

## **Edward Cohen**

### ***Quintet for Clarinet and String Quartet***

**Laura Flax, clarinet**

**The Atlantic String Quartet**

## **Eleanor Cory**

### ***Profiles***

**Allen Blustine, clarinet Chris Finckel, 'cello Aleck Karis, piano**

### ***Apertures***

**Aleck Karis, piano**

**Edward Cohen** was born in New York City in 1940. He studied composition with Irving Fine, Seymour Shifrin, Luigi Dallapiccola and Max Deutsch. His work has been recognized by awards such as the George Ladd Prix de Paris and the 1982 New Works Competition sponsored by the New England Conservatory of Music and the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities. He has had works commissioned by the Fromm Foundation, the Boston League-ISCM and Brandeis University. Having previously taught at Brandeis and Harvard Universities, Cohen is currently on the faculty of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

### *Notes on the Music*

The *Quintet* for Clarinet and String Quartet is in three movements, each longer than the preceding, The third, a slow movement, accounts for nearly half of the piece's length. The first movement is introductory. After a fragmentary opening the music builds quickly, then dissolves, with the tension of the climax still persisting. The second is a scherzo; fast and motoric, but subdued, with strings muted. At the end of this movement a full and sonorous climax is finally achieved and sustained, but is cut off and followed, after a pause, by an epilogue that is unexpectedly tranquil. The first two movements form a single span. Unsettled and continuous, they provide a setting for the serene and expansive third movement. The five distinct sections of this concluding movement alternate slow music with episodes that are more animated. The ending is quiet and joyous as the long arc comes peacefully to rest.

—Edward Cohen

### *Notes on the Performers*

Praised for her performances of classical as well as contemporary repertoire, **Laura Flax** has established herself as one of today's leading proponents of the clarinet literature. A former member of the San Francisco and San Diego Symphonies, Flax is currently a member of the Da Capo Chamber Players and the New York City Opera Orchestra. She is a frequent guest with the foremost chamber ensembles and orchestras in New York including the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble, Orpheus, the Brooklyn Philharmonic and the New York New Music Ensemble. She has performed over 50 world premieres and has had numerous pieces written especially for her, including works by Shulamit Ran and Joan Tower. Flax is on the faculty of Bard College. She has recorded for the New World and Nonesuch labels, and may be heard as a soloist on CRI recordings SD 419, Olan: *Composition for Clarinet and Tape*/SD 509, Ran: *Apprehensions*/SD 517, Tower: *Wings*.

Formed in 1975, the **Atlantic Quartet** has distinguished itself both for its virtuoso performances and its impressive repertoire of 20th century string quartets. "The performance was remarkable . . . there is a natural, human, breathing and altogether winning character in their playing." (Boston Globe). Currently, the Quartet enjoys the sponsorship of some of the most important organizations in contemporary music including the League of Composers-ISCM and the Composers Guilds of New York and New Jersey. The Atlantic Quartet may be heard on CRI SD 520, performing Sheila Silver's *String Quartet*.

On this recording, the Atlantic Quartet is:

Linda Quan, violin

Evan Paris, violin

Lois Martin, viola

Chris Finckel, cello

**Eleanor Cory** studied composition with Charles Wuorinen, Chou Wen-chung, Bulent Arel and Meyer Kupferman, receiving her doctorate from Columbia University. Her work has been recognized by awards and prizes including the Holly Bush Festival Commerce Bank International Composition Award, the American Composers Alliance Recording Award, the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts (CAPS), Yale University, the MacDowell Colony and the Bennington Chamber Music Conference and Composers' Forum of the East (Composer-in-Residence). Cory has taught at Yale University, Baruch and Brooklyn Colleges, the Manhattan School of Music and the New School for Social Research. She is currently president of the American Composers Alliance. Her works have been recorded on the Opus One and Advance labels, and may be heard on CRI SD 459, *Designs* performed by the Arioso Trio.

### *Notes on the Music*

The music in *Profiles* moves in and out of focus: sometimes obscure and mysterious, sometimes clear and direct. The first two movements, played without interruption, each start with slow, ethereal, low-register material. The first gradually broadens as the three instruments blend into a single cascading gesture, while the second turns into a clarinet and piano duo where romantic lushness is spiced with jazz-like harmonies. The final movement begins abstractly and ends very concretely in a thumping ostinato.

*Apertures* (1984) originated with a surge of energy. In the early stages of composition the entire piece was intense, driving and constant in the rapid turnover of its textures. The title grew out of the discovery that the piece needed openings or breathing spaces to allow the high energy material to diffuse. Hence the "apertures," the quiet, contemplative sections of the piece, were born. They introduce the listener to the active music in slow motion. The challenge for composer and listener alike is to transform material from dissonant to consonant, vertical to horizontal, rhythmically complex to simple, widely spaced to close together, without losing sight of the common harmonic and melodic sources that link them. The piece is in three large sections with an "aperture" at the end of each.

—Eleanor Cory

*Notes on the Performers*

Hailed as "a brilliant, versatile and musicianly young pianist" (*The Village Voice*), **Aleck Karis** is among the select few who can perform the music of his own time as persuasively as the music of the past. A champion of American music, he has presented works of Cage, Carter, Babbitt, Crumb, Davidovsky and Subotnick, among others. He made a highly successful recital debut in Sao Paulo, Brazil (1981) performing an all-Chopin program, and has since appeared throughout Europe, North and South America. He was awarded the Special Prize from the first Kennedy Center-Rockefeller Foundation International American Music Competition, a grant from the Fromm Foundation of Harvard University, and a Solo Recitalist Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. As a member of *Speculum Musicae*, he is an Associate in Music Performance at Columbia University.

Aleck Karis holds a Bachelor's degree in music composition from the Manhattan School of Music and a Master's degree in piano from the Juilliard School. His teachers include Artur Balsam, Beveridge Webster, and, since 1976, William Daghlian. Karis has recorded for the Bridge label, and may be heard on CRI recordings: SD 427, Tobias Picker: *Romance* (1978) with Linda Quan, violin; SD 463, Harvey Sollberger: *Angel and Stone* (1981) with Harvey Sollberger, flute; SD 518, Ursula Mamlok: *Panta Rhei* (1981) with Benjamin Hudson, violin and Chris Finckel, cello.

**Allen Blustine** has premiered dozens of new works for the clarinet, including Babbitt's *My Ends Are My Beginnings* and Martino's *Triple Concerto*. He is a member of *Speculum Musicae* and the Group for Contemporary Music. Blustine has been on the staff of the Composers' Conference (at Wellesley College) since 1966 and is currently on the faculty of Columbia University. He has recorded extensively for the Nonesuch, Columbia and Bridge labels, and, with the above groups, for CRI.

**Chris Finckel**, cellist, is widely respected for his performances of contemporary music. Currently he is a member of the Atlantic String Quartet, Parnassus, the New York New Music Ensemble and the North Country Chamber Players. Through these and other affiliations, he has participated in tours of Europe, Australia and the Far East, and in the premieres of the works of over 50 composers. As a soloist, Finckel may be heard on CRI recordings: SD 487, Ung: *Tall Wind* and SD 518, Mamlok: *Panta Rhei*.

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*(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*