

THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS

EDWIN LONDON

PSALM OF THESE DAYS III

- 1. Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?**
- 2. Let us break their bands asunder and cast away their cords from us.**
- 3. Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.**

EDWIN LONDON (b. Philadelphia, 1929) studied at the Oberlin Conservatory (French horn) and the University of Iowa. His composition teachers were P.G. Clapp, Phillip Bezanson, Luigi Dallapiccola and Darius Milhaud. During his duty as faculty member at Smith College (1960-68) he conducted the Smith-Amherst Orchestra and the Amherst Community Opera. At the University of Illinois from 1968-78 he was chairman of the Composition-Theory Division where he founded and directed *Ineluctable Modality* and conducted the Contemporary Chamber Players. He was a University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study fellow in 1969, a Guggenheim Fellow in 1970, a four-time fellow of the MacDowell Colony and recipient of grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. In 1978 he became chairman of the music department, Cleveland State University. He writes:

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS III is the centerpiece in a cycle of five works which deal in a variety of religious experiences. All are based on biblical Psalm texts. Each of five segments deals with a different instrumental combination and posture, as well as an assortment of vocal approaches and attitudes.

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS I — Psalm 34:1 *I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth* — set for mezzo, women's chorus, kazoos, flute, and string quartet.

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS II — Uses Psalm 131 in its entirety and concerns itself with the struggle of a computer programmed to speak, in its progress toward religious enlightenment, and is scored for four solo virtuoso singers.

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS IV — Psalm 47:6, *Sing praises to God, sing praises unto our king, sing praises*. Written for clarinetist, Phil Rehfeldt and reciter-composer Barney Childs with tape.

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS V — in progress.

“PSALM OF THESE DAYS III — lines from Psalm 2 traffics in the desire to make first rate instrumentalists sing as well as play. Commissioned by the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players.

“It has been asserted that the condition most characteristic of the age is paranoia. Without the constraints traditionally imposed by institutional religion and/or the agencies of social organization, the use of guilt mechanisms to guard and guide the psyche's development has been effectively neutralized. As Brecht and Weill suggest in *Mahagonny*, something is missing in societies where anything goes and everything is allowed. In the absence of this something, 'voices' appear to occupy the vacuum created. These 'voices,' raging and mumbling, are the resultant of our own energies run amok in search of significance.”

Performed by: John Fonville, flute; Paul Martin Zonn, clarinet/vocal quartet; Ray Sasaki, trumpet; James Staley, trombone/vocal quartet; Daniel Perantoni, tuba/vocal quartet; Don Baker, percussion; Arthur Maddox, piano; Guillermo Perich, viola; Thomas Fredrickson, doublebass/vocal quartet; Edwin London, conductor/vocal solo.

BEN JOHNSTON

DUO

BEN JOHNSTON (b. Macon, Georgia, 1926) holds degrees from William and Mary College, Cincinnati Conservatory of Music and Mills College. He joined the faculty of the University of Illinois in 1951, and currently serves as Professor of Composition and Theory. Among his works which have been widely performed are *Knocking Piece* for piano interior and two percussionists and *String Quartet No. 2* (recorded on Nonesuch by the Composers String Quartet). His widely diversified commissions include Eleazar de Carvalho, former conductor of the St. Louis Symphony, (*Quintet for Groups*, 1967). The Swingle Singers commissioned (*Ci-Git Satie*), the ETC Company of La Mama of New York (his opera *Carmilla*, 1970) and recorded by them on Vanguard, the Smithsonian Institution (two commissions: for a film score and for a sound environment), the Polish Radio (Strata). Among the honors he has received are a Guggenheim Fellowship (1959), a grant from the National Council on the Arts and the Humanities (1966), and Associate Membership in the University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study (1966). *Sonata for Microtonal Piano* is part of New World Records' Anthology of American Music. He writes:

“The DUO for flute and string bass was written for Bertram and Nancy Turetzky in April, 1963. It is in three short movements: *Prelude*, *Interim*, and *Flight*. The pitch organization of all three movements is serial, being based on twelve-tone rows made up of combinatorial hexachords. The two rows used in the outer movements are both shown, during the second movement, to be derived from a simpler row composed of symmetrically arranged segments. A cadenza near the end of the last movement again interconnects the thematic material. Especially in the first two movements, many of the pitches are inflected microtonally. The rhythmic texture of the first movement is polyrhythmic, that of the second based upon proportional durations, and that of the last movement composed of changing metric patterns and proportional tempi.”

Performed by: John Fonville, flute; Thomas Fredrickson, doublebass.

PAUL ZONN

GEMINI-FANTASY FOR OBOE AND SIX PLAYERS

PAUL MARTIN ZONN (b. Boston, 1938), composer, conductor, clarinetist, teacher, scholar is an important figure on the new music frontier in the midwest, performing regularly throughout the musical centers. His musical activities have won him awards and honors that include two Ford Foundation Humanities Fellowships, a Rockefeller Fellowship at the Center for Creative and Performing Arts at SUNY Buffalo, an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, an appointment to the University of Illinois Center for Advanced Study, an ACA recording award (CRI SD 299), and numerous commissions. He has been on the faculty of Grinnell College, and since 1970 a member of the composition faculty of the University of Illinois where he served as the theory-composition division chairman between 1972 and 1976 and where he conducts the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and performs with and conducts the Contemporary Chamber Players. He writes:

“GEMINI-FANTASY is one of many compositions written to celebrate the artistry and virtuosity of oboist Wilma Zonn. Simultaneously it espouses personal musical ideas about staticity and collateral sonorities. The music divides into that which is fixed and that which is mobile or modular, although for this recording (and in any performance) the mobile material also becomes fixed. The last section of music is recapitulatory and coda-like. GEMINI-FANTASY is dedicated to Harold Gomberg, who was Wilma's teacher and a great influence on both of us.”

Performed by: Wilma Zonn, oboe; Ray Sasaki, trumpet; Daniel Perantoni, tuba; Don Baker, percussion; Arthur Maddox, piano; Guillermo Perich, viola; Thomas Fredrickson, doublebass; Paul Martin Zonn, conductor.

THOMAS FREDRICKSON
TRIPTYCH

THOMAS FREDRICKSON (b. Kane, Pennsylvania, 1928) holds degrees from Ohio Wesleyan University and the University of Illinois and studied composition with Tilden Wells, Hubert Kessler and Burrill Phillips. He served as Director of the School of Music of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign from 1970 to 1974, and since then as professor of composition and theory. He has composed extensively in a variety of styles and media and is active as a double bassist in symphonic, chamber and jazz ensembles. He is one of the founders of the University of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players. His compositions written for this group are among his most widely-played works. He writes:

“TRIPTYCH (1977), for oboe, viola, trumpet, and bass trombone, is in three movements. The musical analog of a triptych, i.e., a painting with a central panel and two flanking panels that fold over it, is achieved only in concert performance, when the second movement is played spatially with a player in each corner of the stage. An inner triptych results as the main section of the middle movement is preceded and succeeded by brief streams of eight-part harmony. The first movement concerns itself with alternating sections of free and strict time and the third with rates of motion.”

Performed by: Wilma Zonn, oboe; Ray Sasaki, trumpet; James Staley, trombone; Guillermo Perich, viola.

WILMA ZONN is a well-known performer of the most difficult contemporary music. She has been featured soloist in Festivals of Music in Hawaii, Las Vegas, Chicago, Tanglewood and Urbana, to name a few. Her career has included a stint as solo oboist of the Oregon Symphony as well as teaching duties at the University of Iowa, University of Portland and University of Illinois. She has recorded on CRI 299, Ubres, and Advance.

JOHN FONVILLE has given numerous solo and chamber performances, and has performed extensively with the U. of Illinois Contemporary Chamber Players. He is presently (1979) engaged with the Syracuse Society for New Music, and teaches at the State University of New York at Oswego.

This recording was made possible by a grant from the University of Illinois.
Produced by Carter Harman

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)