

NAUMBURG RECORDING AWARD WINNERS

MARIO DAVIDOVSKY

INFLEXIONS

14 players conducted by David Gilbert

CHACONA for Violin, Cello and Piano

Jeanne Benjamin, violin; Joel Krosnick, cello; Robert Miller, piano

TISON STREET

STRING QUARTET 1972

Concord String Quartet (Mark Sokol, Andrew Jennings, John Kochanowski, Norman Fischer)

RICHARD TRYTHALL

COINCIDENCES

Richard Trythall, piano

MARIO DAVIDOVSKY (b. 1934, Argentina) is most known for his groundbreaking compositions for synthesized sound and traditional instruments demonstrated in his series of *Synchronisms* for synthesized sound and traditional instruments (Numbers 1, 2 and 3 appear on CRI SD 204, and No. 5 on CRI SD 268). His music is personal and is noted for refinement and elegance. These qualities are equally apparent in his two compositions on the present record.

Davidovsky moved to New York in 1960, the year of his first Guggenheim Fellowship. Since then he has won awards from the National Institute-American Academy of Arts and Letters, Brandeis University, the Tanglewood Festival, the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation (the award that resulted in his music's appearance on this record) and the Pulitzer Prize (1971). He is Associate Director of the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center and has taught at the Instituto di Tella, Buenos Aires; the Manhattan School of Music, Yale and Michigan Universities and is, in 1973, Professor of Music at the City College of New York,

INFLEXIONS was written in 1965. It was commissioned by the Fromm Foundation as part of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the University of Chicago, and was premiered there by Ralph Shapey. The piece is in one movement and scored for fourteen players: two flutes, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, piano, four percussion players, violin, viola, cello and contrabass.

This composition was one of the first purely instrumental pieces written by Mr. Davidovsky after a period of almost five years of composing exclusively with electronic means. Articulative processes, idiosyncratic to the electronic media, seem to have been transferred to the conventional instruments, lending to the piece a very particular idiomatic character.

CHACONA for violin, cello, and piano was commissioned in 1972 by Drake University, College of Fine Arts, and was premiered by the Drake Fine Arts Trio.

In this composition, a regularly recurrent set of durations provides one of the basic materials upon which musical continuity is derived. There is a resemblance between the function of these recorded sets of pulses and the function of the harmonic scheme in the classic Baroque *chaconne*. There is an attempt in this composition to obtain an acoustically balanced ensemble, avoiding the traditional dominance of the piano, by incorporating the three instruments into a single texture.

TISON STREET (b. 1943) studied composition with Leon Kirchner at Harvard, and has worked as a teacher at the University of California in Berkeley and as a free lance violinist in the Boston area. His growing number of awards includes the National Institute-American Academy of Arts and Letters Award (1973) a Rome Prize (1973) and the Naumburg Recording Award (1973) which resulted in his music's appearance on this record. About his music, he writes:

“The original ideas for my STRING QUARTET, 1972, were developed over a period of years before the piece was actually written. These were years in which I was beginning to feel a renewed sense of well-being and began composing again after the lacuna that followed my student days. I began to develop a new musical speech — especially during my stays at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire — a kind of harmonic and gestural language that had possibilities of expressing warmth, joy, sensuousness to a greater degree than some of the well-known avant-garde styles, and that achieved this without returning to the tonal and rhythmic language of the past.

“In the QUARTET, the harmony and melody generally grow from the extension of the major sixth (which gives them their lushness) into two whole-tone hexachords, and thence into various arrays of all 12 notes. The rhythms are based on organic gestures of rhapsodic quality — the rhythm of waves or of swaying branches rather than of a steady pulse. This results in a framework of accelerations and decelerations, i.e. circles and curves rather than rectangles. Indeed, some of the resulting notational problems were like 'squaring the circle' in reverse.

“But there is another important facet of the materials of the work that balances their sensuous or rhapsodic nature. The fabric of the music is governed by diverse contrapuntal devices: canons, cancrizans, augmentations, palindromes, *canti firmi*, etc. When well-tooled and 'heard,' such processes have an irresistible 'magic number' quality, a perfection that glows on the page and creates a whole dimension of aural fascination. To combine these two facets in one and the same music was an important goal for me.”

The quartet was finished in the winter of '72 and first performed March 26 at Sanders Theater in Cambridge by the Composers String Quartet.

RICHARD TRYTHALL (b. Knoxville, Tenn., 1939) studied composition with David Van Vactor and Roger Sessions, and piano with Alfred Schmied. As a composer he has received a Fulbright Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, the Rome Prize and commissions from the Fromm Music Foundation and the Dorian Quintet. As a pianist he won first prize in the 1969 Kranichstein competition for interpreters of contemporary piano music held in Darmstadt, Germany, and has since then concertized extensively in Europe.

About his music, Trythall writes:

“In the four large orchestral works that preceded COINCIDENCES (*Composition for Piano and Orchestra*, *Penelope's Monologue* for soprano and orchestra, *Costruzione* for orchestra, *Continuums* for orchestra), I had become increasingly concerned with achieving a greater variety of musical gesture and nuance. This had led me to a more flexible approach towards pitch control and to attempts to link this with a functional harmonic framework — in the large as well as the small shape of the work.

"COINCIDENCES (1969) is built upon the movement from a finite, cadenced phrase-world to an infinite, non-cadenced world. Structurally this is effected by a gradual contraction of the phrase length (i.e. a compression of the time in which a thought may unfold) to the length of a single sound, and the subsequent periodic repetition of this point in extended open ended phrases.

“The overall process occurs in several stages and, as the thought span tightens. is accompanied by an increase in the density of the chordal writing.

“Basically the work takes place at the coincidence of two very different scales of temporal organization and is involved with elaborating possible relationships between them.”

DAVID GILBERT is an outstanding flutist and composer as well as conductor. During 1970-71 he was assistant conductor of the New York Philharmonic. From 1971 to the present (1973) he has been a conductor with the American Ballet Theatre.

JOEL KROSNIK teaches at the California Institute of the Arts, but travels widely to fill the many demands for his talents. He has also been selected as cellist for the Juilliard Quartet.

ROBERT MILLER is one of New York's most phenomenally gifted pianists.

JEANNE BENJAMIN is known for her extraordinary performances, particularly in contemporary music, and is the first violinist in the Contemporary String Quartet and a leading member of the Group for Contemporary Music.

The performers in INFLEXIONS are: Ronald K. Anderson, Fortunato Arico, Jeanne Benjamin, Allen M. Blustine, Alvin Brehm, Raymond Des Roches, Jacob Glick, Gordon S. Gottlieb, Claire Heldrich, Paul Jacobs, Karl Kraber, Gerardo Levy, Porter Ross Poindexter, and Howard Van Hyning.

The CONCORD STRING QUARTET is one of the newest and finest on the current scene. It played 120 concerts in its first year (1972-3), eliciting extravagant praise on all sides. Its outstanding characteristics are described as "youth" and "vitality." It is also, as this recording demonstrates, highly musical and technically superb. Appropriately, the group won a Naumburg Chamber Music Award in 1972.

This recording was made possible by a grant from the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, which makes an annual award to composers. The 1973 winners were Messrs. Davidovsky, Street and Trythall.

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)