

ALAN HOVHANESS

TUMBURU, Op. 264, No. 1

VARUNA, Op. 264, No. 2

The Macalester Trio (Joseph Roche, violin; Donald Betts, piano; Eric Wahlin, cello)

VALLY WEIGL

NATURE MOODS

George Shirley, tenor; Stanley Drucker, clarinet; Kenneth Gordon, violin

NEW ENGLAND SUITE

Stanley Drucker, clarinet; Ilse Sass, piano; Kermit Moore, cello

ALAN HOVHANESS (b. Somerville, Ma. 1911) is the son of an Armenian father and a Scottish mother. His chief musical studies were at the New England Conservatory of Music.

By his early twenties, Hovhaness had already composed an impressive body of works. In the late 1930's, he repudiated his early works, destroying most of them (about a thousand scores in all!). In the ensuing years, Hovhaness has gone his own way as a composer, producing a considerable number of works that derive their characteristics from a fusion of disparate elements: an affinity for the basic forms of Western music; an interest in the styles and techniques of Oriental music; and a reverence for his Armenian heritage. In 1974, he was living and working in Seattle.

TUMBURU is the name of the Indian god of music. The trio was completed on April 20, 1973.

The music is conceived with long melodic lines, in some places Indian in feeling and suggesting certain Indian ragas. In other places there is a feeling akin to Gagaku, an ancient form of music which flourished in Tang Dynasty China in the sixth and seventh centuries and is in part still preserved in Japan. I have not imitated or suggested Gagaku melodies or harmonies but have created my own melodies and harmonies which I attach in imagination to the Gagaku spirit. The music begins out of nothingness, mysteriously, and at the end dissolves again into nothingness and mystery. The movements are as follows:

1. *Moderato espressivo*—a stately, ceremonial piece
2. *Allegro (Dance-like)*—a short, fast dance
3. *Senza misura-Andante espressivo*—This is a big central piece, beginning with long melodic lines *in cello* and violin without piano, leading to a central, ceremonial, expressive piece and ending in long mysterious string melodies.
4. *Moderato-Allegro*—This is a raga-like, improvisational *alap* piece. The piano is used in the style of a kannoon (with rapid repeated notes). It ends with a very short dance in the same raga for violin, cello and piano.
5. *Moderato espressivo*—The last movement is a slow, stately, ceremonial piece in the style and form of the first movement, but with entirely new music.

VARUNA is the name of another ancient Indian god. The trio was completed on December 12, 1973.

VARUNA is described as "shining with a somber light," and is especially linked with the moon. The two gods, Mithra and Varuna, maintain universal order. Mithra, as the sun, shines by day; Varuna, as the moon, shines by night, Varuna is lord of physical and moral order. "He follows the track of the birds which fly in the sky like the wake of a ship ploughing through the waves, and he knows the past and the future." The music is in four movements:

1. *Moderato*—in the style of a lullaby—The violin in seven beats, muted, plays a dance of sleep while the cello plays a free-rhythm pizzicato and the piano plays drones and celestial chords.
2. *Allegro*—This movement begins in a seven beat dance, wild and savage, followed by a piano solo, *senza misura*, dark, somber and passionate, sometimes accompanied by free-rhythm pizzicato in violin and cello. The seven beat dance returns briefly.
3. *Andante*—This movement is in the style of a dream-like nocturne with a melody using a microtone heard in dialogue between violin and cello. A chorale forms the middle section. The nocturne-like melody with its microtone returns briefly and the music dissolves into nothingness.
4. *Andante Espressivo*—in the style of a lullaby—The violin plays a pizzicato dance of slumber in free rhythm. The piano has a rocking lullaby drone with harp-like chords. The cello sings a broad, expressive slumber song.
5. Both trios are dedicated to Joseph Roche and the Macalester Trio.

—notes by Alan Hovhaness

VALLY WEIGL studied philosophy and psychology along with music and musicology at Vienna University. Her piano teacher was Richard Robert and her composition teacher was Karl Weigl, to whom she later was married. Before the couple and their son emigrated in 1938 and became U.S. citizens, she taught at Vienna University's Musicological Institute.

In New York her teaching encompassed several schools as well as the American Theatre Wing while she also played piano duet recitals with her husband and gave performances of his music. In 1953 she took an M.A. at Columbia University in music therapy and was appointed chief music therapist at New York Medical College, conducting research projects, publishing professional papers and lecturing in the U.S. and abroad. In 1964 she accepted chairmanship of the Quakers' "Arts for World Unity Committee" for which she organized inter-cultural programs for persons of many different denominations. Meanwhile, she pursued her career as a composer specializing in vocal solo, choral and chamber music. She is published by Presser and E. C. Schirmer, among others, and her music has been performed by leading artists here and in Europe. This is her first CRI recording.

NATURE MOODS was written in 1956 on poems from "The Green Kingdom" by the New York poet and horticulturist, Harry Woodbourne. It is dedicated to Stanley Drucker, solo clarinetist of the New York Philharmonic, who played its

first performance at a New York City Music Festival, over WNYC, and at Carnegie Recital Hall in 1958. After a performance at the Louisville Music Festival in 1962, William Motz wrote in the Louisville Courier-Journal: "The lyrics speak of loneliness and muted pain through symbols that call up the sounds and sights of nature ... a setting of shimmering beauty. Clarinet and violin weave around the voice, echoing its moods and sometimes imitating the sound of a lost bird or a murmuring insect."

"NATURE MOODS" from the GREEN KINGDOM
by Harry Woodbourne

I. WHIPPOORWILL

Here, loosed from time bars
Where the sylvan spaces still, And blue dusk defines stars,
I hear a whippoorwill.
Over and over in a sad singing
As if to the last of light in sky
Where a lost bird is winging
Its unavailing flight.
What sadness sung in my own heart
Sounds from a bird's throat?
What echoing, mysterious art
Is in the dark afloat?
Bird on a dark'ning branch of tree,
To whom do you sing farewell?
"Never to be, never to be";
What lost love do you tell ...

II. WINTER REVERIE

When the days shorten and grow cold
Do the trees mind?
When the skies darken over them
And the nights blind,
Do they shiver as I do and feel old?
Winterbound do they long
To put an arm around another,
Lean warm upon a hidden spring
And give it tongue
Renewed and young?

III. AFTERTHOUGHTS

A heart can remember
Though a mind forget,
In quiet September
Spring echoes yet.
Mayglow is duller,

The vows you made
are colorless flowers
Lost in shade:
Your fingers' touch
Made songs of spring.
The memory stays
Long lingering.
A heart can remember
Though a mind forget;
In quiet September
Spring echoes yet.

IV INSECT ORCHESTRA

When dims the harsh sunlight,
Twilight hushed the day,
A summer concert starts at night,
Insect orchestras play.
The bull frogs' bass rough-hewn,
The locusts' shrill off-key
 Chorus their mad and raucous tune,
 the crickets hit high C.
 From meadow, wood and lake
 Sounds in riot are heard,
Yet, as I listen they seem to make
Song of a sweeter world.
 How strange that my tortured heart
 Should gain thereby release,
 In nature's symphony should find
 Harmonies of peace.

V GARDENER'S PRAYER

Bring me, God, to the still waters
And the quieting trees.
 To the green kingdom
 In whose holy cloisters
 I am at peace;
To the silent places
 Of retreat
 Wherein I say
 My grace.

NEW ENGLAND SUITE is a work of refreshing charm, skillfully scored for three instruments. The different timbres are artfully blended to create a well nigh homogeneous web of sound. Without in any way being "avant garde" or couched in the more fashionable idioms of the day, the NEW ENGLAND SUITE achieves its own distinction and individuality.

The first movement, VERMONT NOCTURNE, is gently evocative of the countryside with its wistful opening theme announced by the cello and echoed by the clarinet to the background of the piano accompaniment. A short contrasting section of sturdier, vigorous character is then heard, suggestive of a New England thunderstorm, after which the music of the opening section returns, bringing the movement to a quiet close.

MAINE INTERLUDE is livelier in style, perhaps depicting the vacationer's enjoyment of nature and the woodland, with its birdcalls, and the sport and exuberance of life in the open.

BERKSHIRE PASTORALE begins with a nostalgic melody of an autumnal sadness. This is followed by a short working out of several themes and motival elements, after which the first melody is heard once more, with a return to the elegiac mood of the beginning.

The last movement, CONNECTICUT COUNTRY FAIR is appropriately rollicking and jocular with its suggestions of a rustic barn dance and other diversions of the midway. There is some contrapuntal treatment of themes before the piece comes to a lilting end.

Commentary by Dr. Marion Morrey Richter

GEORGE SHIRLEY is a leading tenor at the Metropolitan, Covent Garden, Teatro Colon, Glyndebourne and National Scottish opera companies, and has sung with the world's great orchestras and music festivals. The distinguished MACALESTER TRIO is composed of faculty members and artists in residence at Macalester College, St. Paul, Minn. STANLEY DRUCKER and KENNETH GORDON are members of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. ILSE SASS and KERMIT MOORE are widely known as outstanding performers.

(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP jacket)