

ROSS LEE FINNEY

SECOND SONATA in C for Violoncello and Piano

CHROMATIC FANTASY IN E for Violoncello Solo

Jerome Jelinek, cello

Joseph Gurt, piano

LESLIE BASSETT

MUSIC FOR VIOLONCELLO AND PIANO

Jerome Jelinek, cello

Joseph Gurt piano

ROSS LEE FINNEY is a product of middle America who has been deeply influenced by several aspects of European musical thought and by his own continuing search for a workable philosophy of music. He was born in Wells, Minnesota in 1906, and studied at the University of Minnesota and Carleton College. Before his formal education was complete he went to study composition with Nadia Boulanger in France, paying his passage by playing in a jazz band. In 1931-2 he was in Vienna, studying with Alban Berg, Schoenberg's great pupil and 12-tone disciple. During the 1930's, he also studied with Roger Sessions, who brought out Finney's strong natural concern for musical tradition, along with the eloquence that comes from his Welsh antecedents. The composer's work reflected this concern above all his other influences for a full decade. In 1949, Finney was appointed professor of composition and composer-in-residence at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He retired in 1972.

About his music, the composer writes:

“My SECOND SONATA for cello and piano was the last work I wrote before my style underwent its conversion to serialization of pitch (my *Sixth String Quartet in E*, recorded on CR1 116, is my first 12-tone work). After completion of the SONATA, it seemed to me that its melodic chromaticism was in conflict with its formal design, and after that this conversion was inevitable.

“Although I was strongly impressed by the 12-tone technique, which I had learned with Alban Berg as early as 1931, it took almost 20 years, with a Depression and a World War, for me to find a way to make this new technique compatible with my natural melodic feeling and the classic-functional concepts that I had been drawn to as a student in Paris during the 1920's.

“In retrospect, I can trace in the works of these years my growing concern for the hexachord and the harmonic-melodic possibilities that were opened up. The very first measure of the SONATA presents such a hexachord and the second measure completes, except for one note, the total chromatic palette.

“My major concern when I composed the SONATA, however, was to give the natural singing quality of the cello complete freedom and to use the piano in such a way that it would never conflict with the cello and still have its own brilliance and articulation. The work is, of course, an arch form, with fast movements placed between the slow introduction and conclusion and the slow movement which is the keystone.

“My CHROMATIC FANTASY IN E for solo cello was composed in 1957, a year before my *Fantasy in Two Movements* for solo violin which was commissioned by Yehudi Menuhin. The term "fantasy" refers more to the manner in which I employ the hexachord of the row than to the over-all form of the composition. It was a completely unconscious chance, seen only in retrospect, that the hexachord of this work which one hears at the start is the same as the first six notes of the SECOND SONATA for cello and piano. More important, however, and completely conscious, was the quotation from Bartok's *Sixth String Quartet*. The work unfolds freely through sections of contrasting moods."

LESLIE BASSETT (b. California, 1923) is also a product of both American and European training. Ross Lee Finney himself provided Bassett with his most important American influence, which was mixed with the practical experience of arranging and playing trombone in U. S. Army bands during World War II.

Upon winning a Fulbright Fellowship, Bassett went to study with Boulanger and Arthur Honegger in France. In 1952 he joined the University of Michigan faculty, where he became chairman of the composition department in 1970. His music has been commissioned and performed by the finest players, and has won prizes including a Pulitzer Prize (1966), a fellowship at the American Academy in Rome (1961-3), a citation from the National Institute of Arts and Letters (1964) and a Guggenheim Fellowship (1973-4). In addition to composing for traditional forces, Bassett uses electronic sounds, and was one of the founders of the University of Michigan's Electronic Music Studio. He is extremely active in support of contemporary music and has served in its behalf on numerous committees. His music may be heard on CR1 148 and 203

MUSIC FOR CELLO AND PIANO was written during the late summer of 1966 for a concert of Bassett's music at his alma mater, Fresno State College, on November 20 of that year, with Fred Dempster and Bob Bennett performing. The music evolves from characteristic shapes and sounds heard in the first movement to a brief, reflective conclusion, in which are hidden two phrases of the FSC Alma Mater.

JEROME JELINEK, professor of music at the University of Michigan, and cellist of the Stanley Quartet, has received critical acclaim as recitalist and soloist with orchestras in Europe, Canada and the United States. A graduate of Michigan, Jelinek continued his study with Luigi Silva in New York City and with the distinguished English cellist, Douglas Cameron, at London's Royal Academy of Music. He has been the recipient of a Fulbright Fellowship, the University of Michigan's Stanley Medal, the Harriet Cohen International Music Award in Cello, and in 1968 was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy.

JOSEPH GURT has been on the piano faculty of Eastern Michigan University since 1967. He studied at the Juilliard School of Music, where he was accompanist in the studios of Leonard Rose, Ivan Galamian, Joseph Fuchs and Luigi Silva. In 1961, he was official accompanist at the Pablo Casals International Cello Competition in Israel. He has appeared extensively in recitals and ensembles in Canada, the United States, Israel and Australia, and has given frequent radio broadcasts.

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THIS IS A COMPOSER-SUPERVISED RECORDING

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)