

James Ostryniec, oboe

Witold Lutoslawski

Epitaph (1979)

Ralph Shapey

Sonata (1952)

both with Wanda Maximilien, piano

Ruth Crawford Seeger

Three Songs for alto, oboe, piano, and percussion (1930-32) with Patricia Berlin, mezzo-soprano, Paul Hoffman, piano, and Darr Armstrong, percussion

Charles Ives

Adagio Sostenuto (1902-1912)

with the Alard Quartet (Joanne Zagst and Donald Hopkins, violins; Raymond Page, viola; Leonard Feldman, cello) and Paul Hoffman, piano

Otto Luening

Legend for oboe and strings (1951)

with the Alard Quartet and David Rossi, bass viola

Witold Lutoslawski (b. 1913, Warsaw) studied piano and violin at the Warsaw Conservatory and mathematics at the Warsaw University. His international career includes teaching positions at Tanglewood, Dartington, the Stockholm Academy, Dartmouth College, and the Hochschule für Musik in Essen. Between 1959 and 1965 he served as a member and then as vice president of ISCM and has received honorary doctorates from the Cleveland Institute of Music and the Universities of Chicago and Warsaw. He holds two prizes from the Polish Composers' Union, three first prizes from the UNESCO competition, the International Koussevitzky Prize, the Ravel Prize, and the Sibelius Prize.

Epitaph was written as an affectionate tribute to the composer and pianist Alan Richardson (1904-1978) at the request of his widow. The composition presents a dramatic form through the contrast and struggle between the oboe and piano. A nine-note recurring motive in the oboe serves to unite the various sections, which display inventive textures, colors and articulations. A short homophonic presentation by the two instruments gives a simple and highly poetic conclusion to the composition.

Ralph Shapey (b. 1921, Philadelphia) began his musical studies at the age of seven. He studied violin with Emanuel Zetlin and composition with Stefan Wolpe. After serving in the Army during World War II, Shapey taught at the University of Pennsylvania, and, in 1964 joined the faculty of the University of Chicago, where he is Professor of Music and Music Director and Conductor of the Contemporary Chamber Players.

A person of strong artistic convictions and beliefs, Shapey suspended performance of his music in 1969 as a protest against what he considered to be the steadily deteriorating ethical standards in the musical world and the world in general. He reversed his decision in 1976 and since that time there has been substantial interest in his work among the public, performers, and the press. In 1982 Shapey was awarded the unique MacArthur Foundation Award for Creative Genius.

The *Sonata* for oboe and piano—along with sonatas by Stefan Wolpe and Gunther Schuller—ranks as one of the important contributions to the oboe literature by major 20th century composers. As with other compositions by Shapey from this period, the dominant principle used throughout the composition is repetition with variation; when an event is repeated either the motive is slightly altered or the setting changes so that the effect is new and fresh. The result is a thoroughly organized composition with a strong sense of direction.

The first movement is rhapsodic with sustained notes in the oboe and percussive harmonic punctuations in the piano. Both instruments present independent material which develops into a complex dialogue. The dialogue becomes fragmented as silences interrupt the flow and create a sense of suspended animation. A return of the opening material in a slightly altered form and accompaniment concludes the movement.

The second movement is a humorous *Scherzo* and *Trio*. In the *Scherzo*, syncopated accents punctuate a motoric rhythm. The *Trio* is more lyrical and contrapuntal, incorporating jazz-like elements, and a fleeting reference to the opening motive of Beethoven's Symphony No. 5. A modestly expanded reiteration of the *Scherzo* completes the movement.

In the slow movement, brief, concise motives are presented but, once heard, immediately evaporate into silences. The motives reappear, slightly altered and with harmonies built up of melodic intervals. The movement, with its simple gestures, sparse textures, and subtle instrumental color, is an austere contrast to the previous movements.

To complete the Sonata, Shapey delivers a movement of substantial proportions which contains references to the previous three. Two distinctive motives serve as building blocks which reappear in slightly altered forms, each time adding energy and direction to a complex rhythmic structure. The movement progresses to an extended coda, which uses an augmentation of the rhythmic motives, and ends with a protracted cadence of unresolved dissonance.

Ruth Crawford Seeger (1901-1953) attended the American Conservatory in Chicago, where she studied piano and composition and also taught. She studied composition in New York with Charles Seeger, who later became her husband. In 1930 she won a Guggenheim Fellowship, the first given to a woman for musical composition. In 1935, she moved to Washington where, in addition to her creative work, she made several thousand transcriptions of American folk music from recordings at the Library of Congress and composed piano accompaniments for some 300 of them. She edited or arranged eight volumes of folk songs, among them *American Folk Songs for Children*, and was co-editor with Charles Seeger of *Folksong: U.S.A.*, a publication by John and Alan Lomax. She also developed teaching methods for children utilizing folk music. Her other CRI recordings are CRI 247, 249, and 423.

Crawford Seeger's compositions are astonishing in their technical boldness, often anticipating the future avant-garde. The *Three Songs* exist in two versions: the version recorded here is for three instruments and voice; the larger version adds two ostinati groups—one composed of winds and another composed of strings. (The latter version was one of two works chosen to represent the U.S. at the festival of the International Society for Contemporary Music in Amsterdam in 1933 and is recorded on New World Records NW 285).

All three songs contain heterophony and polyphony in which there appears to be no relationship between the parts except mere proximity of time. Closer examination reveals a high degree of organization that binds together this non-coincidence. The *Three Songs* are based on a single dictated pitch organization.

Charles Ives requires no introduction as the first great prophet of American music. He was absorbed in the Concord Sonata and other large and complex works when, perhaps to relax his mind, he wrote the *Adagio Sostenuto*. It is a simple, thirteen-bar song for English horn accompanied somberly by sustained strings and piano.

Otto Luening (b. 1900, Milwaukee) has been an active flutist, opera and orchestra conductor, accompanist, and Professor of Composition at Columbia where he was Chairman of the Division of Music in the School of the Arts and a member of the Committee of Direction for the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center. Since 1952, he has worked in the field of tape and electronic music, several times in collaboration with Vladimir Ussachevsky.

Luening's more than 200 works in other categories include chamber music, symphonic works, an opera, "Evangeline," piano music, songs and choral works. His compositions have been played throughout the world and recorded on CRI 103, 219, 768, 334, 400, and elsewhere.

He is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters, a Trustee of the American Academy in Rome, and is a member of the Educational Advisory Board of the Guggenheim Foundation.

Legend, composed for Robert Bloom and the New Chamber Music Society, opens with a slow, narrative state rone played by the oboe over an independent rhythmic melodic string accompaniment. The tempo changes to *Allegro con spirito* - a dancelike section which begins with the strings. A lively imitative section, played by strings alone, is followed by a folksong-like oboe tune. A variation of the opening section followed by the dancelike section, now in a four beat meter, completes the composition.

James Ostryniec, internationally acclaimed oboe soloist and acknowledged master of contemporary oboe techniques, concertizes extensively throughout the United States and Europe. He has presented world premieres by such noted composers as Krenek, Cage, and Ussachevsky. His performances have been syndicated nationally by Parkway Productions and he has presented solo broadcasts for the West German radio, the Austrian radio, and the British Broadcasting Corporation. He has received grants from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Japan/United States Friendship Commission, and has recorded on Finnadar Records, Orion, Varese International, and on CRI SD 423.

Formerly the principal oboist of the Honolulu and Louisville Symphonies, Ostryniec is (1984) assistant principal oboist of the Baltimore Symphony. He is also a member of the governing board of the Chamber Music Society of Baltimore, Inc.

Wanda Maximilien began studying the piano at the age of six in her native Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and received her MS in performance at the Juilliard School. Her teachers were Adele Marcus and Nadia Boulanger, among others. Her interpretations of contemporary music, in recitals in and around New York and on CRI SD 404, 457, and 496, have been praised for their warmth, sensitivity, and commanding technique. She is Associate Professor of Music at the Mason Gross School of the

Arts of Rutgers University.

Patricia Berlin has appeared with the Atlanta Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Rochester Philharmonic, the Metropolitan Opera, the Munchner Opern Buhne, the Cincinnati Simmer Opera, and the Chautauqua Opera. She is chairman of the voice department at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati.

Paul Hoffman made his European debut at the Vienna Konzerthaus in 1973 and has appeared with Meet the Moderns, the Inter-American Festival, the Group for Contemporary Music, and the Sorbonne (Paris). Hoffman is assistant professor of piano at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University.

Daniel Armstrong has performed with the Dallas Symphony, the Oklahoma City Symphony, and the Pittsburgh Symphony, and is presently assistant professor of percussion at the Pennsylvania State University.

The Alard Quartet is one of the distinguished line of quartets to emerge from The Juilliard School of Music. It has premiered works by Shostakovich, Bartok, Penderecki, Laderman, Persichedi, Siegmeister, and others. The Quartet has performed in the leading festivals and concert halls of the world, has appeared as soloist with Andre Previn and the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Cincinnati Symphony, and the Denver Symphony, and has been featured on the American Music Festival of the National Gallery in Washington. Since 1962, the Alard has been Quartet in-Residence at Pennsylvania State University.

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(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)

Ruth Crawford Seeger

Three Songs

Rat Riddles

There was a grey rat looked at me with green eyes
out of a rathole

"Hello, rat," I said,
"Is there any chance for me
to get on to the language of the rats?"

and the green eyes blinked at me,
Winked from a gray rat's rathole.

"Come again," I said,
"Slip me a couple of riddles;
there must be riddles among the rats."

Prayers of Steel

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.
Let me pry loose old walls.
Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.
Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.
Drive me into the girders that hold a skyscraper
together.
Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central
girders.
Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through
blue nights into white stars.

In Tall Grass

Bees and a honeycomb in the dried head of a horse
in a pasture corner - a skull in the tall grass
and a buzz and a buzz of the yellow
honey-hunters.

And I ask no better a winding sheet (over the earth
and under the sun).

Let the bees go honey-hunting with yellow blur of
wings in the dome of my head, in the rumbling,
singing arch of my skull.

Let there be wings and yellow dust and the drone
of dreams of honey - who loses and remembers? -
who keeps and forgets?

In a blue sheen of moon over the bones and under
the hanging honeycomb the bees come home
and the bees sleep.

from **Carl Sandburg's** *The American Song Bag*