

**THE WALTER W. NAUMBURG FOUNDATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY
1975 RECORDING AWARD WINNERS**

RICHARD WERNICK
A PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM
Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano
Glen Steele, percussion

RICHARD WERNICK (b. Boston, 1934) studied composition with Irving Fine and Harold Shapero at Brandeis University, with Leon Kirchner at Mills College, and with Ernst Toch, Boris Blacher and Aaron Copland at Tanglewood. The recipient of numerous prizes and honors (Brandeis University, Berkshire Music Center, Ford Foundation, National Endowment of the Arts) and commissions (including Fromm Music Foundation, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Royal Winnipeg Ballet, Aspen Music Festival), Wernick has composed solo, chamber, orchestral, vocal and choral compositions and a large body of music for theater, films, ballet and television.

He has taught at the State University of New York at Buffalo, the University of Chicago and University of Pennsylvania where he was Chairman of the Music Department from 1969 to 1974 and where he continues to teach composition. Wernick has been active as an orchestral and choral conductor in numerous university series as well as for theater, film, ballet productions and recordings. He is musical director of the Penn Contemporary Players at the University of Pennsylvania.

Notes by Richard Wernick

The PRAYER FOR JERUSALEM was composed in the fall and winter of 1970-71. It was written for and is dedicated to Jan DeGaetani.

The work is, indeed a prayer — for the survival, prosperity, and unity of Jerusalem and all that it represents and symbolizes. Above all it is a prayer for peace, for an end to the insanity that has prevailed for so long in the Middle East. The fragments of the 122nd Psalm which comprise the text dwell on the concept of peace, and are as relevant today as they were in the time of King David.

The musical fulcrum of the work is a whole tone scale, which in the last moment of the work is seen in its "real" guise: the opening fragment of Bach's chorale *Es ist genug*. The last two words of the Hebrew text being "shalom bach," the opportunity to construct a musical pun (on the very highest level) was irresistible. Therefore the quote from Bach. I of course chose the particular chorale not only because of its melodic construction and harmonic content, but also because its own words, "it is enough" compliment the emotions of the original psalm, and for me heighten them and bring them even more up to date. Jerusalem has been divided, fought over, and the scene of religious and political controversy for centuries; Jerusalem should represent the best in us, not the worst, and it is time to put an end to the madness. "It is enough."

The piece therefore exists on two levels: it is a set of variations before a theme containing the melodic and harmonic content of the original; and a plea for peace and reason employing direct and indirect texts from two widely divergent sources.

Although written for only two people, the piece uses five different bell type percussion instruments: the vibraphone, glockenspiel, crotales and finger cymbals are played by the percussionist and the chimes by the singer.

I
Our feet stand within your gates, Jerusalem.

II
Jerusalem, you are built as a city that is undivided.

III
Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; may they that love you prosper.

IV
Peace be within your walls and prosperity within your palaces.

V
*For the sake of my brethren and companions I will now say:
Peace be within you.*

WALTER MAYS
SIX INVOCATIONS TO THE SVARA MANDALA
Wichita State University Percussion Orchestra
J.C. Combs, conductor

WALTER MAYS (b. 1941 Chester County, Tenn.) holds a D.M.A. from the University of Cincinnati where he studied composition with Felix Labunski and Jenő Takács, and chamber music with Walter Levin. More recently he has worked with John Cage and Krzysztof Penderecki. He was co-founder and first musical director of Music '70, the contemporary music performing group at the University of Cincinnati. Major works include *Funeral Music For Jan Palach* premiered by the Indianapolis Symphony (1971); *Variations*, Cincinnati Symphony (1965); *Five Hallucinations* for viola ensemble; *Riot* for wind ensemble; and concertos for trumpet, violin, and saxophone. The *Concerto for Saxophone* (1974) was commissioned for and premiered at the Fourth World Saxophone Congress in Bordeaux, France. *SIX INVOCATIONS TO THE SVARA MANDALA* received first prize in the 1974 Percussive Arts Society National Composition Contest and the 1975 Naumburg Recording Award that made this recording possible. Since 1970, Mays has been a member of the musicology-composition department at Wichita State University.

Notes by Walter Mays

SIX INVOCATIONS TO THE SVARA MANDALA was commissioned by J.C. Combs and the Wichita State University Percussion Orchestra in 1973. It was my intention to write a full length composition of symphonic scope that could serve as the principal serious work for a percussion concert. The score calls for 10 percussionists covering 65 instruments plus 3 additional players for celesta, piano and electric bass guitar. Some of the more unusual instruments are chromatic toy piano, slide whistle, steel pipes, automobile brake drums, tuned glasses, musical saw, and a bass marimba box (a large thumb piano from Jamaica). One percussionist works inside the piano using gong beaters, xylophone mallets, pencils, pick, and a wooden rolling pin.

The bowing of various percussion instruments with contrabass bows is a major feature of this work. Included are bowed tamtams, vibraphone, glasses, flexatone, musical saw, and electric bass guitar (harmonics). In Movement IV, four players bow the vibraphone at the same time, two on each side of the instrument.

The name "Svara Mandala" refers to a rare kind of harp used in Indian classical music. Metal strings are strung across a horizontal resonator box and plucked with plectrum or fingers. It is usually played to the accompaniment of tablas. The gypsy cimbalom of Europe is probably a derivative of the Svara Mandala. In *SIX INVOCATIONS* the Svara Mandala is addressed as a deity, each invocation emphasizing a different sound producing medium. The fourth invocation for bowed vibraphone, piano strings, and drums is directly influenced by the sound of the Svara Mandala.

In composing *SIX INVOCATIONS* I was particularly concerned with progressions of texture and timbre and with dramatic continuity. For the most part, choices were intuitive rather than by system. Each movement explores a particular aspect of percussion timbre or technique. The first movement employs much unison doubling of melodic lines and chords and slight differences in intonation among the instruments producing a characteristically vibrant effect.

The second, third and fourth movements develop bowed sounds. The idea for the fifth movement grew out of experiments with bouncing rubber balls recorded in overlapping patterns. The last movement develops the "klangfarben" possibilities of the roll.

JAN DEGAETANI has become one of the prodigies of the contemporary music world, extracting the utmost beauty and musical sense from even the most difficult music. Although new music is her specialty, she is also a top singer of music in traditional styles.

GLEN A. STEELE has appeared with an impressive number of organizations including the Philadelphia Orchestra at Robin Hood Dell, the Oklahoma Symphony and the U.S. Military Academy Band. He is Assistant Professor of Percussion at Temple University.

The WICHITA STATE UNIVERSITY PERCUSSION ORCHESTRA was founded in the 1950's by Dr. Robert Buggert. Since that time the ensemble has had a tradition of representing the idiom with outstanding and varied percussion literature. In addition to premiering new works such as the *SIX INVOCATIONS*, the ensemble has also worked under the direct supervision of such composers as Michael Colgrass, Donald Erb, and Krzystof Penderecki. Players on this recording are: Toni Absher, Dave Adams, Brad Bartlett, Steve Braswell, Sal D'Andrea, Jeff Farley, Kay Fussman, Bob Keckeisen, Howard Pitler, Mark Schmidt; Mark Minkler, electric bass; Tom Grubb, celesta; Mary Mays, piano.

J.C. COMBS has taught percussion at the University of Oklahoma, University of Missouri at Kansas City, and at Wichita State University. He has held timpani and percussion positions with the Oklahoma City Symphony, Kansas City Civic Ballet Orchestra, Kansas City Civic Orchestra, the Kansas City Lyric Orchestra and (1976) was principal percussionist with the Wichita Symphony.

This recording was made possible by a grant from the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, which makes annual awards in the fields of chamber music, piano and vocal performance and in composition. Wernick and Mays were the 1975 composition winners.

Produced by Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)