

MUSIC OF RAMON ZUPKO

MASQUES (1973-78)

Western Brass Quintet (Donald Bullock and Stephen Jones, trumpets; Neill Sanders, horn; Russell Brown, trombone; Robert Whaley, tuba); Phyllis Rappeport, piano

NOCTURNES (1977)

Abraham and Arlene Stokman, pianos

FLUXUS II (1978)

Abraham Stokman, piano

RAMON ZUPKO (b. 1932, Pittsburgh) is the director of the Studio for Electronic Music and the New Music Ensemble at Western Michigan University, where he also teaches composition, music theory, and acoustics. He began his musical studies at an early age, eventually receiving composition degrees from Julliard. He studied further at Columbia, and in Europe, where he lived for several years. His principal composition teacher was Vincent Persichetti.

Many of his works make use of the electronic medium, as well as theatrical elements. His awards include grants from the Fulbright Commission, the Ford Foundation CMP Project, the Fromm Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund. Several of his works have been published, including the *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1962)* which was awarded first prize in the "Premio Citta di Trieste," and *FIXATIONS for Piano, Violin, Cello, and Tape (1974)*, which received a 1977 ACA Recording Award (CRI SD 375). His orchestral works have been performed by the Detroit, St. Louis, and Indianapolis Symphonies. He writes:

"As is the case with most of my works, those recorded here received their initial impetus from either poetic sources or dramatic-theatrical conceptions. Each of them deals with a re-interpretation of the resources and techniques of the past, with special attention focused on the elements of timbre, space, and an expanded concept of tonality.

MASQUES

play minstrels!
begin your journey
in sound and in motion
unfold your theatre —
allow us an image
of free spirits!

"As the title implies, this is an entertainment piece which combines music with ritual and pageantry. In live performance the musicians, who are costumed uniformly, move about the stage in specified patterns, creating a constantly changing visual as well as aural perspective. The 1978 version includes a number of modifications in order to render the work more suitable as a purely audible experience on disc. This recording attempts to preserve some of the sonic spatiality which one would experience if hearing the work live. Formally, the piece is a series of static sound blocks within a single movement, each one a 'disguised' version of one or more of the others. All of the pitch material is an outgrowth of a single five-note cluster: B, C, D, E, and F, and the sound 'metamorphosis' of the piece is from pitch-oriented to noise-oriented sound, then abruptly back again for the last segment.

"MASQUES was premiered by the artists on this recording on February 15, 1974, on the campus of Western Michigan University.

“NOCTURNES was written during September and October of 1977, and received its premiere by the Stokmans at the University of Chicago on January 20, 1978. Although there are six separate pieces here they form an entity. Each of them is tied to the others through its timbral, melodic, and rhythmic materials, but especially through the harmonic elements, all of which are permutations of a polychordal structure consisting of three major triads a half-step apart. The homage to Chopin is apparent throughout, as is the tone-picture quality of each of the pieces, inspired as they were by the following Haiku:

1. (Calmato)
autumn evening;
a crow perched
on a withered bough (Basho)
2. (Bizzarramente)
the sound of dancing dies;
wind among the pine trees,
insect cries (Sogelsu)
3. (Freddamente)
icy the moonshine;
shadow of a tombstone
shadow of a pine (Shiki)
4. (Ardente)
a lightening gleam
into darkness travels
a night-heron's scream (Basho)
5. (Affabile)
the water-fowl
pecks and shivers —
the moon on the waves (Zuiryu)
6. (Lontano)
the bell from far away —
how it moves along in its coming
through the spring haze! (Onitsura)

“FLUXUS II was composed between February and April, 1978, and is dedicated to Abraham Stokman, who premiered the work at Alice Tully Hall on January 20, 1979. The expressive and dramatic flow of the work was strongly influenced by a poem of Dylan Thomas entitled *In the Beginning*, the poet's personal expression of the story of Genesis. Musically the work is concerned with Baroque and Classical keyboard embellishment, Romantic keyboard figuration and bravura, and with the relationships among static tonal centers. The piece derives its form from the melodic growth and expansion of a three-note cell. It approaches the piano as a polyphonic 'color' instrument, with many gradations of attack and dynamic, 'orchestrated' textures with foreground accompanied by one or more layers of background, various 'echo' effects and the rapid alternation of differing textures and shapes.”

ABRAHAM STOKMAN was born in Israel, where he began his piano studies at the age of six. Later he came to the Juilliard School to study with Edward Steuermann, receiving his B.S. and M.S. degrees in piano. Since taking up his residency in Chicago several years ago, he has performed often as soloist with the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago, members of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in chamber music concerts, and most recently as soloist with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the Bach *D Minor Concerto*. He has had compositions written for him by Ralph Shapey, Robert Lombardo, and John Austin. In addition to activities as performer, piano teacher, accompanist, arranger and composer, Mr. Stokman improvises in the manner of the 19th century pianists.

ARLENE GATILAO STOKMAN is a native of the Philippines. After she received her B.S. degree from the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, she came to the Chicago Musical College of Roosevelt University, where she received the Rudolph Ganz Piano Award. She has performed frequently with her husband as a piano duo.

PHYLLIS RAPPEPORT is Professor of Music and head of the piano department at Western Michigan University. She holds degrees from Queens College and the University of Illinois, where she was a member of the Contemporary Chamber Players. She has been the recipient of a Fulbright Scholarship, and has been active throughout the country as accompanist and ensemble performer:

THE WESTERN BRASS QUINTET was founded in 1966 in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Its members are professors of music at Western Michigan University. It has performed throughout the country, including performances for the Composer's Forum on NPR, the Composer's Forum in New York, invitational performances for the Tuba Universal Brotherhood Association and the International Trumpet Guild, and at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York. The ensemble has premiered numerous works which were written for it, including the work on this album, 'Nodding Music' by Elgar Howarth, and LANDSCAPES by Pulitzer composer Karel Husa, a work commissioned by the Quintet, and recorded by them on CRI 192 (78).

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(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)