

MUSIC FROM THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

WILLIAM HELLERMANN

ON THE EDGE OF A NODE (1974)

Tison Street, violin; Frances Uitti, cello; William Hellermann, guitar

WILLIAM HELLERMANN (b. Milwaukee, 1939) is presently living and working in New York City as a free lance composer, performer, lecturer, visual artist, and as General Manager of the Composers' Forum. He has composed extensively with electronic sound and written for a variety of instrumental ensembles, expanding recently into dance and theatre related works (poetic enactments) and the visual arts (ear-art for the eye). As a guitarist, Hellermann has appeared frequently in solo evenings of all new music programs, primarily in Europe. Awards he has received include a CAPS Grant (NYSCA), Martha Baird Rockefeller Grant, *Rome Prize Fellowship* from the American Academy, and grants from the Gaudeamus Foundation (Holland) and Alte Kirche Boswil Foundation (Switzerland). His *EK-STASIS* appears on CRI SD 299. The composer writes:

“ON THE EDGE OF A NODE is a fabric of forgotten memories in which the notes have a lot to do with a reworking of received material mostly Bach (another time in fragments). More importantly, all the instruments are 'clipped' — that is, their strings are 'prepared' with paper clips (why are only pianos prepared?) which give artificial 'nodes' that emphasize pitches in varying degrees of distant relation to the fundamental stopped pitch. Each note played then becomes a timbral event in itself made up of a family of pitches at a variety of amplitudes. What I especially like about clipping the strings is that it makes the surface of the sound particularly evident (your ear can 'feel' the scrape of the bow).

“There is another sense to the use of the word 'node' in the title. It comes from a quote I find in my notebooks unattributed:

“Nodes defined by Levi-Strauss as bundles of relations are where various and contradictory conflicts, motives, and actions join; a moment, or quick succession of moments, of intense confrontation and decision; consequences streaming from these decisions in different and not always harmonious directions; between nodes a bumpy, sometimes indirect ride where irrelevant material often occupies our attention; a textual surface that is apparently out of touch with sub-textual moves and counter moves — this is the overall structure. A turbulent and unsteady alternation and altercation in which the grace and consistency of the flow is disturbed by the ambivalence of action.”

MARTIN BRESNICK

B.'S GARLANDS (1973)

Giuseppe Selmi, Giorgio Ravenna, Guido Mascellini, Michele De Luca, Luigi Lanzilotta, Anamaria Mastromatteo, Salvatore De Girolamo, Giancarlo Mori, cellos

MARTIN BRESNICK (b. New York City, 1946) attended the High School of Music & Art and first studied composition privately with William Sydeman (1963-64). At the University of Hartford he worked with Arnold Franchetti. In 1969 he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to Austria, where he studied composition with Gottfried von Einem and electronic music with Friedrich Cerha, and in 1975, the *Rome Prize Fellowship of the American Academy*. As a student at Stanford University (D.M.A. 1972) he studied computer music with John Chowning and composition with Leland Smith and György Ligeti. He has taught theory and composition at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music (1971-72) and at Stanford University (1972-75) where he also was the director of the Stanford ensemble for new music,

Alea II, and since then at Yale University, where he is Assistant Professor of Theory. He writes:

“B.'S GARLANDS was composed for the outstanding cellist Bonnie Hampton and her gifted pupils. The eight parts are independent, but graded in difficulty such that while the first 3 parts are virtuosic the last 2 are relatively simple.

“The work itself is a divertimento — music for *Johannesnacht*, the German equivalent of our Midsummers' Night. As in Wagner's *Meistersinger*, the night watchman may be heard now and again, and the work observes Wagner's indication at the end of Act II 'Auf dem Horn, sehr lang' (On the horn, very long) ...

“B.'S GARLANDS is dedicated to my daughter Johanna, born in the year of the work's composition, 1973.”

GEORGE EDWARDS

EXCHANGE-MISERE (1974)

Angelo Persichilli, flute, alto flute, piccolo; Michele Incenzo, clarinet, bass clarinet; Massimo Coen, violin, viola; Frances Uitti, cello; David Saperstein, piano

GEORGE EDWARDS (b. Boston, 1943) studied composition with Richard Hoffmann at Oberlin College and with Earl Kim and Milton Babbitt at Princeton University. Among his awards are the Koussevitsky Composition Prize, Tanglewood (1967), the Rome Prize Fellowship (1973-75) and a Naumburg Recording Award (1974). He has taught at the New England Conservatory of Music and currently teaches at Columbia University. Two of his compositions have previously appeared on CRI: *STRING QUARTET* (CRI SD 265) and *KREUZ UND QUER* (CRI SD 323). The composer writes:

“In EXCHANGE-MISERE a dense complex of linear, motivic, and harmonic associations and relationships is embedded in a language which is both drastically simplified in its intervallic procedures and rich in means of elaborating a harmonic region or moving from one such region to another. In a sense, then, it represents an attempt to regain some of the expressive and structural possibilities of tonal music, but without allowing any single tone or sonority to be as ultimately stable as a tonic would be. Instead, cadential harmonies are only locally stable, the cadences themselves weakened by not coinciding with major structural goals or turning points. Only at the very end, in a long and unexpectedly expansive coda, is the pervasive chromaticism of the piece subsumed into a relatively diatonic context; yet even here, the sense of completion results less from any tonal resolution than from arriving (at last!) at new and fresh territory.”

JEFFREY JONES

PIECE MOUVANTE (1974)

Noriko Hiraga, piano

JEFFREY JONES (b. 1944, Corona Del Mar, California) received his Bachelor of Music degree from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, where he studied guitar with Guy Horn and composition with Dorrance Stalvey. He has since studied with Goffredo Petrassi, Arthur Berger, Harold Shapero, Martin Boykan, Seymour Shifrin, and Franco Donatoni. Active as composer, conductor and performer, he has won numerous awards, including a BMI-SCA, Fulbright Fellowship, the *Premio d'Arti* and *Premio Bonaventura Somma* from the Academia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, the *Premier Gran Prix du Festival du Son* of the ORTF (for his composition *Variance*), and the Rome Prize Fellowship. He has also been Composer-in-Residence at the Marlboro Festival of Music.

THE AMERICAN ACADEMY IN ROME

The American Academy in Rome was founded in 1894 and chartered by Congress in 1905 for the purpose of providing fellowships for independent study in Rome. The First fellowships in musical composition were given in 1924 and since that date over seventy young American composers, many of them now the most distinguished in the country, have spent from one to three years living and working at the Academy. There they have had not only private studios, a good electronics studio, and a good concert hall but also access to excellent performers and frequent opportunities to present their work before critical audiences. Although the works of scores of Academy Fellows are available on recordings, this is the first recording of Fellow's work sponsored by the Academy itself.

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Produced by Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)