

DOMINICK ARGENTO
SIX ELIZABETHAN SONGS

Barbara Martin, soprano; Susan Palma, flute; Melvin Kaplan, oboe; Eric Wilson, cello; Linda Quan, violin; Edward Brewer, harpsichord; Arthur Weisberg, conductor

DOMINICK ARGENTO (b. York, Pa., 1927) was educated at the Peabody Conservatory, Baltimore (B.M., M.M.), and the Eastman School (Ph.D.). He studied composition with Nicholas Nabokov, Hugo Weisgall, Henry Cowell, Alan Hovhaness, Bernard Rogers, Howard Hanson and Luigi Dallapiccola. He has composed ten operas, four song cycles and various choral and orchestral works and has received a Fulbright Fellowship, several Guggenheim Fellowships, the award from the Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters that made this recording possible, and the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 1975. His song cycle *LETTERS FROM COMPOSERS* appears on CRI SD 291. He writes:

“These SIX ELIZABETHAN SONGS exist in two versions: the first — with piano accompaniment — was composed in Florence during November and December of 1957 and is dedicated to the tenor Nicholas Di Virgilio, who premiered the work the following year; the second version — with baroque ensemble accompaniment — was made in 1962 for the soprano Carolyn Bailey, who premiered the cycle in Minneapolis with the University Baroque Ensemble.

“The songs are called 'Elizabethan' because the lyrics are drawn from that rich period in literature, while the music is in the spirit (if not the manner) of the great English composer-singer-lutenist, John Dowland. The main concern is the paramount importance of the poetry and the primacy of the vocal line over a relatively simple and supportive accompaniment.”

FRANK AHROLD
THREE POEMS OF SYLVIA PLATH

Corrine Curry, mezzo-soprano; members of the London Symphony Orchestra; Harold Farberman, conductor

FRANK AHROLD (b. Long Beach, California, 1931) is a graduate of U.C.L.A., where his principal teachers in composition were John Vincent and Lukas Foss. He has written more than 170 works, which have been performed throughout the United States and in Europe and have won high critical praise. He has also been active as a conductor, and as a resident of San Francisco performs in solo and chamber music recitals throughout California, serves as accompanist for many Bay Area singers, and since 1973 has been pianist for the Oakland Symphony Orchestra. He has been honored by awards from A.S.C.A.P. and commissions from the Roger Wagner Chorale, Sacramento Chorale and Oakland Ballet. His *SECOND COMING* was commissioned by the Oakland Symphony and appears on CRI SD 389, along with his *SONG WITHOUT WORDS*. He writes:

“In 1969, newly arrived in San Francisco, I was given a private commission to set some of the poetry of Sylvia Plath to music. The three poems selected have a dark beauty and fragile intensity that is the hallmark of much of this artist's work.

“Musically, the vocal lines for each song are constructed in the twelve-tone manner with a contrapuntal accompaniment that is partially derived from the voice part, but with elements of free harmonization. The instrumental ensemble is comprised basically of a quintet of flute, clarinet, bassoon, cello and vibraphone, with the addition of various percussion. In *Sheep in Fog*, triangle bells and chimes are important color elements; in *Night*

Dances the tambourine, tenor drum, and celesta are emphasized; while the final song, *Words*, makes prominent use of the xylophone, woodblock, and gong.”

The work was premiered on March 11, 1971, at an all-Ahrold concert given at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. In his review in the San Francisco Examiner, Arthur Bloomfield wrote: "Settings of three difficult poems by Sylvia Plath struck me as brilliantly, sensitively accomplished, voice mixing artfully with winds, cello and percussion."

RICHARD HERVIG

CHAMBER MUSIC FOR SIX PLAYERS

Betty Bang Mather, flute; Thomas Ayres, clarinet; John Simms, piano; Thomas L. Davis, percussion; Leopold La Fosse, violin; Eldon Obrecht, bass; William Hibbard, conductor

RICHARD HERVIG was born in Story City, Iowa in 1917. After receiving a B.A. degree in English from Augustana College in South Dakota he taught in South Dakota high schools. In 1941 he began to study composition under the late Philip Greeley Clapp at the University of Iowa. He then taught at Luther College and Long Beach State College, returning to Iowa in 1955. Since that time he has been on the faculty of the University of Iowa's School of Music, where he is head of the Composition/Theory area and Director of the Center for New Music. He writes:

“CHAMBER MUSIC FOR SIX PLAYERS was composed for the 'Iowa Parade of Music,' one of a series of concerts, one from each state, sponsored by the National Music Council and the National Federation of Music Clubs and presented at Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. during the Bicentennial year. The first performance was at Kennedy Center on May 31, 1976. The piece was designed for the performers on this recording, all of whom are professors in the University of Iowa's School of Music.

“The title indicates in part my intention in this and other works; the 'players' have roles (musical ones, of course), and their musical developments and relations are not unlike those of the *dramatis personae* in the theatre.”

BARBARA MARTIN is much admired as a singer of contemporary music. She has appeared with Pierre Boulez and *Speculum Musicae*, and has toured with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and appeared in classical operatic roles in major centers. She sings Chinari Ung's *MOHORI* under Weisberg's direction on CRI SD 363. In 1978 she became an Affiliate Artist at the Hopkins Center of Dartmouth College. ARTHUR WEISBERG is a distinguished bassoonist as well as one of the foremost conductors of 20th century music. He has participated in numerous CRI recordings and in recordings for Nonesuch, Desto and Seraphim.

CORRINE CURRY is a versatile artist in all musical periods and styles. A graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, she has premiered many contemporary works and has appeared with the Chicago Lyric Opera, the Houston Opera and the Brussels Opera, as well as with leading orchestras and in chamber music at the Marlboro Festival. She has also appeared at Tanglewood where she was sponsored by the Fromm Foundation. HAROLD FARBERMAN has been musical director of the Oakland Symphony Orchestra and has in the course of his busy career as composer-conductor built a reputation as a first rank Ivesian, as well as a leading interpreter of contemporary works. He can be heard conducting music of Ives on CRI SD 314, Imbrie on CRI SD 308 and Ahrold on CRI SD 389.

WILLIAM HIBBARD is professor of theory and composition at the University of Iowa and has served as music director of its Center for New Music since its inception in 1966. He appears as composer on CRI SD 322 and as violist on CRI SD 324.

SIX ELIZABETHAN SONGS

1. SPRING by Thomas Nash

Spring, the sweet Spring, is the year's pleasant king:
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in a ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, towitta woo!

The palm and may make country houses gay,
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherd pipes all day,
And we hear aye birds tune this merry lay,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, towitta woo!

The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit,
In every street, these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug-jug, pu-we, towitta woo!
Spring! the sweet Spring!

2. SLEEP by Samuel Daniel

Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
Brother to Death, in silent darkness born,
Relieve my anguish and restore thy light,
With dark forgetting of my care return.

And let the day be time enough to mourn
The shipwreck of my ill-adventured youth:
Let waking eyes suffice to wail their scorn
Without the torment of the night's untruth.

Cease, dreams, the images of day-desires
To model forth the passions of the morrow;
Never let rising sun approve you liars
To add more grief to aggravate my sorrow:
Still let me sleep, embracing clouds in vain.
And never wake to feel the day's disdain.

3. WINTER by William Shakespeare

When icicles hang by the wall
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail;
When blood is nipt and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tuwhoo! Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!
While greasy Joan keels the pot.

When all aloud the wind doth blow,
And coughing drowns the parson's saw,
And birds sit brooding in the snow,
And Marian's nose looks red and raw;
When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl
Then nightly sings the staring owl
Tuwhoo! Tuwhit! Tuwhoo! A merry note!
While greasy Joan keels the pot.

4. DIRGE by William Shakespeare

Come away, Come away, Death,
And in sad cypress let me be laid;
Fly away, Fly away, breath;
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.
My shroud of white stuck all with yew,
O prepare it! o prepare it!
My part of death, no one so true
Did share it. Did share it.

Not a flower, not a flower sweet
On my black coffin let there be strown;
Not a friend, Not a friend greet
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:
A thousand thousand sighs to save,
Lay me, O where
Sad true lover never find my grave,
To weep there.

5. DIAPHENIA by Henry Constable

Diaphenia, like the daffa-down-dilly,
White as the sun, fair as the lily,
Heigh ho, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as my lambs
Are beloved of their dams;
How blest were I if thou would'st prove me.

Diaphenia, like the spreading roses,
That in thy sweets all sweets encloses,
Fair sweet, how I do love thee!
I do love thee as each flower
Loves the sun's life-giving power;
For dead, thy breath to life might move me.

Diaphenia like to all things blessed
When all thy praises are expressed
Dear joy, how I do love thee!
As the birds do love the spring,
Or the bees their careful king:
Then in requite, sweet virgin, love me!

6. HYMN by Ben Jonson

Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light, thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wished sight
Goddess, Goddess excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short so ever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess, Goddess excellently bright!

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)