

ORCHESTRA OF THE 20TH CENTURY

ARTHUR WEISBERG, conductor

ROBERT MOEVS

CONCERTO GROSSO FOR PIANO, PERCUSSION AND ORCHESTRA

Wanda Maximilien, pianist; Raymond DesRoches, Richard Fitz, Louis Oddo, Bruce Patti, Stephen Payson, percussionists

ROBERT MOEVS (b. 1920, La Crosse, Wisconsin) began his musical life as a pianist. He studied at Harvard, and in Paris with Nadia Boulanger. His later associations have been with Harvard, with the American Academy in Rome, where he is a Fellow, and with Rutgers University. He lives in rural New Jersey.

Among his numerous prizes and awards are a Guggenheim Fellowship and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award. He has received orchestral commissions from many organizations, including the Koussevitsky Foundation and Boston, Cleveland and Milwaukee Orchestras. In 1978, the CONCERTO GROSSO recorded here was awarded the Stockhausen International Composition Prize in Italy. The Orchestra of the 20th Century (Arthur Weisberg, conductor), with Wanda Maximilien, pianist, gave the first American performance at Carnegie Hall in New York City on April 20, 1981. The composer writes:

“In 1960, a preliminary version of the CONCERTO GROSSO was set down under pressure while I was composer-in-residence at the American Academy in Rome. It was apparent at the time that the work suggested more than the rather straight-forward proportional system, based on units of five, that it then embodied. In 1968, I returned to it, recast the materials into a more complex system based on a 60-beat periodicity of four simultaneous systems.

“A highly ordered world evolves from the simplest of elements (the minor second). This world is brought under attack by a disintegrative force (disassociated, non-measured notes and gestures) that begins its destructive action in the depths of the orchestra, as one says, and ultimately overwhelms all, except for the bell that marks the 60-beat spans.

“The survival of the bell is an affirmation that there exists a level that destruction cannot reach. I was struck, particularly at rehearsal, by the calm reassurance it provided – a sense of being, maintained amidst the mounting chaos.

“The original title of this work was *Concerto for Piano, Orchestra and Percussion*. American listeners have asserted, sometimes with heat, that it is not a regular piano concerto. We may ask why they expected it to be, given the presence at the front of the stage of a *concertino* comprising six percussionists (five in this performance) and piano, joined also by the harp – hardly the apparatus of a standard concerto. Although it had not crossed my mind before, a search for historical precedents does lead to the fifth *Brandenburg Concerto* of Bach with its *concertino* group and a cembalo part that emerges in a virtuosic solo passage. Accordingly, I have renamed the work.”

JACOB DRUCKMAN **WINDOWS (1972)**

JACOB DRUCKMAN (b. 1928, Philadelphia) has for many years been regarded as one of America's major composers. He studied at the Juilliard School of Music in New York and at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris. He also worked with Aaron Copland at the Berkshire Music Center. He served on the Juilliard faculty for fifteen years beginning in 1957 and also part-time at Bard College from 1961 to 1967. In 1967 he became associated with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center; from 1972 to 1976 he directed the Electronic Music Studio and Brooklyn College. In 1976 he became chairman of the composition department and director of the Electronic Music Studio at the Yale University School of Music. He is a member of the American Academy-Institute of Arts and Letters, and has earned many honors, including the Pulitzer Prize, Brandeis Citation in music, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Fulbright Fellowship, and an award from the Society for the Publication of American Music. Among his numerous commissioned works are those written for the Koussevitsky Foundation, Radio-Diffusion Française, IRCAM and the New York, St. Louis and Cleveland Orchestras. He writes:

“WINDOWS was strongly shaped by the circumstances surrounding its composition and, primarily, by the personality of the late Bruno Moderna who requested the work and conducted the first performances. Bruno's musicality was a fascinating combination of intense Italianate Romanticism and the sporting nature of a gambler. For him, “aleatory” was simply part of the adventure of Romanticism.

“In 1971 I had just received a commission from the Koussevitzky Foundation in the Library of Congress for a chamber work. I was honored but still longing after that magical world of large orchestras. It was at that moment that Bruno asked me to write a work for his next concert with the Chicago Symphony and it was as though he had opened a flood gate. The piece was to be programmed next to Debussy's *Jeux*, which had been an important piece in my development. The Koussevitzky Foundation was willing to accept an orchestral work and the piece came pouring out. Certainly, part of these energies came from the sense of new direction and rediscovery that was so strong at that time but, for me, it was a special confluence of moment and people.

“The Windows of the title are windows inward. They are points of light which appear as the thick orchestral textures part, allowing us to hear, fleetingly, moments out of time – memories, shadows of ghosts. The imagery is as though, having looked at an unpeopled wall of windows, one looks away and senses the after-image of a face.”

WINDOWS was completed in 1972 and first performed on March 29th of that year by the Chicago Symphony under the direction of Maderna. The work earned its composer the 1972 Pulitzer Prize in Music, and since that time has been performed by many major orchestras, including the Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, New York, and Los Angeles symphonies, the Berlin Philharmonic, French Orchestre National, and New Philharmonia of London. WINDOWS is in one movement, and is scored for full symphony orchestra.

The ORCHESTRA OF THE 20TH CENTURY first appeared in 1975 as the New Orchestra, adopting the current name two years later. A project inaugurated by ARTHUR WEISBERG as an extension of his Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, it was New York's first full-sized orchestra to devote itself entirely to the music of the twentieth century. Its annual concerts in Carnegie Hall have been well attended and have received excellent press coverage. Its policy of playing major works, some of them of extreme difficulty, from all parts of the 20th century, from Europe as well as America, has

been Weisberg's goal ever since he founded the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble in 1960. The excellence of his interpretations with his own group and as guest conductor of such ensembles as the Berlin Radio Orchestra has been praised by critics on three continents. He has appeared on CRI as conductor on thirteen records and as bassoonist on three others.

Haiti-born WANDA MAXIMILIEN has focused her impressive talents on contemporary music since obtaining her M.S. From the Juilliard School at the age of twenty. Her recording of the music pf Dallapiccola and Moevs (CRI SD 404) received two enthusiastic reviews in the *New York Times* and raves elsewhere. She is associate professor of music at Rutgers University.

(original liner notes from CRI LP Jacket)