

Musical Elements 10th Anniversary Recordings

Robert Beaser and Daniel Asia, Music Directors

Yehudi Wyner: *Passage I* (1983)

Malcolm Goldstein: *A Breaking of Vessels, Becoming Song* (1981)

Robert Dick, flute solo

Fred Lerdahl: *Fantasy Etudes* (1985)

Yehudi Wyner composes music, plays the piano and teaches, all of which he has been doing for a long time. His experience has been rather broad and varied: he has been music director for synagogues as well as opera companies; he has played the traditional song and chamber music literature as well as a substantial amount of twentieth-century music, and for the past twenty years he has been keyboard artist for the Bach Aria Group. His composition shows similar contrast, ranging from music for the theater to music for worship, from solo songs and instrumental pieces to large-scale compositions for voice and orchestra. Mr. Wyner received the Rome Prize in 1953, has garnered many honors, fellowships, awards and commissions, and was composer-in-residence for the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival in 1982. He taught and was head of the composition faculty at Yale University, and was Dean of Music at SUNY-Purchase from 1978-1982 where he is currently on the faculty. Since 1975 he has been on the regular faculty at the Tanglewood Music Center. Wyner's works have been recorded on the Pro Abe label, and may be heard on CRI recordings: SD 141, *Serenade for Seven Instruments* (1958) ensemble conducted by Werner Torkanowsky; SD 161, *Concert Duo for Violin and Piano* (1956) Matthew Raimondi, violin; Yehudi Wyner, piano; SD 306, *Three Short Fantasies* (1963-71) Robert Miller, piano; SD 352, *Intermedio* (1974) Susan Davenny Wyner, soprano; Yehudi Wyner, conductor.

Malcolm Goldstein, as composer/violinist, has been active in the presentation of new music and dance since the early 1960's: as co-founder/ director of Tone Roads Ensemble and as participant in the Judson Dance Theater, the New York Festival of the Avant Garde and the Experimental Intermedia Foundation. Since then, he has toured extensively throughout North America and Europe, presenting solo violin concerts and appearing as soloist with various new music and dance ensembles. His music has been heard at numerous New Music America festivals, the Brooklyn Philharmonic's 'Meet the Moderns' series, the Next Wave Festival of the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the Weiner Festwochen and Steirischer Herbst World Music Festival (Austria), the Westdeutscher Rundfunk Koln Horspiel Festival, 'Ear It Live: Festival of Jazz and Improvised Music (Canada) and the Fylkingen concert series (Sweden). His extensive work in improvisation and extension of sound/texture techniques has received international acclaim especially as focused on his "Soundings" improvisations for solo violin.

Fred Lerdahl (born 1943) grew up in Wisconsin and studied at Lawrence and Princeton Universities and at Tanglewood. He has taught at Harvard and Columbia Universities and is currently on the faculty of the University of Michigan. He has been in residence at the Marlboro Music Festival and at IRCAM in Paris. Lerdahl has received numerous honors, including the Koussevitzky Composition Prize, the Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters Award, a Guggenheim fellowship, the Naumburg Recording Award, and commissions from the Fromm Foundation, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Juilliard Quartet, the Spoleto Festival USA, the Naumburg Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and others. A number of his works have been recorded, on the Laurel label, and on CRI recordings: SD 319, *Piano Fantasy*, Robert Miller, piano and *String Trio*, Matthew Raimondi, violin; Jean Dupouy, viola; Michael Rudiakov, cello; SD 378, *Eros*, Beverly Morgan, mezzo-soprano with Collage

conducted by the composer; CD 551, *String Quartet No. 1* (1978) performed by the Juilliard String Quartet. In addition to composing, Lerdahl is an active music theorist and has published a book, with Ray Jackendoff, "A Generative Theory of Tonal Music."

Robert Dick (born in New York City) has studied the flute with Henry Zlotnik, James Pappoutsakis, Julius Baker and Thomas Nyfenger. He received his B.A. and M.M. in composition from Yale University, where he studied composition with Robert Morris, Bulent Arel and Jacob Druckman.

As both performer and composer, Dick's work has been widely heard and recognized; he performs as solo recitalist throughout Europe, Scandinavia and the United States, giving master classes on both continents. He has performed in Avery Fisher Hall, Merkin Hall and the Joyce Theater in New York, and in the concert halls of such European radio stations as Radio France in Paris and the ORF in Vienna. Dick has received grants and awards for both performance and composition from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Pro Musicis Foundation and the New York Foundation for the Arts. In addition to his solo concerts, Dick is a member of the New Winds, with composer/performers J.D. Parran and Ned Rothenberg. As a soloist, Dick has recorded for the GM and Lumina labels, and may be heard on CRI SD 400, performing his composition *Afterlight*, for solo flute.

Robert Beaser (born 1954, Boston MA), co-music director and conductor of Musical Elements, is also a composer. He earned a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Yale School of Music; he has William Steinberg and Arthur Weisberg and composition with Yehudi Wyner, Jacob Druckman, Earle Brown, Goffredo Petrassi and Arnold Franchetti, as well as with Betsy Jolas at Tanglewood.

In addition to conducting Musical Elements, both in their New York City concert series and on tour, Beaser is quite active and well recognized as a composer, having received numerous grants, prizes and prestigious commissions. His work has been recorded for EMI-Electrola; "Mountain Songs" recorded on the Musicmasters label, received a 1986 Grammy nomination.

Daniel Asia (born 1953, Seattle, WA), co-music director and conductor of Musical Elements, combines an active career as a conductor with an equally productive career as a composer. After receiving his B.A. from Hampshire College, Asia earned his M.M. from the Yale School of Music, where he studied with Jacob Druckman, Krzysztof Penderecki and Arthur Weisberg. From 1981-86, Asia was Assistant Professor of Contemporary Music and Wind Ensemble at the Oberlin Conservatory. In addition to conducting Musical Elements both in their New York City concert series and on tour, Asia's recent guest conducting appearances include the Washington Square Music Festival Orchestra, the Brooklyn Philharmonic, the Aspen Music Festival Chamber Orchestra, the Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and Reconnaissance. For his composition, Asia has received generous recognition in the form of awards, fellowships and commissions. Daniel Asia may be heard conducting Musical Elements on CRI SD 536, Martin Bresnick's *Wir Weben, Wir Weben*.

Established in 1977, **Musical Elements** is a contemporary chamber ensemble presenting an annual concert series in New York City. Through the commissioning of many new works and participation in the NEA Consortium Commissioning Program, as well as through the presentation of 24 world premieres, 39 New York premieres and 11 American premieres, Musical Elements has established itself as one of the most important new music ensembles in the New York area. Its program have been consistently praised by audiences and critics in such publications as *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *The Village Voice* and *the Music Journal*. Beyond its own concert series, it has performed in conjunction with the League of Composers/ISCM and at several universities in the New York area. This is Musical Elements' first full-length album on CRI; Musical Elements may be heard on CRI SD 536, performing Martin Bresnick's *Wir Weben, Wir Weben*.

Musical Elements:

for *Passage 1*

Keith Underwood, flute
James MacElwaine, clarinet
Chris Gekker, trumpet

Syoko Aki, violin
Lois Martin, viola
Julie Green, cello

for *A Breaking of Vessels, Becoming Song*

Robert Dick, solo flute
Keith Underwood, flute
Vicki Bodner, oboe
Charles Neidich, clarinet
Cynde Iverson, bassoon
Chris Gekker, trumpet
Daniel Asia, conductor

David Moss, percussion
Malcolm Goldstein, violin
Shem Guibbory, violin
Karl Bargan, viola
Julie Green, cello

for *Fantasy Etudes*

Keith Underwood, flute
David Krakauer, clarinet
Syoko Aki, violin
Robert Beaser, conductor

Karl Parens, cello
William Moersch, percussion
Elizabeth DiFelice, piano

Notes on the Music

Passage, Part I, was composed in 1983 to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Boston-based ensemble COLLAGE. The first performance, conducted by Gunther Schuller, took place in Boston in April, a few days after the score was copied and delivered.

Passage deals with vernacular elements, with utterly familiar musical material. A small collection of ordinary harmonies is set in motion in a manner reminiscent of American popular music of years ago. The harmonic web is surmounted and penetrated by strands and patches of melodic stuff, none of it really self-sufficient or substantial, but all of it conventional. It might not be misleading to compare *Passage* with an ostensibly bland street scene by Edward Hopper or an "American Flag" by Jasper Johns.

Passage I was conceived as the opening movement in a series of movements but succeeding music has not yet been completed. As it stands, *Passage I* runs just under 10 minutes.

—Yehudi Wyner

The music has to do with reflections on the breaking of vessels/shells ("kelipot")—with the release of sparks of creative energy—as referred to in the Book of Zohar, and on the "Perennial Question" of existence as posed in Charles Ives' "Unanswered Question." It is the process of sound events becoming articulate as phrase gestures, of a "Larger" melody implied.

It is an improvisation structure in which all of the participants (orchestral instrumentalists, conductor and flute soloist) play an active role in creating the dynamic flow of the music. The orchestra, working from a specially devised notation, progresses from a gamut of specified events to more tonally-designated timbre-modulation phrases. The flute part has no pre-written material at all, but rather uses the living sounds of the orchestra as the basis for the solo improvisation. It is a concerto, a "working-together," in which the soloist, responding, extending, combining and molding the orchestral performance, creates, within the ever-fleeting moment, the vision of communal song.

This piece was commissioned by Macalester College and was composed in 1981. The premiere performance was held at the college at that time.

—Malcolm Goldstein

Fantasy Etudes (1985) was commissioned with the support of an NEA consortium commissioning grant by Musical Elements, Alea III, the Arch Ensemble, and the Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago. The piece is scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion (one player), and piano. It is about 17 minutes long and is in one movement.

The form is built up from 12 interlocking "etudes," each having its own characteristic musical idea and texture. This sequential profusion of material results in an overall sense of "fantasy." Against this surface variety there exists an underlying similarity of procedure. Each etude is cast in the form of expanding variations: it starts with a simple event and progressively elaborates into complexity. Each time, as the material of an etude begins to collapse under the weight of its elaborations, a new etude enters. These overlaps produce moments of dramatic tension—changes, if you like, from one fantasy to another.

—Fred Lerdahl

This Recording was made possible by public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Additional funding was generously provided by the Oliver M. Ditson Fund of the University of Michigan and the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University.

Passage I: Produced by Daniel Asia - Recorded by Richard Lawson - Edited by Allan Tucker - Recorded at the State University of New York, Purchase, October 1985

A Breaking of Vessels, Becoming Song: Produced by Daniel Asia - Recorded by Richard Lawson - Edited by Allan Tucker - Recorded at the State University of New York, Purchase, October 1985

Fantasy Etudes: Produced by Robert Beaser - Recorded and edited by Craig Dory - Recorded at Kaufman Concert Hall of the 92nd St. Y, New York City, November 1986

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)