

ROBERT TAUB is a leader in the new generation of pianists whose performing characteristics include precision, aplomb and the ability to make the most difficult music sound graceful. He was a prize-winner in the 1978 Kennedy Center/Rockefeller Foundation Contemporary Music Competition and the winner of the 1981 Peabody-Mason competition in Boston. He is also a Phi Beta Kappa Princeton graduate (1977) with a doctorate (1981) from Juilliard and teaches at Juilliard and Drew University. This is his first recording.

LEON KIRCHNER **SONATA (1948)**

LEON KIRCHNER (b. 1919, Brooklyn) has been an important figure in American music for many years. He studied with Ernest Bloch, Roger Sessions and Arnold Schoenberg and soon made a highly respected place for himself as composer and performer. He has appeared with leading orchestras as conductor and pianist in performances of his own works as well as of contemporary and classical literature. He performed and conducted for many years at the Marlboro Festival and, with the assistance of the Rockefeller Foundation, established a contemporary music program there.

Kirchner is a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and is a Fellow of the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford. He has been the recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, the Naumburg Award for Composition, the Brandeis Gold Medal, two New York Critics Circle Awards, and the Pulitzer Prize (for his *Third String Quartet*). He is Walter Bigelow Rosen Professor of Music at Harvard University. His *STRING QUARTET NO. 1* is on CRI SRD 395.

Kirchner's only SONATA (1948) is a highly chromatic work, a mosaic of short, contrasting motives, characterized by driving rhythms, quasi-improvisational passages, and a uniquely expressive lyricism. A slow introduction (*Lento*) leads to a rhythmically propulsive allegro (*Doppio movimento*), whose last section (*Quasi adagio*) serves as a bridge to the freely developed variations of the *Adagio*. The *Finale* restates motives of the preceding two movements before concluding with a modified recapitulation.

SEYMOUR SHIFRIN **RESPONSES (1973)**

SEYMOUR SHIFRIN (b. 1916, Brooklyn; d. 1979, Boston) is widely recognized as a major figure of the middle generation of American composers, whose music possesses a deep lyricism as well as formal strength. He studied privately with William Schuman, at Columbia University with Otto Luening, and as a Fulbright Scholar in Paris with Darius Milhaud. He joined the music faculty of the University of California at Berkeley in 1952, and then moved to Brandeis University in 1966. Among the many awards he received are two Guggenheim Fellowships, a grant from the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the Bearns Prize, the Boston Symphony's Mark Horbbit Award, and a Brandeis Creative Arts Award. Works for a variety of chamber ensembles, including a series of five string quartets, make up the main body of Shifrin's creative output; but he also wrote for solo voice, chorus, and orchestra. His orchestral compositions have been performed by the symphony orchestras of Cleveland, Chicago, and Boston, and the BBC in England. His *SERENADE FOR FIVE INSTRUMENTS* is on CRI SD 123, his *THREE PIECES FOR ORCHESTRA* on CHI SD 275, and his *STRING QUARTET NO. 4* on CRI SD 358.

RESPONSES (1973) is one of Shifrin's two solo piano pieces. The second and third parts are successively slower than the first, and the fourth returns to the original tempo. Certain pitch complexes act as referential centers throughout the work, and dramatic contrasts are provided by the juxtaposition of lyric phrases with others that are pointillistic in nature, and by terse fragmentary material accompanying principal sustained lines.

MILTON BABBITT **THREE COMPOSITIONS FOR PIANO (1947)**

MILTON BABBITT (b. 1916, Philadelphia) is an acknowledged leader of the 12-tone school of composition. He was the first to apply 12-tone principles of order to rhythmic and dynamic as well as pitch organization, and the THREE COMPOSITIONS FOR PIANO (1947) are the first works to make use of these principles. Each of the three compositions clearly projects its own character. The first is terse and dramatic; the second lyrical and even introspective, and the third is playful and energetic. He writes:

"THREE COMPOSITIONS FOR PIANO were selected to form a connected set, from a number of piano pieces written on my return to composition after a war-enforced hiatus of a half-dozen years. Therefore, they embody ideas about music which evolved but could not be fulfilled compositionally during that period, particularly ideas about interpretations of serial order in and as musical structure. This applies not only when order is interpreted as pitch-ordering but in those other musical dimensions realistically susceptible to linear ordering, and, above all, when temporality itself, i.e. rhythm, is so structured."

Babbitt was educated in the public schools of Jackson, Mississippi, and at New York and Princeton Universities, and studied privately with Roger Sessions. He is William Shubael Conant Professor of Music at Princeton, and a member of the Composition Faculty of the Juilliard School. He is a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His *COMPOSITION FOR FOUR INSTRUMENTS* appears on CRI SD 138; his *VISION AND PRAYER* on CRI SD 268; his *PARTITIONS* on CR1 SD 288, and his *COMPOSITION FOR VIOLA AND PIANO* on CRI SD 138 and 446.

BELA BARTOK **SONATA (1926)**

BELA BARTOK (b. 1881, Hungary; d. 1945, New York City) is one of the handful of 20th-century composers whose music has become standard on concert programs everywhere. This is the first CRI recording of his music. Bartók's only SONATA (1926) is his most extended composition for solo piano. The first movement (*Allegro moderato*), often described as "barbaric" in feeling, is in classical sonata-allegro form. The second movement (*Sostenuto e pesante*) is free and rhapsodic. The last movement (*Allegro molto*) is a rondo.

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)