

MIRIAM GIDEON

NOCTURNES

Judith Raskin, soprano;

Da Capo Chamber Players (Patricia Spencer, flute; Joel Lester, violin; Andre Emelianoff, cello) with guest artists Ronald Roseman, oboe; Gordon Gottlieb, vibraphone;

John DeMain, conductor

SONGS OF YOUTH AND MADNESS, on poems of Friedrich Hölderlin

Judith Raskin, soprano;

American Composers Orchestra; James Dixon, conductor

Recorded live from a performance at Alice Tully Hall, December 1977

MIRIAM GIDEON (b. 1906, Greeley, Colo.) studied composition with Lazare Saminsky and Roger Sessions. She is (in 1979) Professor of Music at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and Professor Emeritus at City College of the City University of New York. In 1975 she was elected to the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Her music appears on CRI 128, 170, 286, 288, and 343.

Gideon has written extensively for all media and has been performed and recorded in the U.S.A., Europe and the Far East by outstanding chamber groups, orchestras, and soloists. Many of her recent works are for solo voice and instrumental ensemble, and reveal her interest in multi-lingual settings: her fascination with the musical transformation of a poetic idea as it appears in the original language and in translation. *SONGS OF YOUTH AND MADNESS* is an illustration of this procedure. The composer writes:

“NOCTURNES was composed in 1975 on a commission from Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Siegel of New York City, in celebration of the 18th birthday of their daughter, Rena. The poems I chose, and their transmutation into music, seemed an appropriate evocation of youth and its awakening to the magical forces of nature: the quiet traversing of the sky in *To The Moon*; a serene control over turbulent forces in *High Tide*; and the dream-like spell of *Witchery*.

“SONGS OF YOUTH AND MADNESS, composed in 1977 on a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, is a cycle based on poems by Friedrich Hölderlin, written during the two extreme phases of the poet's life: the first, during his over-powering love affair with Susette Gontard (the ‘Diotima’ of the poems); and the second phase, after the tragic death of Mme. Gontard, which in part effected a radical change in the poet's personality, rendering him unable to face reality, but not extinguishing his poetic activity. *To the Fates*, *To Diotima*, and *Affirmation* are early poems of youthful passion and sorrow. *The Walk* is typical of his period of madness: remote, devout, and shot through with bolts of anger and pain.

“The poems are set in the original German, alternating with the English translation.”

MARTIN BOYKAN

SECOND STRING QUARTET

Pro Arte Quartet (Norman Paulu, Martha Francis, Richard Blum, Parry Karp)

MARTIN BOYKAN (b. New York, New York, 1931) studied composition at Harvard and Yale with Walter Piston, Aaron Copland, and Paul Hindemith. His major works include his *STRING QUARTET NO. 1* (CRI 338), *Piano Trio* (commissioned by the Fromm Foundation), *Psalm* for

acapella chorus, and Concerto for 13 Players. He is a respected writer on musical subjects and is a member of the editorial board of *Perspectives of New Music*. He has been on the faculty of Brandeis University since 1957. He writes:

“Though divided into four separate movements, my **SECOND QUARTET** is conceived as a continuous work, culminating in the extended slow movement which closes it. Each of the first three movements is unbalanced in shape. The first movement begins with a rapid-fire succession of ideas leading to an unusually early climax. A short slow movement follows — too short, in fact, to be complete. It is to be continued at the end of the quartet. The third movement is a fast scherzo which leads into the last movement without any pause (indeed, with a phrase overlap).

“The concluding 'Lento' is divided into four equal sections, marked by rhyming cadences. But against this even background, the music is unevenly paced, so that the sections seem unequal in length. For the first time in the quartet octaves appear; they are intended not as points of structural emphasis, but as expressive moments. I have attempted to invest this interval, avoided in much contemporary music, with the significance of a 'diabolus in musica.'

“The quartet is dedicated to my friend and colleague, Seymour Shifrin.”

JUDITH RASKIN has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera as well as with other major opera companies and orchestras in the U.S.A. An outstanding recitalist, she has become increasingly involved in contemporary repertoire, and has premiered several new works by American composers. She has made numerous recordings, among them Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*.

JAMES DIXON is conductor and music director of the Tri-City Symphony Orchestra and the University of Iowa Symphony Orchestra. A champion of contemporary American music, Dixon has appeared with orchestras throughout the U.S.A., Europe and Greece.

The DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS has been hailed as one of the foremost ensembles specializing in 20th century repertoire. Winner of the 1973 Naumburg Award, the ensemble is sponsored by the Carnegie Hall Corporation in an annual series of concerts, and has toured widely throughout the U.S.A. It can be heard playing music of Fennelly, Sollberger, and Tower on CRI.

JOHN DeMAIN is (1979) Exxon/Arts Endowment Conductor with the Houston Grand Opera and Music Director of the Texas Opera Theater. Other assignments have been with the Pittsburgh Symphony, American Opera Center at the Juilliard School, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the San Diego Symphony.

The PRO ARTE QUARTET, in residence at the University of Wisconsin, has a history and a length of performing activity which are unique in the field of chamber music. Organized in 1912 by a group of young Belgian students, the Quartet flourished on both sides of the Atlantic with essentially the same personnel for almost thirty years. The Quartet in its second phase was under the leadership of Rudolf Kolisch, and began its association with the University of Wisconsin. Now in its third phase, the Quartet continues its 65 year-old tradition as one of the leading exponents of contemporary music. It can be heard playing music of Elston on CRI 289, and Lansky on CRI 402.

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NOCTURNES

TO THE MOON (Percy Bysshe Shelley)

Art thou pale for weariness
Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
Wandering companionless
Among the stars that have a different birth, —
And ever changing, like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy?

HIGH TIDE (Jean Starr Untermeyer)

I edged back against the night.
The sea growled assault on the wave-bitten shore.
And the breakers,
Like young and impatient hounds,
Sprang with rough joy on the sinking sand.

Sprang, but were drawn back slowly,
With a long, relentless pull,
Whimpering, into the dark.

Then I saw who held them captive,
And I saw how they were bound
With a broad and quivering leash of light,
Held by the moon,
As, calm and unsmiling,
She walked the deep fields of the sky.

WITCHERY (Frank Dempster Sherman)

Out of the purple drifts,
From the magic sea of night,
On tides of musk a moth uplifts
Its weary wings of white.

Is it a dream or ghost
Of a dream that comes to me,
Here in the twilight on the coast,
Blue cinctured by the sea?

Fashioned of foam and froth —
And the dream is ended soon,
And lo, whence came the moon-white moth
Comes now the moth-white moon!

SONGS OF YOUTH AND MADNESS

on poems of Friedrich Hölderlin

English translations by

Michael Hamburger. used by permission.

TO THE FATES

One summer only grant me, you powerful Fates!
And one more Autumn only for mellow song.
So that more willingly, replete with
Music's late sweetness, my heart may die then.

Nur einen Sommer gönnt, ihr Gewaltigen!
Und einen Herbst zu reifen Gesange mir,
Dass williger mein Herz, vom süssen
Spiele gesättiget, dann mir sterbe.

The soul in life denied its god-given right
Down there in Orcus also finds no peace;
But when what's holy, dear to me,
The poem is done, my art perfected,

Then welcome, silence, welcome cold world of shades!
I'll be content, though I must leave my lyre
And songless travel down; for once
I lived like the gods, and I need no more.

Die Seale, der im Leben ihr göttlich Recht
Nicht ward, sie ruht auch drunten im Orkus nicht;
Doch ist mir einst das Heil'ge, das am
Herzen mir liegt, das Gedicht gelungen,

Willkommen dann, O Stille der Schattenwelt!
Zufrieden bin ich, wenn auch mein Saitenspiel
Mich nicht hinab geleitet; einmal
Lebt ich, wie Götter, und mehr bedarfs nicht.

TO DIOTIMA

Beautiful being, you live as do
Delicate blossoms in winter;
In a world that's grown old,
Hidden, you blossom alone.

Lovingly outward you press
To bask in the light of the springtime;
To be warmed by it still,
Look for the youth of the world.

But your sun, the lovelier world,
Has gone down now,
And the quarreling gales
Rage in an icy bleak night.

Schönes Leben! du lebst
Wie die zarten Blüthen im Winter,
In der gealterten Weit
Blühst du verschlossen, allein.

Liebend strebst du hinaus,
Dich zu sonnen am Lichte des Frühlings;
Zu erwärmen an ihr
Suchst du die Jugend der Welt.

Deine Sonne, die schönere
Zeit ist untergegangen.
Und in frostiger Nacht
Zanken Orkane sich nun.

AFFIRMATION

Dearest one, you lie sick,
So that weeping
My heart is heavy, and fear
Almost takes root in me.
Yet I cannot believe that you could die,
When you still can love.

DER GUTE GLAUBE

Schönes Leben! du liegst krank,
Und das Herz ist mir
Müd vom Weinen, und schon dämmert
Die Furcht in mir,
Doch, doch kann ich nicht glauben,
Dass du sterbst, so lang du liebst.

THE WALK

You wayside woods, well painted,
On the green and sloping glade,
Where I conduct my footsteps
With lovely quiet repaid,
For every thorn in my bosom
When dark are my mind and my heart,
Which paid from the beginning
In grief for thought and art.

Ihr Wälder schön an der Seite
Am grünen Abhang gemahlt,
Wo ich umher mich leite
Durch süsse Ruhe bezahlt,
Für jeden Stachel im Herzen,
Wenn dunkel mir ist der Sinn,
Den Kunst und Sinnen hat Schmerzen
Gekostet von Anbeginn.

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)