

WANDA MAXIMILIEN, piano

LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA (complete works for solo piano)

SONATINA CANONICA ON PAGANINI CAPRICES (1942-43)

I. Allegretto comodo — Allegro molto misurato

II. Largo — Vivacissimo

III. Andante sostenuto

IV. Alla marcia; moderato

QUADERNO MUSICALE DI ANNALIBERA (1952)

Simbolo

Accenti — Contrapunctus primus —

Linee — Contrapunctus secundus (Canon contrario motu)

Fregi — Andantino amoroso e Contrapunctus tertius (Canon cancrizans) —

Ritmi — Colore — Ombre

Quartina

LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA (1904-1975) was born in Pisino in Istria, a disputed province where Italian, Austrian, and Slavic cultures meet. In 1916 the Austrian authorities deported his family to Graz, an experience that gave the young musician an early taste of political oppression and at the same time exposed him to the rich heritage of Austro-German culture, especially music. In 1922 he journeyed to Florence to study, and he made that historic city his home for the remainder of his life. Originally intending to become a concert pianist, he determined to be a composer after hearing a performance of Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* under the composer's direction at the Palazzo Pitti in 1924. During the 1920s and '30s Dallapiccola attracted notice for his skillful counterpoint and sensitive vocal writing in a "neoclassic" style, following the direction of Casella and Malipiero. In the later '30s, however, chromaticism and dissonance become more frequent in his music, coinciding with the increasing oppressiveness of Fascism and the threat of war. A turning point was his *Canti di Prigionia* (1938-41), a setting of texts written by condemned prisoners, which combines modal polyphony with the techniques of twelve-tone serialism. By 1945 Dallapiccola had turned to pure serial composition, the first Italian composer to do so. Subsequent works, establishing his international reputation, include the opera *Il Prigioniero* (1949) and *Canti di Liberazione* (1955). The composer's dedication to freedom dominates these impressive compositions.

Although Dallapiccola was professionally trained and was active as a performer, often in partnership with the violinist Sandro Materassi, he composed only these two works for solo piano. (His only other purely pianistic composition is *Musica per tre pianoforti* of 1935.) It is as if he put the essence of his thought in just one work for his own instrument in each of the two principal styles into which his creative production falls.

SONATA CANONICA in E-flat major is based on *Capricci* for violin by the early nineteenth-century virtuoso Niccolò Paganini; it was written in 1942-43, at the same time as his earliest twelve-tone works. Paganini's themes remain essentially intact, but they are enriched and amplified by dissonant polytonal counterpoint, various canons related to the techniques of serialism, and an appropriately virtuoso piano style. In the first movement a deceptively lyrical augmentation canon encloses a breathless and strongly accented allegro. In the second, suspenseful and harshly dissonant phrases enframe a lively two-part canon. The third movement opens with a somber canon in a low register, followed by a simple

statement of the theme and then a retrograde canon on it, and concluding with a restatement of the opening canon in a middle register. The brilliant *finale*, based on the horn-calls of Paganini's *La Caccia*, features polytonal fanfares with a mirror canon at the center.

The **QUADERNO MUSICALE DI ANNALIBERA**, composed in 1952 for the Pittsburgh International Contemporary Music Festival, is Dallapiccola's only twelve-tone work for piano. It is dedicated to the composer's daughter Annalibera, born during the liberation of Florence in 1944. More reflective and serene than the **SONATINA**, it nonetheless occupies a central place in Dallapiccola's work. Many of its musical ideas are incorporated into the *Canti di Liberazione*, the composer's largest non-dramatic work. This "Musical Notebook" pays homage to Bach in various ways including its title, reminiscent of the Notebooks for Anna Magdalena and Wilhelm Friedemann Bach. It consists of eleven short pieces based on the same tone-row, arranged in a schematic order that alternates "free" with canonic movements. It is, in effect, a set of variations, akin to Bach's "Goldberg" Variations and *Art of Fugue*. Dallapiccola renamed this piece *Variazioni* when he arranged it for orchestra in 1951.

The opening *Simbolo* makes the homage to Bach explicit by announcing the motto B-A-C-H in a harmonization derived from the 12-tone row. The second movement, *Accenti*, is harshly rhythmic, while the *Contrapunctus primus* following is a canon involving rhythmic as well as melodic transformations of the theme. The fourth movement, *Linee*, sets a sustained melody against an ostinato-like accompaniment. Its complement, *Contrapunctus secundus* ("alla Serenata"), is a gentle canon in contrary motion. *Fregi* (Friezes), the center-piece of the *Quaderno*, is intensely melodic, almost vocal (marked "con espressione parlante"); its second half is a free inversion of the first. (This movement is transformed into the opening of the *Canti di Liberazione*.) The seventh movement (*Andantino amoroso e Contrapunctus tertius*) is warmly expressive; its "theme" of two-note chords is repeated against itself in retrograde (as in the third movement of the *Sonatina Canonica*). *Ritmi* is violent and harsh, *Colore* relaxed and quiet, while *Ombre* (Shadows) exploits the darker colors of the piano. *Quartina* (Quatrain) concludes the work with a quiet summation of its principal melodic and harmonic elements.

– Notes by Martin Picker

WANDA MAXIMILIEN began studying the piano at the age of six in her native Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and received her MS in performance at the Juilliard School after studies with Adele Marcus and Nadia Boulanger, among others. Her interpretations of contemporary music, in her recitals in and around New York, have been remarked for their warmth and sensitivity. She is Associate Professor of Music at Rutgers University. This is her first recording.

ROBERT MOEVS

FANTASIA SOPRA UN MOTIVO (1951)

PHOENIX (1971)

UNA COLLANA MUSICALE (1977): Nos. 2, 6, 5, 10, 11, 12

ROBERT MOEVS (b. LaCrosse, Wisc., 1920) began musical life very early as a pianist. Training in composition was later pursued at Harvard and, for ten years, in France and Italy. In 1955, he returned to teach both theory and composition at Harvard and, since 1964, at Rutgers. He was a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, and also has served as Composer in Residence there. Orchestral, choral, chamber and solo music are all represented in his work. Among his commissions have been works for the Boston, Cleveland and Milwaukee orchestras. In 1978 his *Concerto for Piano, Orchestra and Percussion*, with amplified instruments, won the Stockhausen International Composition contest in Italy; performance was by the RAI Orchestra of Milan. Other works for piano are *Sonatina* (1946); *SONATA* (1950) (CRI 136); *Ludi Praeterti: Games of the Past* (1976) for two pianos. He writes:

“FANTASIA SOPRA UN MOTIVO was written in the spring of 1951. The dotted upbeat containing a minor second is the cause of all that follows. A downward drive persists until it attains a climactic low B. This then allows the minor second to grow into a contrapuntal passage, affording temporary respite. The last part is an expanded recall of the processes carried out earlier, a way of proceeding that I have adopted in a number of subsequent works, including the *Concerto for Piano, Orchestra and Percussion*.

“My concern with intervallic control came to be complemented by, or worked out against, a balanced pitch distribution. This duplex consideration brought about a systematic chromaticism that I found more musically sensitive than the determinism of orthodox serialism. This chromaticism can *become* serial, when conducive to the musical purpose, as in PHOENIX (1971): a theme of nine different pitches is intervallically symmetrical about the pivotal fifth pitch, which also is the peak of the melodic arch. A countertheme of two tritones, often heard with it, completes a twelve-note set. This theme never disappears, but is gradually submerged within, seemingly consumed and its coals scattered by multiple superposed layers of itself, widely but symmetrically extended. The resulting texture, therefore, is serially derived. From this crucible the theme reemerges alone and intact but somehow purified. The concept is symbolized by the Phoenix; Ovid refers to it: *Et vivax phoenix, unica serper avis*. Since it is a religious symbol, Phoenix is in this sense *musica sacra*.

“UNA COLLANA MUSICALE, 12 brief pieces for pianoforte, was written in 1977. These pieces, whose durations range from 30 seconds to a couple of minutes, are individual moments of varied character and compositional procedure. Their first pitches, rather as an acronym, present the circle of fifths, starting from C. No. 1, *Praeludium*, returns modified as No. 13, a *Postludium*, clasping, as it were, the necklace together. Inasmuch as they are otherwise individual entities, various selections and arrangements can be made. To fit the remaining space on the disc, Ms. Maximilien plays a set consisting of Nos. 2, 6, 5, 10. 11. 12. This collection has a certain logic of its own, illustrated by the metromonic rates: 66, 30-60-30, 90, 132, 60-45, 60.”

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All recorded by David Hancock, New York City, November 1978, February, 1979.

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)