

MUSIC FOR CLARINET AND PIANO

DONALD MARTINO

A SET FOR CLARINET

DONALD MARTINO (b. Plainfield, N.J., 1931) a clarinetist himself, was a pioneer in expanding clarinet techniques. A SET FOR CLARINET, written nearly a quarter century ago, shocked clarinetists and audiences alike with the triple-octave leaps, rapid scale passages, and dramatic dynamic contrasts. Martino has proven in more recent works his ability to write virtuosic music for other instruments as well, the percussion writing in his Pulitzer Prize-winning NOTTURNO being a prime example. His composition teachers were Ernst Bacon, Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions and Luigi Dallapiccola. He himself has a solid teaching career, having taught at Princeton, Yale, Harvard and the New England Conservatory of Music where he is presently (1977) Chairman of the Composition Department, and at the Berkshire Music Center in the summer. His talents as a composer have been recognized by the major organizations including the Guggenheim Foundation, the Naumburg Foundation, the Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, and the Creative Arts Awards Commission of Brandeis University; he has had numerous distinguished commissions and publications. Although he has written several works of large scale, he is a specialist in composing deftly for unusual small combinations. His music appears on CRI 212, 230 and 240. He writes:

“A SET FOR CLARINET, composed at the rate of one movement per day, and completed on February 9th, 1954, is in three movements, of which the first two, marked Allegro and Adagio, respectively, are in ternary form, while the final Allegro is binary. The term 'set' used in dance band parlance refers to the practice of collecting a number of pieces to be played as a group before a short intermission.”

VERNE REYNOLDS

FOUR CAPRICES

VERNE REYNOLDS (b. Lyons, Kansas, 1926) began study of the violin and piano at an early age and at 13 began playing the French horn. He has degrees in composition from the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and the University of Wisconsin and has studied at the Royal College of Music in London. As a performer he has been a member of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, the American Woodwind Quintet and from 1959-1968 was principal hornist of the Rochester Philharmonic. As a teacher he has been on the faculties of the University of Wisconsin and Indiana University, and since 1959 has been Professor of Horn and Chairman of the Wind Department at the Eastman School of Music. As a composer he has written orchestra, chorus, solo and chamber music. He has received awards and commissions from the Louisville Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, University of Michigan, University of Wisconsin, Lawrence College, Baylor University, Doc Severinsen, Eastman School of Music and others. He has a continuing project of transcribing Renaissance and early Baroque music for performance by wind instruments. He writes:

“These CAPRICES were written during March of 1972. The piano part is strictly accompaniment and often plays the same figures as the clarinet. The clarinet writing concentrates on several things that the clarinet seems to do well, such as entering and leaving very softly, slow smooth slurs, rapidly slurred notes and arpeggiated cadenza-like figures. The first Caprice has all of these elements in a slow-fast-slow formal pattern. The second Caprice is a motion piece, with a steady flow of 16th notes played pianissimo throughout. Caprice No. 3 is slow with large slurred intervals. The last Caprice is free with cadenza-like passages in both instruments.”

MICHAEL WEBSTER

FIVE PIECES FOR CLARINET SOLO

MICHAEL WEBSTER (b. New York, 1944) studied with Harold Freeman, Bernard Portnoy and Earl Bates. He received a Rochester National Scholarship to the Eastman School of Music where he studied with Stanley Hasty and earned his B.M., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees. In 1968 he succeeded Hasty as principal clarinetist of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra.

That year he also gave his Town Hall (N.Y.) debut recital with his father, the pianist Beveridge Webster. The Websters have since given many recitals together, including an appearance for the Public Broadcasting Service, performing music by Debussy, Stravinsky and Michael Webster. As a winner of the 1968 Young Concert Artists competition, Webster appeared in recital at Carnegie Recital Hall and Hunter College; he has played chamber music at Alice Tully Hall and in the "Music by Three" series, and in recitals and residencies throughout the United States. He has also appeared several times as guest artist with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society, at Tully Hall and at the Kennedy Center. His summers have been spent at the music festivals of Stratford, Ontario; Marlboro, Vermont; Santa Fe, New Mexico and with Chamber Music Northwest in Portland, Oregon.

Webster has appeared as clarinet soloist with many orchestras, including the Rochester Philharmonic and the Clarion Society of New York. In 1976, he was invited by Aaron Copland to appear as soloist in Copland's *Clarinet Concerto* with the Philadelphia Orchestra at the University of Michigan's May Festival. He writes:

"FIVE PIECES FOR CLARINET SOLO were begun as an exercise in composing away from the piano, attempting to utilize some of the idiomatic possibilities of the clarinet as a solo instrument. Brief as they are, they were originally even shorter, and arrived at their present form only after the first and fourth movements were extended and a trio added to the third movement. Their nature is that of short, contrasting character pieces, each one based on a limited amount of thematic material and featuring one or more techniques indigenous to the clarinet. Rapid staccato, rhythmic surprises, and quick leaps dominate the *Fanfare*. The *Rhapsody* is a study in quarter-tone alterations. The *Ländler* explores the pianissimo use of the altissimo register, while the *Romance* is an extended melodic line with metric modulations giving an overall effect of *accelerando-ritardando*. The *Perpetual Motion* attempts to create the illusion of motion through a rest (we must breathe, after all), to be played as quickly as the performer can manage. The pieces revolve roughly around a tonal center of D (concert pitch), with the exception of the *Ländler*, which offers the contrast of E flat and B flat."

LOUISE TALMA

THREE DUOLOGUES

LOUISE TALMA (b. 1906) was educated in New York at the Institute of Musical Art (now the Juilliard School of Music), New York University, Columbia University, and in France at the Fontainebleau School of Music (composition with Nadia Boulanger, piano with Isidor Philipp). She is now (1977) Professor Emeritus at Hunter College, where she continues to teach from time to time on a visiting basis.

Talma was the first woman to be elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters. A citation presented on that occasion stated: "Many of her admirers, who had grown accustomed to seeing or hearing her referred to as one of our foremost women composers, have noticed with pleasure in recent years that she is being referred to more and more often without any qualification at all as one of our foremost composers."

She has received two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Koussevitzky Foundation Commission, a Senior Fulbright Research Grant, two grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Marjorie Peabody Waite Award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

Her works have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the NBC Symphony, and the Milwaukee Symphony, and have been recorded by Desto Records, the Musical Heritage Society, Avant Records, and Vox Records. Her *TOCCATA* appears on CRI 145, her *LA CORONA — HOLY SONNETS OF JOHN DONNE* on CRI 187, and her *PIANO SONATA NO. 2* on CRI SD 281. Michael Webster writes:

“The only true twelve-tone writing in this album is in the THREE DUOLOGUES which Louise Talma wrote for our 1968 Town Hall recital. Her use of the row, however, is delightfully free, and the DUOLOGUES are not without tonal implications. She, too, is concerned with the coloristic possibilities of the clarinet and piano, as evidenced by the intermittent unisons which characterize the openings of both the slow and fast sections of the first DUOLOGUE. Here, too, the demand upon the performer is great, particularly in the rapid high-note passages at the end of the movement. The second DUOLOGUE is a haunting piece of night music, utilizing the clarinet's ability for playing long, sustained phrases; the fragmented speed of the final movement offers maximum contrast and an effectively brilliant conclusion.”

BEVERIDGE WEBSTER, born in Pittsburgh in 1908, studied there with his father who was founder and director of the Pittsburgh Conservatory of Music. He became the first American ever to win the First Prize in Piano at the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied with Isidor Philipp. He later continued his studies with Artur Schnabel, which was followed by several seasons of concertizing in Europe. His U.S. debut was in 1934 as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, and he has since played with the great orchestras and conductors.

Throughout his distinguished career Webster has been a moving force in contemporary music. He has introduced many important new works by American composers, among them Roger Sessions' Piano Concerto, and William Schuman's Voyage, and he was the first to record much of the piano music of Sessions, Copland and Carter, as well as Berg, Webern, Stravinsky and Schoenberg. Since 1946 he has been a member of the piano faculty of the Juilliard School where he has helped form many young artists active in the musical world today.

This recording was originally scheduled for release on Desto Records, but was offered to CRI after that company ceased new production. The CRI release was made possible by a grant from the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

Produced by Horace Grennell and Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)