

## American Chamber Music

### **Matthew Greenbaum**

*Chamber Music* (1980)

Contemporary Trio (Susan Palma, flute; David Holzman, piano; Maxine Neuman, cello)

### **Lee Hyla**

*String Trio '81*

Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble (Janet Packer, violin; Anne Black, viola; Ted Moak, cello)

### **Elaine Barkin**

*Plein Chant* (1977)

Harvey Sollberger, alto flute

### **Stephen Jaffe**

*Centering* (1978)

Linda Quan and Curtis Macomber, violins

**Matthew Greenbaum** (b. 1950, New York City) studied composition with Stefan Wolpe, Mario Davidovsky, and Charles Dodge. He holds a Ph.D. from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, and has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, three fellowships to the Johnson Composers' Conference, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller grant which makes this recording possible. He writes:

"Tracing the preconscious associations that generate a musical work always yields curiosities. Consequently I was only slightly stunned when I discovered Francois Couperin, Webern, Thelonious Monk, the conductus, and a Beethoven cello sonata among other "repressed" presences in the "unconscious" of *Chamber Music*.

"I found in addition that the basic structural device of the work — the use of brief quasi-diatonic sequences, each obliterating the tonality of the previous one — was a pattern that lent itself to embracing this rather hectic variety of associations. These sequences create surface tension in the composition as well contributing to its form (the work's three sections may be read as a sonata, chaconne, and canon).

"Thus, preconscious selection was the first stage of composition, followed by the search for a structural process to accommodate the selection, and finally, the construction of large-scale forms which could successfully articulate the smaller elements in the design."

**Lee Hyla** (b. 1952, Niagara Falls, New York), grew up in Greencastle, Indiana. He studied composition with Malcolm Peyton and John Heiss at the New England Conservatory, and with David Lewin at S.U.N.Y. Stony Brook. He has been active in New York, Boston, and Toronto as a performer of new music, improvisation and rock and roll, and has had residencies at the MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, and the Ossabaw Island Project. His music has been performed throughout the U.S., Canada, and Europe, and two of his compositions, *Revisible Light* for solo piano and *Pre-Amnesia* for solo alto saxophone, have been recorded for Opus One Records. His recent work includes a chamber concerto commissioned by the Fromm Foundation for the 1984 Contemporary Music Festival at Tanglewood. He lives in New York City. He writes:

"The *String Trio* was written for Dinosaur Annex in 1980-81. The basic idea of the piece is the relationship of the relatively simple tune, heard in the violin as the piece begins, to its angular and dramatically contrasting accompaniment. The music develops through two minuet-like sections and one quiet variation of the tune, and is brought into focus by two literal returns to the opening, one occurring about a third of the way through the piece (after the first of the "minuets"), and the other arriving at the very end.

"*String Trio* is dedicated to the memory of my uncle, Sigmund "Sheik" Kubas."

**Elaine Barkin** (b. 1932, New York City) is Professor of Music at the University of California, Los Angeles and an 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). She has received grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the ISCM, the UCLA College of Fine Arts, and the Rockefeller Foundation (for residency at Bellagio). For the past several years she reports that she has been centering her energies upon a participatory exploration of an intimate, experiential music conceived directly out of interpersonal, home-bred, autonomous interactions. She writes:

"Fuzzy particles diffidently imprint their traces, unhurriedly stake out their territory, abundantly flourish in their articulate, recolored, suffused fluting and—once fully affirmed—recede in the flickering aftersound of their history.

"*Plein* (= full, not plain) Chant (= three 5-toned tune-shapes) was written in 1977 for Anahid Nazarian, who requested a 'special effects' piece for her senior recital at UCLA."

**Stephen Jaffe** (b. 1954, Washington, D.C.) lives in Durham, North Carolina where he is on the faculty at Duke University. He received his training in composition at the University of Pennsylvania, where his teachers were George Rochberg, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick, and in piano and composition at the Conservatoire de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland. In addition to a Premier Médaille from that institution, he has received the Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome, the Beards and BMI Prizes, a Nonesuch Commission Award and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, Tanglewood, and the Composers Conference. His works have been performed by such groups as the Orchestra Sinfonica della R.A.I. of Rome, the Da Capo Chamber Players, Orchestra Society of Philadelphia, Penn Contemporary Players, Gruppo Strumentale d'Oggi, and at the Grand Teton and Monadnock Music Festivals. He writes:

"*Centering* was written in the spring of 1918, and is, at about seven minutes, my shortest work to date. That spring I was very much concerned with the notion of economy in music. I was looking for clarity of design and expressive intensity without relying unduly on color, and it was with this in mind that I chose the relatively austere instrumental combination of two violins. The form of the work, too, reflects my concern with economy: it is a kind of mosaic resulting from the piecing together of shorter sections, all of which develop a single idea. Listeners will note the recurrence at different pitch levels of a kind of "drone" sound produced by playing the same pitch on two adjacent violin strings; these sounds chart the harmonic progress of the piece and provide a continuity between sections, while at the same time creating a second, discontinuous plane of development.

"The compressed lyricism particular to *Centering* probably reflects my response to New York's fine group of new music specialists — particularly the violin playing of **Linda Quan** and **Curtis Macomber**, which I heard for the first time at the 1977 Composers' Conference in Johnson, Vermont. This style of playing, with its powerful upbows, its variety of bowstrokes, plucked notes, and lyric intensity impressed me as something so physical, so visceral and intense yet completely lyrical and colorful; I must certainly have had it in mind when composing *Centering*. Linda and Curtis gave the work its first performance at the 1978 Composers Conference, and have performed it together and with other partners on many occasions since then."

**The Contemporary Trio** was formed in 1976 to explore the large body of recent works for flute, cello, and piano. Its repertoire has expanded to cover numerous classical works and the whole 20th century. It has given 11 World and American premieres and has performed to critical acclaim throughout the Northeast.

**Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble** (Scott Wheeler, artistic director) began in 1975 as an affiliate of the New England Dinosaur Dance Theater and has been independent since 1977. In addition to its annual Boston concert series, the group has been active in recordings, residencies, and concerts throughout the New England and New York areas. Its members, like all the other performers in this record, are much in demand as soloists and chamber music performers, and are among the leading performers of contemporary music.

**Susan Palma** is a member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, the American Composers Orchestra, Speculum Musicae, and Orpheus. She has recorded for CRI, New World Records, Nonesuch, and Columbia, and is on the faculty of the Mannes College of Music.

**Maxine Neuman**, internationally known soloist and chamber musician, has collaborated with many composers, whose works she has premiered and recorded. She is currently on the faculty of Bennington College, Vermont.

**David Holzman** studied with Paul Jacobs and Nadia Reisenberg while completing degrees at the Mannes College of Music and Queens College. He was a semifinalist in the 1981 International American Music Competition and is currently pianist with the Pierrot Consort and Assistant Professor at C.W. Post University. He can be heard on CRI.

**Harvey Sollberger**, composer and one of today's outstanding flutists, is a co-founder and conductor of the Group for Contemporary Music. In 1983 he joined the faculty of Indiana University.

*(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*