

FRANCIS THORNE

SEVEN SET PIECES FOR 13 PLAYERS

Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago;

Ralph Shapey, conductor

FRANCIS THORNE (b. Bay Shore, N.Y., 1922) received a B.A. in theory and composition from Yale University in 1942, where he studied with Paul Hindemith and Richard Donovan. From 1959 to 1961, after giving up a business career as a stockbroker, he studied privately with David Diamond in Florence, Italy. He lives in New York City, where he is Executive Director of the American Composers Alliance and President of the American Composers Orchestra. He serves on the board of Trustees of the Manhattan School of Music, the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation, the MacDowell Colony and the Theater Development Fund.

Thorne was active as a jazz pianist during the 1950s. His music has been performed by major orchestras in the United States and Europe, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Buffalo Philharmonic, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Denver Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has received commissions from the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Cabrillo Music Festival, the New Haven Symphony and the orchestras of Springfield, Mass. and Charleston, South Carolina. In 1968 he received an award in music from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, which included the recording of his *LIEBESROCK* on CRI 258. His *BURLESQUE OVERTURE* and *RHAPSODIC VARIATIONS* for Piano and Orchestra are recorded on CRI 216. The following notes are by David Diamond:

“The SEVEN SET PIECES have that balance between the newest technical panoply (a protective aesthetic armor that permits Thorne the maximum individual musical liberties) and the consistency of a rewarding communicative potential. He thinks his structures through 'loose and easy,' as most good jazz-experienced pianists have done, and still do when they are more than 'ear' men who have put on the stylistic gear of the past ten years. Listen carefully to both Jam Sessions of this work for proof of this. And he pursues no good idea to the point of absurdity that annihilates any good by-accident ideas and moments of communicative fantasy. Listen carefully also to both Grotesques. He respects aesthetic freedom and never abuses it. The result is a fine work of top-notch craftsmanship and entertainment — a clear example of the future composed of fragments of the past — a work thoroughly of our time.

“The SEVEN SET PIECES have as their unifying thematic idea a series of twelve chromatic notes (A natural, C natural, A flat, G natural, G flat, D natural, E flat, B flat, B natural, E natural, F natural, D flat). The use of the word Set is both significant of a compositional ordering (in the sense of the note-row) and a Jam Session performance. The order of the pieces is: Grotesque I (Adagio maestoso; Allegretto misterioso); Romance (Adagietto); Jam Session I (Presto vivace); Grotesque II (Allegretto); Choral Prelude (Adagio semplice); Jam Session II (Allegro con fuoco); Finale (Andante-Presto).” This work originally appeared on the Owl label, which has kindly permitted CRI to reissue it under its program of preserving important works from other catalogues. It has been completely re-mixed and the second movement restored for this recording.”

RICHARD MORYL

DAS LIED

Jan DeGaetani, mezzo-soprano;

New England Contemporary Ensemble; Gerard Schwarz, conductor

RICHARD MORYL (b. Newark, N.J. 1929) attended Columbia and Brandeis Universities and the Hochschule für Musik in Berlin. As a composer he has received many awards and grants. To him composing, or creating, is finding pleasure in the action for its own sake — in the skill that one perfects and perfects by being pleased with it. This, he says, is responsible for every creative endeavor — our delight in what humans do because they do it.

Moryl is the artistic director of the New England Contemporary Ensemble which has performed extensively throughout the northeast and the south, and which has been recorded on Desto and Serenus records.

One of the masterpieces of Western music is Mahler's *Das Lied von Der Erde* (Song of the Earth), a symphony for tenor, contralto (or baritone) and orchestra. It was begun in 1907 and completed in 1908. *Der Abschied* (The Farewell) is the high point of this great work, and is three times the length of the preceding movements. It is also the most symphonic, making extensive use of orchestral interludes.

Moryl's work uses the same German translations of two Chinese poems. The poems are by two different poets, both of whom are considered by the Chinese to be as important to their literature as Shakespeare is to ours. The words are considered sacred, and create a serene experience for all who listen.

DAS LIED is a very elegant and listenable work, which closely follows the original words, evoking all the built-in ambiguities which were so important to classical Chinese poetry. The piece maintains an intimate, almost far-away quality; the voice is not so much a soloist as a member of the ensemble, another instrument. At times an oriental coloring, with its economy of musical gestures, is introduced, and, except for some intense outburst, a mood of calm sadness pervades the work. The spirit of *Der Abschied* underlies the music; the final *ewig* (eternal) is almost inaudible, as if coming from the depths of the earth itself.

The work was commissioned to celebrate the Bicentennial by the American Artist Series of Michigan, and was premiered by them on February 8, 1976.

In 1964 RALPH SHAPEY became Professor of Music at the University of Chicago and Music Director and conductor of the CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS, which under his direction has become one of the most respected new music ensembles in the country. Shapey presents a series of concerts of new music with the PLAYERS each year, and frequently guest conducts throughout America and Europe. The group can be heard playing music of Shapey on CR1 232, 355 and 391; Perkins on 232; Putsche, Schafer and Weinberg on 245; Wernick on 379. The members on this recording are: Marilyn Bass, clarinet; Stanley Davis, bass clarinet; James Berkenstock, contra-bassoon; James McKay, bassoon; Rodney Miller, trumpet, Luther Didrickson, trumpet; James Mattern, trombone; Edward Ponemba, percussion; Norbert Szymanski, percussion; John Cobb, piano and celesta; Harold Katz, viola; Everett Zlatoff-Mirsky, viola; Stephanie Smith, bass. JAN deGAETANI can do no wrong, whatever she sings, and she remains the First Lady of contemporary vocal music. She can be heard on numerous CRI, Nonesuch, Columbia and Vox recordings. GERARD SCHWARZ has had an extensive career as an orchestral musician, soloist, recitalist and conductor, and has made over 15 solo recordings for Columbia, Vox, Nonesuch, and Desto Records. He has been a devoted performer

and conductor of 20th century music and has also been active in the field of computer music. He can be heard playing and conducting music of Lucia Dlugoszewski on CRI 388. The NEW ENGLAND CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE players on this recording are Philip West, oboe; Alvin Brehm, contrabass, Joann Freeman, piano; Robert D'Angelo and David Smith, percussion.

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Produced by Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)

IN ERWARTUNG DES FREUNDES
Mong-Kao-Jen

Die Sonne scheldet hinter dem Gebirge,
In alle Täler stelgt der Abend neider
Mit seinen Schatten, die veil Kühlung Sind,

O sieh, wie eine Silberbarke schwebt
Der Mond hermit hinter den dunkeln Fichten,
Ich spüre eines feinen Windes Wehn,

Der Bach singt voller Wohllaut durch das Dunkel
Von Ruh und Schlaf ... Die arbeitsamen Menschen
Gehn heimwärts, voller Sehnsucht nach dem Schlaf.

Die Vogel hocken müde in den Zweigen,
Die Welt schläft ein . . . Ich stehe hier und harre
Des Freundes, der zu kommen mir Versprach.

Ich sehne mich, o Freund, an deiner Seite
Die Schönheit dieses Abends zu genießen, –
Wo bleibst du nur? Du lässt mich lang allein!

Ich wandle auf und neider mit der Laute
Auf Wegen, die von weichem Grase schwellen,
O kämst du, kämst du, ungetreuer Freund!

DER ABSCHIED DES FREUNDES
Wang-Wei

Ich steig vom Pferd und reichte ihm den Trunk
Des Abschieds dar. Ich fragte ihn, wohin
Und auch warum er reisen Wollte. Er
Sprach mit umflorter Stimme: Du mein Freund,
Mir war des Glück in dieser Welt nicht hold.

Wohin Ich geh? ich wandre in die Berge,
Ich suche Ruhe für mein einsam Herz.
Ich werde nie mehr In die Ferne schweiten —
Müd ist mein Fuss, und müd ist meine Seele,
Die Erde, ist die gleiche überall,
Und ewig, ewig sind die weissen Wolken . . .

AWAITING THE FRIEND

The sun departs behind the mountains,
In all the valleys the evening descends
With its shadows filled with coolness.

O look, like a bark of silver
The moon soars up behind the dark spruces
I feel the flutter of a gentle wind.

The brook sings melodiously through the darkness
of rest and sleep . . . The diligent people
Go homeward, filled with a longing for sleep.

The birds squat tired in the boughs
The world falls asleep . . . I stand here and wait for
The friend, who promised to come.

I long, o friend, at your side
The beauty of this evening to enjoy, –
Where do you remain? You leave me alone for long!

I wander up and down with the lute,
Along paths, which swell from soft grass, –
O would you come, would you come, unfaithful friend!

THE FAREWELL OF A FRIEND

I got off the horse and offered him the drink
Of the farewell. I asked him, where
And also why he wanted to travel. He
Spoke with muffled voice: my friend,
To me fate has not been kind in this world.

Where do I go? I wander in the mountains
I seek repose for my lonely heart
I shall never again roam far away —
Tired is my foot, and tired is my soul,
The earth is the same everywhere,
And eternal, eternal are the white clouds . . .

German translation from the Chinese by Hans Bethge, from *Die Chinesische Flöte*, English translation by Edith Godel.