

NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY CHORUS
LORNA COOKE deVARON, conductor

MALCOLM PEYTON

THE BLESSED VIRGIN COMPARED TO THE AIR WE BREATHE

MALCOLM PEYTON (b. 1932, New York City) began early music training with piano and trumpet lessons and later continued piano studies with Edward Steuerman in New York. He studied composition with Edward Cone and Roger Sessions at Princeton University and with Wolfgang Fortner while on a Fulbright Fellowship in Germany. At present (1982) he is Acting Chairman of the composition department at the New England Conservatory where he has been teaching since 1965. He writes:

"The initial idea for THE BLESSED VIRGIN COMPARED TO THE AIR WE BREATHE came with the words which appear near the end of Gerard Manley Hopkins' poem: 'Stir in my ears, Speak there'. I composed the ending and thereafter found my way back to the beginning. A fantasy that the music already existed, and was therefore to be discovered, was vivid with me at the time. The piece was written in 1972 for the New England Conservatory Chorus and for Lorna Cooke deVaron, to whom it is dedicated."

ROBERT CEELY

FLEE FLORET FLORENS

ROBERT CEELY (b. 1930, Torrington, CT) cast aside early interests in ventriloquism in favor of music as he studied trumpet and played in youth bands, orchestras, and jazz groups. Mr. Ceely was educated at Hobart College, Williams College, the New England Conservatory, Mills College, Princeton University, and the University of Perugia in Italy. His principal composition teachers were Francis Cooke, Darius Milhaud and Roger Sessions. Since 1967 he has taught at the New England Conservatory where he is also Director of the Electronic Music Studio. Ceely also created the BEEP Studio, an independent electronic music facility that offers workshops in electronic music. He is the composer of a wide range of music for instruments, tape (alone and in combination with instruments) and voice. He has written music for nine films, and has received grants and awards from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Massachusetts Council on the Arts, the Fromm Music Foundation, the Berkshire Music Center and others. He writes:

"FLEE FLORET FLORENS (1978) is a motet for fifteen solo voices, dedicated to Lorna Cooke deVaron and the N.E.C. Chamber Singers. It employs three different texts — one in English, adapted from Chaucer, and two in Latin, both of which were used in a motet attributed to Phillippe de Vitry (1291-1361). The texts here are sung simultaneously, as they would have been in a thirteenth-century motet; individual words, however, are sometimes broken into single syllables in a way that is not characteristic of that period. A word such as *supplicia* might be divided sup-pli-ci-a, with each of the four syllables sung by a different singer. I make use of palindromes throughout the work so that the music is presented first in prime form and then in retrograde. While the entire work is in three-quarter time, each palindrome has its own specific tempo marking, insuring rhythmic diversity and contrast."

JACQUES-LOUIS MONOD

CANTUS CONTRA CANTUM III

JACQUES-LOUIS MONOD (b. 1927, Paris) studied in France at the Conservatoire National de Musique and privately with Rene Leibowitz, in New York at the Juilliard School of Music, and in Berlin at the Hochschule für Musik and the Städtisches Konservatorium. His formal studies were completed in New York at Columbia University, where he received the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts with distinction. Monod's music has been performed in North and South America, Scandinavia, and Western Europe. A number of his compositions have been published by Mobart Music Publications, Inc., and the Association for the Promotion of New Music; of these, *CANTUS CONTRA CANTUM I* (1968), (a song-cycle for soprano and fourteen players), may be heard on CRI SD 358. Monod lives in New York City, where he teaches privately. He writes:

"CANTUS CONTRA CANTUM III is a two-part, second-species, vocalized polyphony in three movements based on an original *cantus firmus* and scored for eight solo voices and double chorus a cappella. Throughout the work, the contrapuntal treatment of the *cantus firmus* aims at suspending the harmonic implications of its material and at generating contrasting and complementary homophonic identities.

"The piece may be viewed as one of the two possible appendices to my *Cantus Contra Cantum I* and *Cantus Contra Cantum II* (a duo for violin and cello). The work, dedicated to my parents on the occasion of their 50th wedding anniversary, was composed in Paris during the summer of 1975."

ELAINE BARKIN

TWO EMILY DICKINSON CHORUSES

ELAINE BARKIN (b. 1932, New York) is a professor of music at the University of California, Los Angeles, and co-editor of *Perspectives of New Music*. She studied with Karol Rathaus at Queens College, Irving Fine, Harold Shapero, and Arthur Berger at Brandeis University, and Boris Blacher at the Berlin Hochschule für Musik (on a Fulbright Grant, 1957).

TWO EMILY DICKINSON CHORUSES were composed in 1976 for Donn Weiss and UCLA Madrigal Singers. Johanna Hill Simpson (of the New England Conservatory Chamber Singers) has written the following:

"The music depicts a mural of the sky in its gradual journey between early evening and dawn. The colorful canvas is flooded with warm dissonances and subtle textual imagery."

LYLE DAVIDSON

ALONG THE EDGE

LYLE DAVIDSON (b. 1938, Randolph, VT) studied at the New England Conservatory and Brandeis University. He has taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard University, and is currently on the faculty of the New England Conservatory. He is also on the staff of Project Zero, Harvard University, where he is studying the development of musical ability in young children. In addition to solo, chamber and electronic music, he has composed music for dance, theatre and film. He writes:

"ALONG THE EDGE is a Christmas piece, reflecting the journey of a soul. The manner in which the materials are constructed and developed grew out of my experience in the Brandeis Electronic Music Studio. In those early days of electronic music, before voltage-controlled instruments were available, the studio contained little more than a collection of tape recorders. The composer was faced with two basic problems: how to create a variety of sounds, and how to control textures.

"ALONG THE EDGE applies methods of composition developed for electronic tape to a work for a live performance group. A variety of textures — from diffuse fragmentation to sensual condensation — is formed by juxtaposing fragments of several poems. Except in the final portion of the piece, each vocal part has its own tempo. The conductor controls the juxtapositions of fragments and overlapping sonorous patterns, leading the individual performers toward a unified expression which finally dominates. ALONG THE EDGE was commissioned by the New Bedford Community Chorus (Ronald Issac, conductor)."

A graduate of Wellesley College, LORNA COOKE deVARON received her M.A. in music at Radcliffe, where she was Assistant Conductor of the Radcliffe Choral Society under G. Wallace Woodworth. She came to the New England Conservatory in 1947 as Director of the Choral Department. She regularly prepares the New England Conservatory Chorus for its annual performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Under her direction, the chorus has premiered many major works by such composers as Leonard Bernstein, Gunther Schuller, Donald Martino, Randall Thompson, Daniel Pinkham, Seymour Shifrin and Irving Fine. She is credited with such honors as The City of Boston Medal for Distinguished Achievement, and is the first American woman to have conducted a mixed ensemble in Europe.

The NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY CHORUS was established by Lorna Cooke deVaron in 1947 to provide professional training for singers, music educators and conductors, and has since become one of the country's most celebrated choral ensembles. Among its seventeen recordings with the Boston Symphony Orchestra are Berlioz' *Romeo et Juliette*, which won the chorus' seventh Grand Prix du Disque award, and Holst's *The Planets*. Its performance of Paul Chihara's a cappella *MISSA BREVIS* appears on CRI SD 409. The chorus has made extensive tours of the United States, the Soviet Union, Israel, and Europe, and has performed under such distinguished conductors as Seiji Ozawa, Sir Colin Davis, Charles Munch, Erich Leinsdorf, Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Robert Shaw, Nadia Boulanger, and Claudio Abbado.

This record was made possible by grants from the New England Conservatory and private donors.

Recorded by Jody Rockmaker, April-May, 1981, and April-May, 1982, Jordan Hall, Boston

Producer: Carter Harman

Associate Producer: Carolyn Sachs

THIS IS A COMPOSER-SUPERVISED RECORDING

(Original liner notes from CRI Lp jacket)

Malcolm Peyton

The Blessed Virgin Compared to the Air We Breathe
by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

Wild air, world-mothering air,
Nestling me everywhere,
That each eyelash or hair
Girdles; goes home betwixt
The fleeciest, frailest-flixed
Snowflake; that's fairly mixed
With, riddles, and is rife
In every least thing's life;
This needful, never spent,
And nursing element;
My more than meat and drink,
My meal at every wink;
This air, which, by life's law,
My Lung must draw and draw
Now but to breathe its praise,
Minds me in many ways
Of her who not only
Gave God's infinity
Dwindled to infancy
Welcome in womb and breast,
Birth, milk, and all the rest
But mothers each new grace
That does now reach our race
Mary Immaculate,
Merely a woman, yet
Whose presence, power is
Great as no goddess's
Was deemed, dreamed; who
This one work has to do -
Let all God's glory through.
God's glory which would go
Through her and from her flow
Off, and no way but so.

I say that we are wound
With mercy round and round
As if with air: the same
Is Mary, more by name.
She, wild web, wondrous robe,
Mantles the guilty globe,
Since God has let dispense
Her prayers his providence:
Nay, more than almoner,
The sweet alms' self is her
And men are meant to share
Her life as life does air.

If I have understood,
She holds high motherhood
Towards all our ghostly good
And plays in grace her part
About man's beating heart,
Laying, like air's fine flood,
The deathdance in his blood;
Yet no part but what will
Be Christ our Saviour still.
Of her flesh he took flesh:
He does take fresh and fresh,
Though much the mystery how,
Not flesh but spirit now
And makes, O marvellous!
New Nazareths in us,
Where she shall yet conceive
Him, morning, noon, and eve;
New Bethlems, and he born
There, evening, noon, and morn
Bethlem or Nazareth,
Men here may draw like breath
More Chirst and baffle death;
Who, born so, comes to be
New self and nobler me
In each one and each one
More makes, when all is done,
Both God's and Mary's Son.

Again, look overhead
How air is azured;
O how! nay do but stand
Where you can lift your hand
Skywards: rich, rich it laps
Round your four fingergaps.
Yet such a sapphire-shot,
Charged. steeped sky will not
Stain light. Yea, mark you this:
It does no prejudice.
The glass-blue days are those
When every colour glows,
Each shape and shadow shows.
Blue be it: this blue heaven
The seven or seven times seven
Hued sunbeam will transmit
Perfect, not alter it.
Or if there does some soft.
On things aloof, aloft,
Bloom breathe, that one breath more
Earth is fairer for.
Whereas did air not make
This bath of blue and slake
His fire, the sun would shake,
A blear and blinding ball
With blackness bound, and all!
The thick stars round him roll

Flashing like flecks of coat,
Quartz-fret. or sparks of salt,
In grimy vasty vault.
So God was god of old:
A mother came to mould
Those limbs like ours which are
What must make our daystar
Much deafer to mankind;
Whose glory bare would blind
Or less would win man's mind.
Through her we may see him
Made sweeter, not made dim,
And her hand leaves his right
Sifted to suit our sight.
Be thou then, O thou dear
Mother. my atmosphere;
My happier world, wherein
To wend and meet no sin;
Above me round me lie
Fronting my forward eye
With sweet and starless sky;
Stir in my ears, speak there
Of God's love, O love air,
Of patience, penance, prayer:
World-mothering air, air wild,
Wound with thee, in thee is led.

Robert Ceely
adapted from *Truth*
by Geoffrey Chaucer (1345?-1400)

Flee from the crowd and dwell with truthfulness;
Let what is yours suffice, though it be small;
For greed makes hate and insecurity;
The crowd is envious and blind.
Savor no more than what is on your plate;
Rule well yourself that others you can lead:
And Truth shalt deliver you, have no dread.

What you are sent, receive in buxomness;
Wrestling for the world asks for a fall;
Here is no home, here is but wilderness:
Forth pilgrim, forth! Forth beast out of your stall!
Know your country, look up, thank God of all.
Hold the high way and let your spirit lead:
And Truth shall deliver you, have no dread.

Texts Used in a motet attribute to Philippe de Vitry (1291-1361)

Florens vigor utciscendo
iuste vincens omnia
ad tibi fides loquendo
fastus ad supplicia
qui Aman genu flectendo
impediunt obsequia
causatori adherendo
fugiunt causaria
sicque falsum sustinendo
succumbit iusticia
Mardocheo detrahendo
preparant exidia
que in ipsos convertendo
sentient duplicia
cum iudex discuciendo
iusta dabit premia.

Floret cum vana gloria
novitatum presumpcio
ypocrisis iactancia
discordia contencio
ac inobediencia
pertinencie captio
procedit ex invidia
in prosperis afflictio
detractio et odia
nocensque susurratio
de proximi iniuria
iocunda exultacio
ex ira contumelia
exit et indignacio
clamor rixe blasphemia
mentis viget inflacio
profluit et accidia
foras mentis vagacio
mafcia pigricia
rancor et desperacio

from avarice flow
intrigue, treachery,
wickedness, perjury,
fraud and hardheartedness;
from gluttony come lust
and dulled sensation in taste;
from extravagance there result
buffoonery, garrulous,
empty merriment,

O growing power, justly victorious
over all in your vengeance,
in speaking for a day of judgment
you shall trust yourself to attain
the death penalty; they who by
bending their knee before Haman
debase proper observances, by
sticking with the adversary seek
to avoid all adversity; and thus
by sustaining falseness, justice
succumbs; by humiliating Mordecai
they prepare ruin, which they
will suffer doubly, as it turns
to befall themselves, when the
judge, in smashing them,
will bestow his just rewards.

Together with vainglory the impudence
of the latest events grows and flourish
as do hypocrisy, boastfulness,
dissension, disputatiousness,
and disobedience;
from envy follow
seizure of property,
affliction in prosperity,
slander, hateful and
harmful whispering, and
gleeful exultation at misfortune
befalling one's neighbor;
from anger arise
insult and provocation,
the clamor of strife, and blasphemy;
conceit flourishes;
disgust is spreading all over,
as are mental derangement,
malice, sloth
rancor, and despair;

manet ex avaricia
fallacia prodicio
iniquitas periuria
fraus cordis obduracio
ex gula inmundicia
sensus hebes in genio
scurrilitas leticia
vana cum multiloquio
sequitur ex luxuria

the distemper of this age, its
blindness, fickleness,
and inconsiderateness;
oh, horror-our glory will turn out
to be grievous ruin;
before God the odious love
of our flesh comes to naught.

huius mundi affectio
cecitas inconstancia
as inconsideratio
horror fulura gloria
gravis precipitacio
in deum peril odia
nostre carnis dilectio.

Elaine Barkin
Two Poems
by Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

A Night—there lay the Days between—
The Day that was Before—
And Day that was Behind—were one—
And now—'twas Night—was here—

Slow—Night—that must be watched away—
As Grains upon a shore—
Too imperceptible to note—
Till it be night—no more—

A slash of Blue—
A sweep of Gray—
Some scarlet patches on the way,
Compose an Evening Sky—
A little purple—slipped between—
Some Ruby Trousers hurried on—
A Wave of Gold—
A Bank of Day—
This just makes out the Morning Sky.

Lyle Davidson
Poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889)

I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day.
What hours, O what black hours we have spent
This night! what sights you, heart, saw; ways you went!
And more must, in yet longer light's delay.

With witness I speak this. But where I say
Hours I mean years, mean life. And my lament
Is cries countless, cries like dead letters sent
To dearest him that lives alas! away.

I am gall, I am heartburn. God's most deep decree
Bitter would have me taste: my taste was me;
Bones built in me, flesh filled, blood brimmed the curse.

Selfyeast of spirit a dull dough sours. I see
The lost are like this, and their scourge to be
As I am mine, their sweating selves; but worse.

Poem by Richard Crashaw (1612?-1649)

Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face.
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I dy in love's delicious fire.
O love, I am thy sacrifice.
Be still triumphant, blessed eyes.
Still shine on me, fair suns! That I
Still may behold, though still I dy.

Jesu, no more! It is full tide.
From thy head and from thy feet,
From thy hand and from thy side
All purple rivers meet.

Each blest drop, on each blest limme,
Is washt it self, in washing him;
Tis a gemme while it stayes here,
while it falls hence it is a teare.

Excerpts from poem by Robert Herrick (1591-1674)

Kill me not ev'ry day
Thou Lord of Life;...

If all mens tears were let
Into one common sewer, sea, and brine;
What were they all, compar'd to thine?
Wherin if thy were set,
Thet would discolour thy most bloody sweat

Thou art my grief alone,
Thou Lord conceal it not; and as thou art
All my delight, so all my smart;
Thy crosse took up in one,
By way of imprest, all my future none.

Nativity

by John Donne (1571 or 1572-1631)

Immensitie cloystered in thy dear womb,
Now leaves His welbelov'd imprisonment,
Where he hath made himself to his intent weake enough,
Now into the world to come;
But O, for thee, for Him, hath the Inne no room?
Yet lay him in this stall, and from the Orient,
Stars and wise men will travel to prevent
The effect of Herod's jealous general doome.
Seest thou, my Soule, with thy faith's eyes,
How he which fills all place, yet none holds him, doth lye?
Was not his pitie towards thee wondrous high,
That would have need to be pittied by thee?
Kisse him, and into Egypt goe, with his kinde
mother, who partakes thy woe.