALCH WILSON (b., Grand Island, Nebraska, 1927) is Director of the Electronic Music Studio and Professor of Composition at the University of Michigan. He received his formal training at the University of Michigan and the Conservatoire Royale de Musique in Brussels and has studied composition with Ross Lee Finney, Nadia Boulanger and Roger Sessions. He founded and is the music director of "Contemporary Directions", a concert series of the University of Michigan devoted to the presentation of new music. He has been the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, the Prix de Rome of the American Academy in Rome, and the Award and Citation from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Letters (1970) which made this recording possible.

About his music, the composer offers the following comments: "These two pieces reflect my concern for the relationship between time as a precise measurement and the sensation of experienced time. For several years, I have been developing musical gestures which are highly compressed in overall length while dispersed over a wide expressive field. In the imagination these works have a span quite apart from temporal reality. Time is an illusion where the miniature becomes the mural.

“Regarding **CONCATENATIONS**, (completed in 1969), I have always been fascinated by what happens to a musical idea when it is turned around and heard backwards, as the painter may find interest in mirrored-image juxtaposition. The piece, like a chain, is a series of links each constructed by reworking the material into some form of reverse order. The initial ideas coincided with my first creative efforts in the electronic music medium. This experience, particularly the shaping of "envelope" — the attack, duration, and release of sound events — greatly influenced not only the linear details of each of the twelve instrumental statements, but offered a new attitude through which I could deal with the larger contours of form. The choice of instrumentation is a salute to the diverse and remarkably skillful instrumental abilities of several of my former students.

“**EXIGENCIES** was completed in 1968 and originally realized in four tracks at the Electronic Music Studio of the University of Michigan. It is dedicated to my wife, Deborah.

“As compositions, these works are one man's terse, but, hopefully pertinent statement about the social and political events of the 1960's, a tragic but dynamic period etched in hatred, anger, and chaos, yet still struggling for a restatement of human values — love, beauty, and tranquility.”

RICHARD WILSON (b. 1941) is Associate Professor of Music at Vassar College. His career has been divided between piano playing, which he does on brief forays from his Poughkeepsie headquarters, teaching, and composition, one formidable example of which is displayed on this record. Despite his youth, he has won several awards for his music, which includes works in the larger forms as well as this condensed example.

About his music, the composer writes:

"**MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO**, in four short movements, follows tradition in that its first and fourth movements share some motivic material and a formal plan; the second movement has the character of a scherzo; and the third movement, really the expressive high point of the piece, bears some resemblance to a classical slow movement. The relationship between the outer movements involves certain deliberate contrasts, the reprise in the first being a tranquil recollection of its opening while that in the last intensifies and extends its material to a climactic point. The third movement is the most systematic: the two parts are in canon at the fifth although the violin gets so far ahead that the cello must resort to a solo cadenza in order to catch up.

"The piece was written for two colleagues at Vassar, Robert Rudie and Luis Garcia-Renart, who gave its first performances at Bard College and Vassar in April, 1969."

THE GROUP FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, whose members are here conducted by its co-founder, **HARVEY SOLLBERGER**, has created a whole school of players attuned to the music of today. It was the prototype of university groups across the nation, which have become the prime source of new music in our time. The players here are: **JEANNE BENJAMIN**, **SOPHIE SOLLBERGER**, **FRED SHERRY**, **DONALD MacCOURT**, **CHARLES WUORINEN** and **RAYMOND DesROCHES**.

The CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS of the University of Illinois is a distinguished group that provides an outlet for midwestern composers in regular and frequent concerts. Its conductor, EDWIN LONDON, is Professor of Music at the university and Associate of the Center for Advanced Study. He is also a composer.

The Players on this recording are THOMAS HOWELL, PAUL ZONN, RON DeWAR, JOHN GARVEY, PETER FARRELL, THOMAS FREDRICKSON, THOMAS HOLDEN, JOHN LEISENRING, KEN FERRANTINO, PETER GRIFFITH, DANIEL PERLONGO and THOMAS SIWE.

This recording was made possible by grants from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., Vassar College and the American Academy-National Institute of Arts and Letters. The last named organization gives awards to four composers every year *and* a recording on CR1 is part of his prize: George Balch Wilson was a 1970 winner.

(Original Liner notes from CRI LP jacket)

Mr. & Mrs. Discobolos

LIBRETTO

FIRST PART

No. 1. First Pastoral

(Lights on, or curtain up. A wall. Sunset. Enter Mr. and Mrs. Discobolos, carrying a lunch basket. They climb the wall. He is solicitous. She is intrepid. They introduce each other to the audience, pronouncing their name with exaggerated diction—people are always getting it wrong. They are a bit out of breath but try not to show it.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Mr.

MR. DISCOBBOLOS and Mrs.

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Discobolos

Climbed to the top of a wall.

(They sit down, the lunch basket between them.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS And they sat to watch the sunset sky

MR. DISCOBBOLOS And to hear the Nupiter Piffkin cry

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

And the Biscuit Buffalo call.

(They unpack the basket.)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS They took up a roll

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS and some Camomile tea,

(Teacups in outside hands, inside hands on basket handle, they turn blissfully to one another.)

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

And both were as happy as
happy could be.

No. 2. Mrs. Discobbolos' First Recitative and Aria

(She freezes exactly as she was at the end of No. 1, while he takes his hand off the basket handle and leans forward to the audience, appealing to them to understand that what is about to happen is not his doing.)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS Till Mrs. Discobbolos said,
(He remains motionless until his next speech.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(Raising her hand suddenly, as though annoyed by some petty mishap.)*
Oh! W! X! Y! Z!

It has just come into my head
Suppose

(The more she thinks about it . . .)

we should happen

(the less abstract the idea becomes.)

to fall!!!!

(Grasping the basket handle in terror.)

Darling Mr. Discobbolos!

(Since Mr. makes no response, there is no alternative but to convince him with an aria. Outside hand still holding tea cup, inside hand free for gestures.)

Suppose we should fall down flumpetty
Just like pieces of stone!

(Wagging her index finger at him as though he were a child.)

Onto the thorns, or into the moat!

(With genuine distress.)

What would become of your new
green coat?
And

(An afterthought.)

might you not break a bone?

(As Mr. remains motionless, she becomes more and more petulant.)

It never occurred to me before
That perhaps we shall never go down
any more!

(She starts a grand gesture and takes a terrific breath, but freezes . . .)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS *(With a tone of, "Well, what can you do?" and shaking his head slowly.)*
And Mrs. Discobbolos said

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(continuing her gesture, completing it on the downbeat)*

Oh! W! X! Y! Z!

(Mr., resigned, lets his head sink into his hand.)

What ever put it into your head
To climb up this wall?

(Turning to him.)

my own

(Hand on lunch basket, she leans over it to plead quietly, but insistently, directly into his ear.)

Darling Mr. Discobbolos?

(To the audience, proud that he has taken her seriously.)

Mr. Discobbolos answered,

No. 3. Mr. Discobbolos' First Response

MR. DISCOBBOLOS *(He raises his head. To Mrs., with great earnestness.)*

At first it gave me pain,
And I felt my ears turn
(Bemused, telling a joke on himself.)
perfectly pink
When your exclamation
(Suddenly serious.)
made me think
We might never get down again!
(Suddenly brighter.)
But now I believe it is wiser far
To remain forever just where we are.

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS And Mr. Discobbolos
(Looking up to him reverently, as though he were about to utter a great truth.)
said,

MR. DISCOBBOLOS Oh!
(Shrugs his shoulders.)

W! X! Y! Z!
it has just come into my head
(With a tone of, "It's that simple, if you just stop to think about it.")
We shall never go down again
(Putting his hand next to hers on the lunch basket.)
Dearest Mrs. Discobbolos!

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(To the audience.)*
So

No. 4. Grand Duet

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Mr.
MR. DISCOBBOLOS and Mrs.
MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Discobbolos
(They stand.)

Stood up and began to sing,
Far away from hurry and strife
Here we will pass the rest of life,
MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(Something suddenly strikes her funny. To Mr.)*
Ding a dong!

MR. DISCOBBOLOS *(Still to the audience, like an echo.)*
Ding a dong!
(To Mrs., with a tone of, "Did I understand you to say, 'Ding a dong?'"
Ding a dong?

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *("Of course, I said 'Ding a dong!'")*
Ding a dong!

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(To each other, getting sillier and sillier.)*
Ding a dong, ding a dong, etc.

(Exultant. They fling away their teacups.)
MR. DISCOBBOLOS We want no knives
MRS. DISCOBBOLOS nor forks nor chairs, MR.
DISCOBBOLOS No tables nor carpets
MRS. DISCOBBOLOS nor household cares,

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS From

(Out to the world.)

worry of life we've fled

(To each other.)

Oh!

(to the sunset sky)

W! X! Y! Z!

There is no more trouble ahead

Sorrow or any such thing

(The lights fade.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS For Mr.

MR. DISCOBBOLOS and Mrs.

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Discobbolos

(Total darkness.)

SECOND PART

No. 5. Second Pastoral

(Sudden daylight. We discover Mr. and Mrs. and the gingham rag dolls who represent their twelve children as in a Victorian family portrait. Mr. is seated with children on either side; Mrs. stands behind him, her hand on his shoulder. All remain motionless throughout No. 5.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Mr.

MR. DISCOBBOLOS and Mrs.

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

Discobbolo

s

Lived on the top of the wall,

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS For twenty years, a month and a day,

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS Till their hair had grown all pearly gray,

MR. AND MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

And their teeth had begun to fall.

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS They never were ill

MR. DISCOBBOLOS or at all dejected, MRS.

DISCOBBOLOS By all admired

MR. DISCOBBOLOS and by some respected

(To the audience, with a resigned air of, "We've been through this before.")

Till Mrs. Discobbolos said,

No. 6. Mrs. Discobbolos' Second Recitative and Aria

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(As in No. 2, annoyed.)*

Oh! W! X! Y! Z!

it has just conic into my head,

(Reasonable, with an air of, "And it's as simple as that.")

We have no more room at all —

Darling Mr. Discobbolos!

Look at our six fine boys!

And our six sweet girls so fair!

Upon this wall they have all been born

(With sudden enthusiasm.)

And not one of the twelve has happened to fall
Through my maternal care!

(Lost in contemplation of her maternal care. She suddenly remembers the matter at hand. With an air of, "The opposite is unthinkable!")

Surely they should not pass their lives
Without any chance of husbands or wives!

(As in No. 2, she starts her gesture, but freezes.)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS And Mrs. Discobbolos said

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *{Despairing, "How will I ever get him to listen to reason?"}*

Oh! W! X! Y! Z!
Did it ever come into your head
That our lives must be lived elsewhere,
Dearest Mr. Discobbolos?

(Mr. assumes she is finished and starts to answer her, but she launches right into a second verse without noticing.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(Tone as in first verse, but somewhat more agitated.)*

They have never been at a ball,
Nor have even seen a bazaar!
Nor have heard folks say in a tone all hearty, *(Gushing.)*

"What loves of girls (at a garden party)
Those Misses Discobbolos are!"

(Lost in contemplation of the joys of garden parties; then, more and more frantic.)

*Morning and night it drives me wild
To think of the fate of each darling child!*

(Faltering.)

But Mr. Discobbolos said

No. 7. Grand Finale

(consisting of Mr. Discobbolos' Second Response, Mrs. Discobbolos' Narrative, Mr. Discobbolos' Song, Mrs. Discobbolos' Prayer, Mr. Discobbolos' Narrative, and the Final Duet of the Departing Spirits of Mr. and Mrs. Discobbolos.)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS *(Exasperated.)*

Oh! W!

(Stamps his foot.)

X! Y! Z!

(Gets up.)

What has come to your fiddledum head!

(He turns and takes a long, hard look at her. With the implication of, "I never realized it before, it's as simple as that!")

What a runcible goose you are!

(Summarily.)

Octopod Mrs. Discobbolos!

(Without further ado he slides down off the wall.)

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS *(Coming forward cautiously.)*

*Suddenly Mr. Discobbolos
Slid from the top of the wall;*

(Mr. picks up the shovel; he tests the soil with the point of the shovel and begins to dig. She peers out over the edge of the wall.)

And beneath it he dug a dreadful trench,

*And filled it with dynamite, gunpowder gench,
And aloud he began to call —*

MR. DISCOBBOLOS (*While Mrs. was singing he has arranged the explosives, put down his tools, and surveyed his handiwork. He sings up to her.*)

*Let the wild bee sing,
And the blue bird hum!*

For the end of your lives has certainly come!

(*Leisurely, he sits down, back to wall, gets settled, looks up over his shoulder at Mrs., and speaks to the audience with deep contentment.*)

And Mrs. Discobbolos said

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS (*She kneels.*)

Oh! W! X! Y! Z!
We shall presently all be dead,
On this ancient runcible wall,
Terrible Mr. Discobbolos!

(*She buries her face in her hands.*)

MR. DISCOBBOLOS (*Having looked up and seen that Mrs. has stopped, he continues the narration, blandly.*)

*Pensively, Mr. Discobbolos
Sat with his back to the wall;
He lighted*

(*Lights match.*)

a match,

(*Fuse starts.*)

and he fired the train,

(*Blackout — a quick series of explosions rocks the wall. Mrs. and the twelve children crumple to the ground. Mr. leaps up exultantly and then crumples to the ground.*)

*And the mortified mountain echoed again
To the sound of an awful fall!
And all the Discobbolos*

(*Mr. and Mrs. rise as slowly as possible and move gradually stage front. The Discobbolos children are slowly hoisted into the air where they float suspended like Baroque cherubs over the heads of their parents.*)

family flew

In thousands of bits to the sky so blue,

(*Spotlights gradually illuminate the faces of the ghosts of Mr. and Mrs.*)

And

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

no one

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

was left to have

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

said

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

"Oh,

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

W!

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

X! Y!

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

Z!

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

Has it

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

come into

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

anyone's

MRS. DISCOBBOLOS

head

MR. DISCOBBOLOS

That the

