

## **DAVID CHAITKIN**

***Summersong for 23 wind instruments (1981)***

**Sylvan Winds, Arthur Weisberg, conductor**

## **CARMAN MOORE**

***Berenice: Variations on a Theme by George Frederick Handel***

**The Aeolian Chamber Players**

**David Chaitkin** (born 1938, New York City) is counted among the most lyrical of today's composers. He followed early experience as a jazz musician with studies at Pomona College and the University of California, Berkeley. His teachers included Luigi Dallapiccola, Seymour Shifrin, Max Deutsch and Andrew Imbrie.

In awarding him a Goddard Lieberson Fellowship, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters called his music "subtle, powerful creations of a knowing musical intelligence," and "works of delicate intricacy and realized originality." He has been honored by fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York Foundation for the Arts, as well as awards and commissions from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., the New York State Council on the Arts, ASCAP, Meet the Composer, the American Music Center, and the University of California's Ladd *Prix de Paris*. His orchestral music includes a *Symphony* and *Concerto for Flute and Strings*. His most recent work was commissioned by the Da Capo Chamber Players.

Other music by Chaitkin may be heard on CRI recordings: SD 345, *Etudes*, David Burge, piano; SD 493, *Seasons Such as These* with the Cantata Singers, John Harbison, conductor, and *Serenade* performed by the New York New Music Ensemble, Robert Black, conductor.

### *Notes on the Music*

"*Summersong*, in one movement, divides into two large sections, the first consisting of an extended melody, beginning *semplice* in unison clarinets, and continuing through many instrumental exchanges. The second half explores and develops more fully the timbral and textural contrasts inherent in the music, giving the brass a featured role. Repeated and varied fragments, growing into longer units, lead to a culmination where the flute enters with a line recalling the opening music, over brass accompaniment.

"Finding ever new instrumental combinations and textural settings was a great pleasure, in this most rich of ensembles. There was a special challenge in finding ways in which to give the 23 instrumentalists opportunities as soloists, rather than thinking of them primarily as members of sections. The influence of Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* will be recognized by many. The two works are virtually identical in instrumentation, while differing fundamentally in their construction: *Summersong* is achieved by sustained melodic and harmonic continuity; *Symphonies* moves through the juxtaposition of block contrasts."

—David Chaitkin

*Summersong* is dedicated to the composer's son, Nathaniel, and to the Sylvan Winds, who commissioned it and gave its first performance in 1981 in New York, with Arthur Weisberg conducting. It has enjoyed several performances since then, including one at the Tanglewood Festival of Contemporary Music conducted by Gunther Schuller.

The **Sylvan Winds** is a natural development of the **Sylvan Wind Quintet** founded in 1976. A New York based group, the Quintet has been actively performing throughout the metropolitan area and the Eastern United States. Currently in their eighth season, they offer a series of concerts at Carnegie Recital Hall, where they have made their home since 1983. Artists who have collaborated in concerts with the ensemble include Kenneth Cooper, Gerard Schwarz, Arthur Weisberg, Robert Sherman and the American Brass Quintet. They have appeared at the White Mountains Festival in New Hampshire and, by invitation, have presented outdoor, pre-concert wind serenades at the Mostly Mozart Festival in Lincoln Center since 1983. In 1985, the Sylvan Winds were invited to collaborate with the Mostly Mozart Festival Winds in a critically acclaimed, sold-out performance of Handel's Fireworks Music. They have been featured on New York City radio stations WNCN, WBAI, WQXR's "The Listening Room" and WNYC-FM's "Artists in Profile." The group has received recognition through support from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Sylvan Winds

Arthur Weisberg, conductor

Svetlana Kabalin, flute\*

Katherine Hoover, flute

Susan Carlson, flute

Mark Hill, oboe\*

David Rowland, oboe

Robert Both, English horn

Charles Neidich, clarinet'

Robert Yamins, clarinet

Steven Ilartman, clarinet

Charles McCracken, bassoon\*

Jeffrey Marchand, bassoon

Lauren Goldstein, contrabassoon

Melissa Coren, horn\*

Janet Uhrlass, horn

Richard Hagen, horn

Ann Yarbrough, horn

Thomas Lisenbee, trumpet

James Hamlin, trumpet

Lowell Hershey, trumpet

Terry Pierce, tenor trombone

James Scott, tenor trombone

C. Michael Richardson, bass trombone

Todd Kaufman, tuba

\*members of the Sylvan Wind Quintet

**Arthur Weisberg**, a virtuoso bassoonist as well as conductor, is currently on the faculties of the Juilliard School and the Yale School of Music. As a bassoonist, he has been a member of the Houston, Baltimore and Cleveland Orchestras and the New York Woodwind Quintet. A longtime champion of contemporary works, Weisberg founded the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble in 1960, which later expanded to what is now the Orchestra of the 20th Century. Weisberg conducted the New York Philharmonic in June 1983; he will be co-principal conductor of the Iceland Symphony Orchestra during the 1986-87 season. Weisberg has recorded for the Nonesuch, Desto, New World and Seraphim labels. He is featured on more than a dozen CRI recordings, performing or conducting works of Schoenberg, Wolpe, Argento, Martino, Moevs, Ung, Pleskow, Blumenfeld, Mayer, Macdougall, Blank, Hamilton, Cortes, Sydeman and Blackwood.

**Carmen Moore**'s compositional studies began in New York City after his graduation from Ohio State University, where his instruments had been French horn and cello. Intensive work in New York with Hall Overton led to advanced studies with Vincent Persichetti and Luciano Berio at the Juilliard School, from which he graduated with a Master of Science degree in 1967. By then Moore had not only become active in many experimental artistic projects at the Judson Memorial Church—renowned for its Judson Poets Theatre, Judson Gallery and Judson Dancers—but had also become a music critic and columnist for The Village Voice. His work as a critic, while almost exclusively concerned with new works and new artistic currents, has been stylistically as wide-ranging as has his large compositional output.

Moore's work includes traditional symphonic, chamber and choral works along with experimental intermedia works, music theatre and even popular songs. Among his symphonic compositions are a concerto for percussion and orchestra entitled *Hit*, which was commissioned by the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and the Nexus percussion ensemble, a three-movement symphony entitled *Wildfires and Field Songs* commissioned by the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, premiered on January 23, 1975 with Pierre Boulez conducting, and *Gospel Fuse* commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, premiered on January 22, 1975 with Seiji Ozawa conducting and featuring a quartet led by soul/gospel singer Cissy Houston. Moore's chamber music includes several works for mixed forces, several of these using synthesizers and/or tape. Within the chamber music boundaries and consistent with his cross-stylistic interest, he has assembled a multi-stylistic ensemble for which he functions as both conductor and principal composer. For the theatre, Carman Moore has composed scores for the Yale Repertory Theater, the Riverside Church Theater and for several Judson Poets Theater productions. Moore's own musical *Wild Gardens of the Loup Garou* was produced in 1982 at the Lenox Arts Center and by the composer himself at the Judson Memorial Church in 1983. This recording marks his debut on CRI.

#### *Notes on the Music*

"Having heard a rather unusual show of mine called 'Wild Gardens of the Loup Garou' presented in Greenwich Village in June 1983, Lewis Kaplan, the Aeolians' director and violinist, commissioned me to write something for the ensemble's 1984-85 season. I accepted happily and soon after launched into some sketches, but could make little headway because my head had recently been invaded by a great big gorgeous unhurried tune by Handel, a minuet theme from the opera 'Berenice.' It became clear that whatever I might be writing in the next stretch of time would have to make psychic room for that music of Handel.

"The six Berenice Variations therefore exist as six reactions to a theme as much as they do in the traditional sense as six calculated displays of compositional premeditation (though once the haunting was acceded to, that aspect of normal composerly behavior crept in too). The first variation is in the precise tempo appropriate to the original theme, employs much of the original's ground bass line, and, in a re-harmonization that offers parodies of Baroque ornamentation and even references to other works, presents a ghost of the theme but never the real thing. The second variation is played allegro vivace by violin and piano, and is based on a thoroughly disguised version of the original bass line, presented staccato on the piano against a similarly altered version of the main Handel theme in the violin part. The aggressive dash of this section then gives way to a lyrically pastoral kind of section featuring clarinet and cello. The two instruments seem to slip in and out of each other's shadows via unisons, octaves, and melodic imitations, all of which behave in analogy to the fact that Handel's Berenice theme exists here intact, albeit interwoven with my own notes to create the variation. The romantic mood of this movement is in response to a totally unresearched suspicion of mine—presumed from certain extravagantly lovely tunes from the Baroque master's complete oeuvre—that he either frequently found himself in love or frequently wished he were. The fourth variation features the piano in mini concerto stance. The flying triplet orientation of the rhythm is a genuflection to the show-off bravura style so typical of the traditional theme-and-variation form, going back at least to Handel himself, who wrote frequently in the form. At one point in the variation the Berenice theme emerges from the deep and then sinks back under the renewed charge of the piano. Next there follows a moody contemplation of Handel's theme scored for cello alone. Some may hear a passage or two of this music as a passing homage to Handel's great contemporary,

fellow organist, and German compatriot. The final variation moves to a jazz-like bass line, shared by bass clarinet and cello for a while and subsequently passed throughout the ensemble in counterpoint before it settles into the cello for the final surge. The fact that the Baroque basso continuo and the traditional jazz rhythm section were both created to accomplish the similar functions of propelling rhythm and maintaining harmonic order provided a tantalizing opportunity for me for a spirited and cross-referenced closing. In this final section also, the sense of this entire work as a set of variations trying desperately to evoke its theme is intensified, as bit by bit the Berenice tune tries to break through in several different ways. Finally out of the density of a partly aleatoric section which has risen to fairly hysterical heights, the theme—on tape as if floated in on time warp—pushes its way through and with each instrument joining in one at a time, closes the whole piece with a flourish of unanimity."

—Carman Moore

The **Aeolian Chamber Players** was formed in 1961 by Lewis Kaplan to present works for strings, winds and piano. The first permanent ensemble of its kind, the Aeolians have won international praise for their unique programs: included in the group's repertoire are the great trios of Beethoven, Brahms, Mozart and Bartok, as well as more than 100 contemporary works written for them. Bowdoin College, with which the group has been associated since 1964, has commissioned works for the Aeolians by such composers as Milton Babbitt, George Crumb, Mario Davidovsky, George Rochberg, Ralph Shapey and Yehudi Wyner. The group has toured extensively both in the United States and in Europe, and is the resident ensemble at the Bowdoin Summer Music Festival. The Aeolian Chamber Players have recorded for the Folkways and Columbia labels and may be heard on CRI recordings: SD 231, Rochberg: *Contra Mortem et Tempus*; SD 233, Crumb: *Eleven Echoes of Autumn*; SD 263, Robert Hall Lewis: *Divertimento for Six Instruments*; SD 273, Weisgall: *Fancies and Inventions* and *The Stronger*.

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(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)