

CRI SD 556

Paul Alan Levi

Rolv Yttrehus

Brian Fennelly

Barney Childs

Paul Alan Levi

***Five Progressions for Three Instruments* (1971) 15:15**

Zizi Mueller, flute

Esther Lamneck, clarinet

Yuval Waldman, viola

Rolv Yttrehus

***Angstwagen* (1971) 5:05**

Janet Wheeler, soprano

Gordon Gottlieb, percussion

Daniel Druckman, percussion

Rolv Yttrehus, conductor

Brian Fennelly

***Tesserae II (Fantasy for Cello)* (1972) 10:40**

Fred Sherry, cello

Barney Childs

***A Question of Summer* (1976) 9:20**

Ruth K. Inglefield, harp

Ivan Hammond, tuba

Paul Alan Levi (b. 1941, New York City) and his wife, poet and librettist Toni Mergentime Levi, won the 1986 Grand Prize from the National Music Theatre Network for their opera Thanksgiving. Levi's commissions include works for the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, New York Choral Society, New York Chamber Symphony and the Music Today Series. Levi received his training at Oberlin College and the Juilliard School, where he studied with Hall Overton and Vincent Persichetti. He is a founding partner of Mountain Laurel Music, and supervised three of the recordings on this disk.

Levi writes: "***Five Progressions*** is my five-movement attempt to create music of magic and fantasy out of recalcitrant materials and techniques. Much of the drama of the music results from its (successful) struggle to break free of my original plans for it. The work features a wide spectrum of relationships between the players including cooperation, competition, deception, strife, equality and dominance. It is a dramatic and lyrical piece, often lingering over the delicious timbres available to this unique instrumental combination."

Rolv Yttrehus (b. 1926, Duluth, MN) studied harmony with Nadia Boulanger and composition with Ross Lee Finney, Roger Sessions, Aaron Copland and Goffredo Petrassi. His academic studies were completed at the Universities of Minnesota and Michigan. He has served on the boards of the League-ISCM, ACA, Guild of Composers (New York), and is currently President of the Composers Guild of New Jersey and Professor of Music at Rutgers University. Other recordings of Yttrehus' music on CRI include: *Quintet*, recorded by Speculum Musicae (SD-438) and *Sextette* (SD-438).

The text for *Angstwagen* is presented on the left below, followed by its modified retrograde on the right:

Angstwagen	Negav tsnya
geht langsam	masnyal theg
immer zu	uz remy

Translation: Anguish-wagon moves slowly ever onward. (Text by the composer)

Yttrehus writes: "The music interprets the text in the traditional manner, but in addition, the text and its retrograde are used as sound sources for a textural-timbral interplay between voice and instruments. Thus, the unvoiced "sss*Ti*" hockets with a small choked cymbal; the bussing of 'UZZZZ' blends with the buzzing rivets of the sizzle cymbal; and the soprano's 'Wu-Wu' mimics the vibraphone tremolo. The syllables of the text and its retrograde are combined in various ways throughout. The text is heard in its straight, unmodified form only at the end, where, after a melismatic "Angst," the remainder of the text is reiterated on a low A-flat as the instrumental textures thin out and fade away."

Brian Fennelly, (b. 1937, Kingston, NY) studied at Yale University with Mel Powell, Allen Forte, Gunther Schuller and George Perle. He is currently Professor of Music at New York University and has been active as an officer and board member of various organizations, including the League of Composers-ISCM and American Composers Alliance. Other releases of Fennelly's music on CRI include: *Wind Quintet* [CRI SD 318] and *Evanescences* [CRI SD 322].

Fennelly writes: "*Tesserae II* (Fantasy for Cello) was written in 1972 and premiered in New York by cellist David Moore. It is the second in a series of nine *Tesserae*, all virtuosic works for solo performers. The mosaic patterns to which the title refers applies to the permeation of motivic substance as well as sectional inter-relationships and aspects of twelve-tone structure. The form may be described as a series of 'strophes' separated by 'episodes'—the former are musically and expressively intense units of complex and expansive structure; the latter are expressively more relaxed and structurally less elaborate."

"The work divides into three groups of these units: the first group includes the rhapsodic first strophe, the following scherzo-like episode, and Strophe II (*Polifonia*). The second group is slow and songful, beginning *con sordino* and expanding lyrically. The strophe within has its own contrasting subsection which introduces playful *pizzicato* figures. The third group returns to faster pacing in Episode 3 (*giocoso*), which leads into the dramatic multiple-stops of Strophe IV. The work closes quietly with a summarizing coda."

Barney Childs (b. 1926, Spokane, WA) was self-taught as a composer. In his late twenties he began studying with Leonard Ratner, Carlos Chavez, Aaron Copland and Elliott Carter. His academic degrees include a BA and MA from Oxford (as a Rhodes Scholar) and a doctorate from Stanford. In addition to over 150 compositions, he has written articles on contemporary theory and esthetics. He has served on governing committees of the American Society of University Composers, is on the national advisory committee of the American Composers Alliance, and is an associate editor for *Perspectives of New Music*. Childs is a professor of composition at the University of Redlands in Southern California, where he also directs the New Music Ensemble.

A Question of Summer, written in 1976, was commissioned by Ivan Hammond. A section in the middle allows each instrument to play what is written at its own pace, the material drawing upon the jazz improvisation of trombonist Roswell Rudd and harpist Alice Coltrane. Returning to the tuba's opening *bel canto* style and the (perhaps ominous) rapping on the harp soundboard, the piece concludes, after what seems to be the final coming to rest, with a single up-flung gesture.

—Paul Alan Levi

American Composers Alliance (ACA) is proud to honor its member composers with the ACA Recording Award. A jury of peers is responsible for the selection of pieces, and artistic excellence is its highest criterion. The award serves to stimulate the careers of talented young composers and to call attention to the achievements of more mature members. This award reflects ACA's ongoing commitment to promoting the strong and diverse talents of living American composers.

—Eleanor Cory, President, ACA

Levi, Yttrehus and Fennelly works produced and recorded 1986 by Mountain Laurel Music. Paul Alan Levi, Executive Producer; Mark Lipson, Michael Mueller and Cathy Waldman, Producers.

Childs work recorded by Mark Bruce in the Electronic Music Studio, College of Musical Arts, Bowling Green State University.

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)