

# AMERICAN ACADEMY AND INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND LETTERS COMPOSERS AWARD RECORD

## MORTON SUBOTNICK

### PARALLEL LINES

**Laurence Trott, piccolo soloist;  
members of the Buffalo Philharmonic and Buffalo Creative Associates;  
Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor**

MORTON SUBOTNICK (b. 1933, Los Angeles) is a pioneer in the field of electronic music as well as an innovator in works involving instruments and other media. He was the first composer to be commissioned to write an electronic composition expressly for phonograph records, *Silver Apples of the Moon* (Nonesuch, 1967), a work that was later choreographed by the Netherlands Ballet, Ballet Rambert of London and the Glen Tetley Dance Company. Subotnick was co-founder of the San Francisco Tape Music Center (now at Mills College) and was Music Director of Ann Halprin's Dance Company and the San Francisco Actor's Workshop. He served as Music Director of the Lincoln Center Repertory Theatre during its first season and was director of electronic music at the original Electric Circus on St. Mark's Place in New York City. Subotnick has held several faculty appointments, including Yale University, and was Composer-in-Residence in West Berlin under the auspices of the DAAD. Since 1970, he has chaired the composition department of the California Institute of the Arts.

PARALLEL LINES is one of Subotnick's "ghost" pieces for live soloist and electronics. The ghost series is a unique method of blending electronics with live performances so that the effect of the electronics is not audible unless the performer is making a sound. The electronic ghost score is a digital control system which activates an amplifier, a frequency shifter, and a location device. These process the instrumental sound according to the plan of each composition. The ghost electronics were made possible by a Creative Arts grant from the Rockefeller Foundation, and were designed by Donald Buchla to the composer's specifications and constructed by John Payne at the California Institute of the Arts.

Other ghost pieces include *Last Dream of the Beast* for singer and tape, *Liquid Strata* for piano, *The Wild Beasts* for trombone and piano, *Passages of the Beast* for clarinet, and *Two Life Histories* for male voice and clarinet. The composer writes:

"PARALLEL LINES was commissioned by Laurence Trott and the Piccolo Society. The title has to do with the way in which the 'ghost' electronics interact with the piccolo. In previous 'ghost' pieces the electronics were used to produce an acoustic environment within which the solo manifested itself, but in this case the 'ghost' score is a parallel composition to the piccolo solo. The ghost score amplifies and shifts the frequency of the original non-amplified piccolo sound. The two ('ghost' and original piccolo sounds), like a pair of parallel lines, can never touch, no matter how quickly or intricately they move.

"The work, a continuation of the butterfly-beast series, is divided into three large sections: (1) a perpetual-motion-like movement in which all parts play an equal role; (2) more visceral music, starting with the piccolo alone and leading to a pulsating 'crying out,' and (3) a return to the perpetual motion activity, but sweeter."

## **DONALD GRANTHAM**

### **SEVEN CHORAL SETTINGS OF POEMS BY EMILY DICKINSON**

**University of Texas Chamber Singers; Morris J. Beachy, conductor**

### **LA NOCHE EN LA ISLA**

**William Rhodes, baritone; Wayne Barrington, French hornist; David Garvey, pianist**

DONALD GRANTHAM (b. 1947, Duncan, Oklahoma) has received degrees in music from the University of Oklahoma and the University of Southern California. His composition teachers have included Ramiro Cortes, Robert Linn and Halsey Stevens; in 1973 and 1974, he held the Walter Damrosch Scholarship for study with Nadia Boulanger at the Conservatoire Américain (Fontainebleau).

Among his major awards and prizes are a Citation in Music from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Prix Lili Boulanger, first prize in the International Horn Society's Composition Competition (1979), and a MacDowell Colony Fellowship. Grantham has taught at the University of Southern California and the University of Texas at Austin. He is co-author, with Kent Kennan, of the third edition of *The Technique of Orchestration* (Prentice-Hall). The composer writes:

"The seven poems of the EMILY DICKINSON CYCLE range in mood from the whimsical and enigmatic (the two 'spider' songs) to the grim and foreboding ('One need not be a chamber to be haunted'). Unity is achieved by the use of arch form: numbers one and seven, two and six, three and five share musical material, while number four — the longest and most somber of the set — stands alone as the arch's keystone. It was my intent in this work to present as characteristic a picture of the poet's output as possible within a brief, self-contained musical work.

"LA NOCHE EN LA ISLA is drawn from Pablo Neruda's collection of brooding, erotic lyrics *Los versos del Capitán*, and is one of the longer and more dramatic of these poems. The song, like the poem, is a single long arch. It begins softly with quarter-tones and multiphonics in the horn, climaxes with all the performers in their extreme high registers, and ends quietly with horn and baritone in gentle counterpoint over a pedal-drone in the piano. This work was a co-winner of the International Horn Society's Composition Competition (1979). Reviewing the work for *The Horn Call*, Gayle Chesebro wrote that ". . . the music always reflects the text and exudes the romance of the poetry . . . There is a naturalness to the flow of the music and a unity that might cause one to wonder whether the music or the text was conceived first."

LAURENCE TROTT, solo piccolo player and flutist with the Buffalo Philharmonic, has virtually created a new place on the concert stage for the piccolo, presenting solo recitals from coast to coast and throughout Europe. As founder and artistic director of the PICCOLO Society (People Interested in Cultivating the Charm of the Little Octave flute), he has commissioned and premiered many contemporary works. He is a faculty member of Daemen College in Amherst, New York and he has conducted master classes throughout the U.S. MICHAEL TILSON THOMAS has conducted the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Cleveland Orchestra, as well as other major orchestras here and in Europe. He is famous for his performances and recordings of the music of our time. THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS CHAMBER SINGERS were organized in 1958 by their present director, Dr. Morris J. Beachy, Director of Choral Activities. The Chamber Singers present music of all styles from Renaissance to contemporary and have given premiere performances of a number of major compositions. They have toured under the auspices of the U.S. State Department

and, in 1979, won first prize in the International Villa-Lobos Choral Festival and Contest in Rio de Janeiro. WILLIAM RHODES, bass-baritone, has sung with symphony orchestras and opera companies throughout the United States. He has performed at the Kennedy Center, at Carnegie Hall and on the NBC-TV Today Show. WAYNE BARRINGTON has played with the San Antonio, Pittsburgh and Chicago symphonies and was Associate Principal horn with the Los Angeles Philharmonic. DAVID GARVEY has been the exclusive accompanist since 1953 for Leontyne Price, soprano, with whom he has appeared several times at the White House, and around the world. He has also been accompanist and chamber music performer with other great artists ranging from Jennie Tourel to Itzhak Perlman. Rhodes, Barrington and Garvey are faculty members of the University of Texas at Austin.

This record is sponsored by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters as part of its music awards program. Four cash awards and a CRI recording are given annually to honor and encourage promising composers and to help them continue their creative work; Morton Subotnick was a winner in 1979, Donald Grantham in 1980.

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*(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*