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David Diamond: *Symphony No. 4*

Peter Mennin: *Symphony No. 7 — “Variation-Symphony”*

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The symphony orchestra in the United States has enjoyed better than a century of health and growth, and this has bred a tradition of symphonic compositional activity that has been equally secure. In discussing the roots of all aspects of our serious-musical culture one inevitably returns to the Germanophilia Americans not only inherited but encouraged from the time of the first great waves of German immigration up to World War I (see the liner notes for New World Records' *Fugues, Fantasia, and Variations*, 80280-2; *Charles Tomlinson Griffes*, 80273-2; and *Aaron Copland: Piano Music*, NW 277). This legacy had its greatest and most lasting effect on the symphony. The founding of the great orchestral institutions in the nineteenth century—the Philharmonic Society of New York (1842), the St. Louis Symphony (1880), the Boston Symphony (1881), the Chicago Symphony (1890), the Cincinnati Symphony (1894), the Philadelphia Orchestra (1900)—was accomplished along lines native to Berlin, Leipzig, and Munich and by figures whose orientation had been fixed by German training and tradition. The conservatories established during and shortly after this period—Peabody (1860), Oberlin (1865), New England (1867), Cincinnati (1867), Chicago (1868), Juilliard (1904), and Mannes (1916)—were also Germanic in allegiance. If a promising young American composer did not actually go to Germany to study, he was still subject to Germanic influences in the schools and concert halls.

The result was not only that the dominant musical idiom was that of Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, and Dvořák but that the preeminent form in which that idiom would be couched was the Classical symphony as structured by Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The symphonies of John Knowles Paine, George Whitefield Chadwick, Frederick Converse, Arthur Foote, or Edgar Skillman Kelley—members in

good standing of the school of Boston Classicists—are works of the purest Teutonic stamp. More important, these men secured the symphony as the form in which serious American composers would operate—however, even the Boston Classicists eventually admitted other than German dicta. Henry Hadley (although educated in Vienna), Edward Burlingame Hill, and Daniel Gregory Mason brought the Paris of Vincent d'Indy to the shores of New England. Horatio Parker, one of the most gifted of the academicians and a pupil of Joseph Rheinberger in Munich, taught Charles Ives at Yale. And Ives, as much as he fought against all that was then alien to American musical utterance, composed four symphonies. At least three of these bear a good deal more than merely formal resemblance to the Dvořák or Brahms manner.

As other foreign influences arrived (“we are not only parrots but polyglot parrots,” Daniel Gregory Mason once wrote)—French Impressionism in the works of Griffes and the transplanted (he was born in Alsace) Charles Martin Loeffler, Nordic Romanticism in Edward MacDowell and later in Howard Hanson, or exotic orchestration in the style of Russian nationalism—the range of possible styles expanded to the point where even something of America could be heard. Of course, what is meant by “American” or an “American sound” is very much open to interpretation. It can be maintained that the very process of assimilation of everything foreign most nearly reflects the American ethos or, equally well, that only a demotic language based on unsophisticated, non-European elements—folk music, hymns, marches, blues, ragtime, jazz—can constitute a truly native musical expression.

This latter type of Americanism had made early appearances in the works of that grand Bohemian-American “primitive” Anthony Philip Heinrich (1781-1861), whose titles for his *soi-disant* symphonies are replete with American landscape, historic, patriotic,

and heroic references. To a certain extent, a proto-American idiom may also be found in the works of George F. Bristow (1825-1898), an early pillar of the Philharmonic Society of New York (he resigned from it briefly because he felt the Society “has been as anti-American as if it had been located in London during the Revolutionary War and composed of native-born British Tories...”); and in those of Louis Moreau Gottschalk (1829-1869), John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951), and Arthur Farwell (1872-1952).

In the 1920s, with the body of Ives’s composition already completed though not performed (yet representing a largely unassessed but potentially important resource), America became a crucible of musical activity. Ernest Bloch and Edgard Varèse brought more than European sophistication to New York: the former his guidance of future American composers as well as his own music, and the latter a leadership of the avant-garde. On one hand were the schools of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, on the other, that of Nadia Boulanger. On the West Coast, Henry Cowell developed a taste for tone clusters; in the East, figures like George Gershwin offered jazz at Carnegie Hall. Carl Ruggles spoke in gnomic, highly concentrated syllables; Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions wrote their first symphonies.

By the next decade it could be seen that the American symphony had emerged in good estate, especially among those composers who had abjured what Virgil Thomson terms “left-wing experimentalism.” In the 1930s Cowell became much more conservative, Copland had merely flirted with atonalism (and then dropped it until the 1950s), Roy Harris achieved a striking popular success with his Third Symphony, and Walter Piston, Samuel Barber, and William Schuman joined the ranks of those writing in the form. With the continued activity of the older conservatives and the flourishing of the orchestras themselves as a result of massive galvanizing federal support during the Depression years, the American symphony achieved an almost official position. In it one might no longer find the sound of Brahms or Dvořák, but one could sense their solidity. The symphony had become maturely American. It was what thoroughly trained, intellectually evolved, musically fluent composers wrote and what symphonic societies expected of them.

## *David Diamond—Symphony No. 4*

David Diamond first composed a symphony when he was sixteen and a student at the Eastman School in Rochester, New York. He has since written eight mature works in the form, and as of 1976 is at work on his ninth symphony. Lest one jump to the conclusion that Diamond is primarily a symphonist, the composer and teacher (at the time of writing, at Juilliard) also has a sizable output of ballets, theater and chamber music, and songs. David Diamond does not submit to easy categorizing either formally or stylistically, but

his protean accomplishments as a symphonist surely rank him as one of the most important American composers in the genre.

Diamond, born in Rochester on July 9, 1915, is the son of Austrian-Polish Jewish immigrants, his father a cabinetmaker, his mother a dressmaker. His family was actively involved in radical social issues: he remembers collecting funds and food for the imprisoned unionist and socialist Eugene V. Debs, and his mother’s friendship with the anarchist Emma Goldman, whose sister lived in Rochester. His was also a family that knew deprivation well before the Great Depression. In 1927 the Diamonds had to give up their Rochester home and move in with relatives in Cleveland. Earlier, however, the boy had begun to compose on his own invention of a four-line staff. (The composer adds: “I invented this method as early as 1921 or 1922. When I began violin studies—at Rochester’s Public School No. 9—I was confused by the four strings on the violin and the five lines in printed music; therefore I ignored the upper fifth line because I rarely got above first position on the violin at that time.”) In Cleveland, young Diamond received his first theoretical instruction from the Swiss André de Ribaupierre at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

The family returned to Rochester in 1929, and David experienced, along with the exhilaration of hearing orchestral readings and rehearsals at Eastman (where he studied composition with Bernard Rogers and violin with Effie Knauss), the discouragement of work that did not interest him: academic studies and practicing the violin and piano. His Eastman career overlapped his high-school days, which were spent miserably in a metal-and-woodworking course for which he showed little aptitude. Still, by 1933, the year of his high-school graduation, Diamond estimates he had composed about one hundred works. As a full-time student at Eastman, Diamond was also not totally contented with the conservative, even reactionary, attitude of Eastman’s director, Howard Hanson, and of some of his fellow students. In the fall of 1935, with Rogers’s blessing, he left Eastman and arrived in New York to begin work, on a scholarship, with Roger Sessions (“one of the great minds of today either within or without the field of music,” Diamond told a West Coast interviewer in 1949) and Paul Boepple at the Dalcroze Institute.

New York offered Diamond more of the same deprivation he had known upstate. He lived at the YMHA, mopped floors at Dalcroze to supplement his scholarship, and had to beg a custodian at the Y to allow him the nighttime use of a piano in an unheated practice room. Nevertheless, the young man quickly made contacts in the artistic Greenwich Village bohemian set of the day. Not only musicians showed interest in this articulate, candid, and fearlessly opinionated youngster (Diamond once told a fellow composer who complained to him that he had no public, “Well, you have no music”) but also artists and writers such as Willem de Kooning, Alfred Kreymborg, and E. E. Cummings.

Within a year of Diamond’s moving to New York, Cummings became directly responsible for the fulfill-

ment of a long-cherished dream: a visit to Paris. Diamond could not believe his good fortune when in July of 1936 he found himself both writing the music for a ballet, *Tom*, with a scenario by Cummings based on *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and being sent to Europe to consult with Léonide Massine, the proposed choreographer for the project. Although the ballet was never produced for lack of funds, the Parisian experience was a revelation. On this first trip and on a return visit two years later on a Guggenheim Fellowship (at twenty-three Diamond was then the youngest composer to have been so honored) he met the writer André Gide, the painter Chaim Soutine, the sculptors Jacques Lipchitz and Ossip Zadkine, and the composers Darius Milhaud, Albert Roussel, and (in 1936) his special idol, Maurice Ravel. He discussed the musical settings of poetry with James Joyce, and when he told Gertrude Stein how much he enjoyed knowing the Irish writer, he was tactfully snubbed on further meetings. He joined what Thomson calls "the [Nadia] Boulangerie" ("I rarely agreed with her, but she inspired me," Diamond has said). Boulanger brought him to see Igor Stravinsky, who listened to his music and pointed out an error in form in his orchestral *Psalm* (which later won the Juilliard Publication Award).

The world appeared totally altered for the boy from Rochester. Although he had already won the Elfrida Whiteman Award in New York for his *Sinfonietta* (now discarded), it was the Paris flowering that counted. If he had sincerely loved the hymn singing in the black Baptist church near his Rochester home, it was still the craftsmanship of Ravel and the Paris masters that captured his musical interests.

On receiving his first Guggenheim in 1938, Diamond returned to Paris for a third stay. By this time two of his heroes, Ravel and Roussel, had died; but Diamond was still so enamored of the French capital and its culture that he seriously thought of ignoring the German invasion, but the United States Consulate persuaded him to leave. The New York he found on his return was preparing for war and not concerned about young composers. On the surface Diamond suffered not at all from a lack of recognition, for he won another Guggenheim in 1942, the Ballet Guild Award the same year, the American Academy in Rome Cash Award in 1942 (for his *First Symphony* and *First String Quartet*), the Paderewski Prize in 1943, a \$1000 prize from the National Institute of Arts and Letters in 1944, and a commission that year from Dimitri Mitropoulos for *Rounds*, a suite for string orchestra that remains one of his best-known works. In addition, his *First Symphony* had been performed by the New York Philharmonic under Mitropoulos in 1941 and the *Second* by the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitzky in 1944.

After the prize monies had been spent, Diamond found himself without sufficient funds. And although he did not have to resort to such drastic measures as becoming a night-shift soda jerk in an upper Broadway drugstore (which he was forced to do in 1938, before his first Guggenheim Fellowship came through), he

nonetheless took a job playing violin in radio's *Hit Parade* orchestra from 1943 to 1945. (The same need caused him to play in theater orchestras several times later during his career, even after his reputation had reached international proportions; as late as 1956, having had to return from Italy because of his mother's final illness, he could be found in the orchestra of the Leonard Bernstein musical *Candide*.) One day, shortly before the United States entered the war, he encountered Béla Bartók, who was experiencing an equally problematic existence in New York. The Hungarian composer said how terrible it was for an American to have this kind of trouble in his own land. "With me it is different. For me it won't be too long."

"Mine was a miserable life then in the United States," says Diamond today. "I had no feeling of necessity to live here. I was considered a 'difficult' person. I could not work in an academic environment. At Columbia, for example, you had the reactionary [Daniel Gregory] Mason and after him the conservative [Douglas] Moore. I couldn't get on. I never understood what made it so difficult. Well, I was outspoken, and then it may have been the recommendations given to me. In certain circles a letter from Koussevitzky could be the worst thing. I never realized that Cummings had enemies. The *Second Symphony* is definitely a reflection of those days of the draft and rationing. It is a pessimistic work, though its last movement is optimistic and bright."

The *Second Symphony* much impressed Koussevitzky, and the protean maestro (whom Diamond credits with doing more for the American composer during his tenure with the Boston Symphony than any other single factor in our musical life) rated the work "an important contribution to American musical literature." The year 1945 saw the composition of both the *Third* (not performed until 1950) and *Fourth* symphonies. The latter was on a commission from the Koussevitzky Music Foundation and bears the required dedication, "To the memory of Natalie Koussevitzky—*Magni Nominis Umbra* [the shade of a great name]." The foundation gave Diamond \$500 and paid for copying the parts. Diamond recalls that 1946 was a traumatic time in his personal life, and as usual funds were a problem. He had no piano and was subletting an apartment on Fifty-eighth Street from the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů, whose upright and grand pianos were both useless. To help him proceed with the Koussevitzky commission, Mitropoulos lent him money, and James Fassett, the music commentator for CBS, let him work in his apartment. Diamond composed the symphony in the Fifty-eighth Street Apartment and later in a loft on Hudson Street.

Koussevitzky had asked for a compact symphony, and the *Fourth* runs only about eighteen minutes. However, it requires the largest orchestra of any of Diamond's symphonies. The composer's original idea was to make the initial movement a prelude to a large fugue. He abandoned this structural approach, although some material in the second movement derives from the fugue (the *Traviata* theme, Diamond smilingly suggests, and, indeed, there is an echo of Violetta's aria "Ah,

fors' e lui"). The work turned out to Diamond's satisfaction—he feels it has “the right balance of expressivity, melody, and spirited liveliness”—and it is perhaps his one symphony that has almost come to be included in the standard repertory.

Because of Koussevitzky's illness, the premiere of the Fourth did not take place until January 23, 1948, at which time the conductor was not the Russian but his protégé Leonard Bernstein, who became a defender of Diamond's musical virtues (“His music restates, in his own terms, the most lasting aesthetic values”). A month after the premiere, Edgar Schenkman conducted the Fourth with the Juilliard Orchestra in Carnegie Hall. The New York Philharmonic, under Bernstein, did not perform it until 1958. Howard Taubman in *The New York Times* wrote on that occasion:

The work concentrates a wealth of feeling. It conveys a sense of unhurried spaciousness while being admirably concise.... Its youthful ardor is unmistakable, despite the composer's confession that he was concerned at the time with theories of life and death. The undercurrent is grave but the vitality and freshness of ideas are compelling even when the surface means to be austere.

What Taubman called “theories of life and death” has created some misunderstanding of the composer's intentions. In the notes for the Boston Symphony program, Diamond mentioned reading Gustav Theodor Fechner, the German physicist and psychologist, but has since denied that there was any programmatic meaning in the symphony. He asserts that all his life he has been strongly influenced by what he has read and by his contacts with the literary world (“Even as a twelve-year-old I instinctively was drawn to [Alfred de] Musset and Julian Green”) but that specific literary content has no direct counterpart in his abstract compositions. He has no intention of having “the musical substance represent specific emotional reactions or conjure up programmatic fantasies. I have a horror of anything as prosaic as that, and since I have never known that method of musical conception, I can only say that the opposite is true. My emotional life and reactions to certain events and situations have worked hand in hand with purely abstract musical conception and manipulation of material, and it was always the material that remained foremostly important to me in my working stages.”

Diamond also denies that there is anything specifically American in the Fourth Symphony. “I think of myself, and always have, as an international composer. My background, from my family on, has seen to that. Well, perhaps the last movements of the Second and Fourth are more American in feeling. My fast movements do have it, as Copland has pointed out, but it is unintentional. I've always loved American folk songs, especially the marvelous sad ones—James Agee used to play sad Appalachian tunes to me—but I never quote (not even in *Rounds*), and I hate arranging folk tunes. I am part of the classical tradition. It is why I sought out Sessions and Boulanger when I could just as easily have gone to

Copland, Varèse, [Nicolas] Slonimsky, Ruggles, or Ives. I have always wanted to make my pieces as perfect as Ravel's. The word ‘perfect’ has always been in my vocabulary, though I am aware it is unattainable.”

Despite the unsettled climate of 1945, the Fourth Symphony radiates a good deal of optimism. The first movement, Allegretto, in rather strict sonata-allegro form, posits two themes: the first is placid and pastoral, the second, first heard in a solo oboe, carefree and lively, totally appropriate to the mood of the movement. The development section climaxes in a combination of both motifs. A return to the initial theme and a short coda complete the movement. The second movement opens with a slow passage of chorale-like dignity, leading to more lyrical material (andante) that is developed, again with thematic richness, to a summation of expansive tonal gestures. The third movement, Allegro, is a combination of a strongly contrapuntal scherzo and rondo forms featuring a large role for percussion. Of this movement Diamond has written:

I do not deny the fact that I have chosen materials... which are strongly contrasting in character... so that there are strongly dramatic flashes of an almost theatrical evocativeness. It is as though what seemed earthbound at the...at the end is leaved. What that force is... I leave to the listener's imagination to conjure up....

The Fourth Symphony belongs to Diamond's middle period. After his apprentice years, the experimental bias of his first mature works gave way to a more traditional, neoromantic manner. Beginning in the early 1950s, roughly about the time he won a Fulbright that led to a prolonged residence in Florence, his music indulges in a chromatic freedom that at first convinced many that he had thrown his lot in with serialism. “I have never used the twelve-note technique,” he has asserted, “and I do not believe there is any such thing as atonal music. There are tonal centers and poles and overtone systems in nature and in the well-tempered system.” Diamond also makes no secret of his hostility to aleatory devices, tape-and-live-music conjunctions, diagrammatic notation, and all the various paraphernalia that are synonymous today with the official avant-garde. “I don't see how music is going to serve the future,” he told an interviewer for his home-town newspaper when he was being celebrated and widely performed for his fiftieth birthday, “if young composers... are concerned with speculation and gimmickry, rather than with composing music that can uplift the spirits.... Music that does not nourish you spiritually is not music, only aural sensation.” His self-styled posture of “nonconformist traditionalist,” his belief in the power of melody and the eventual return to some sort of romanticism (“perhaps with the absorption of the twelve-note technique as used by Berg—not Schoenberg or Webern”), has put him at periods of his career outside the attention of America's musical establishment. Diamond, naming names and

affixing blame for his latest rebuffs, is obviously bitter about this, yet, as he says, "I am always being rediscovered—and the respect is constant."

## *Peter Mennin—Symphony No. 7 ("Variation-Symphony")*

One of David Diamond's many composing colleagues at Juilliard is Peter Mennin, the president of that institution since 1962. Like William Schuman, his predecessor in the post, Mennin spent a great deal of his life functioning as an administrator and a teacher; and, again like Schuman, as a composer he is primarily a symphonist, and has written eight works in that form. As conductor Walter Hendl, who led the New York Philharmonic premiere of the Third Symphony, noted, Mennin is a symphonist by nature, a composer for whom the large orchestra is a natural medium. "I like a big palette," Mennin says. "Small works don't feel as comfortable."

Peter Mennin grew up in a music-loving but not music-performing household in Erie, Pennsylvania, where he was born on May 17, 1923. (The family name was Mennini. Peter eventually shortened his to "Mennin" to distinguish himself from his older brother Louis, who is also a composer.) By the age of five Peter was studying solfeggio and piano; by six and a half, he had progressed to harmony and theory; by seven, to composition. Young Mennin waited only four years to try writing a symphony. Actually, he did not complete a first symphony until he became a composition student with Normand Lockwood at Oberlin. The year was 1942, he was nineteen, and it is so far his longest.

After wartime service in the air force and subsequent employment in a paper mill, Mennin did graduate work at Eastman—studying composition with Bernard Rogers and Howard Hanson and orchestration with Rogers. Although Mennin remained at Eastman to complete both his master's degree (1946) and doctorate (1947), his experience there, like Diamond's, was not altogether happy. He describes himself as having been a renegade (albeit a rather polished one who brought in his sketches in ink), as having "stopped off" at Eastman. Nevertheless, it was during this period—in 1945—that he completed his Second Symphony, which won the Joseph H. Bearns prize conferred by Columbia University. The Allegro movement of the work received the first George Gershwin Memorial Award, and Leonard Bernstein played it with the New York Philharmonic at the Metropolitan Opera House. Also in 1945, Mennin's *Folk Overture*, which, extraordinarily enough, contains no actual folk tunes—became his entree into the repertoire of several major American orchestras.

In the summer of 1946 he studied conducting with Koussevitzky at Tanglewood. In 1947 he wrote his Third Symphony (his Ph.D. dissertation), married, and joined the Juilliard composition faculty, where he remained for eleven years. By the time he reached thirty Mennin had written six symphonies. In 1958 he

was invited to become director of the Peabody Conservatory. While there he instituted the American Conductors Project and the Peabody Art Theatre, a training program for singers.

What this quick but steady success in the music world signifies in addition to the existence of a splendid talent is that Peter Mennin is a superb craftsman fully in command of his tools as pedagogue and creator ("I am concerned with having an unassailable technique," he has remarked). In Mennin's view the two sides of his activity are closely related, for if the ultimate objective of composition is performance, the same is true of the conservatory. "I have never been associated with a non-performing institution," he says, "and I believe a composer does himself a disservice when he is not in touch with performer. The act of performance brings music to life." Juilliard in the 1970s, with its emphasis in all its divisions on professional training for the performing experience, certainly bears out the Mennin philosophy.

Integrating the life of the academy with that of the composer as smoothly as he does may be Mennin's particular triumph. Some have judged it a victory of cold calculation, but certainly it would be nearer the truth to ascribe it to his enormous energy. Mennin's prolific output runs parallel to his success as an educator. When he became president of Juilliard a writer for the *Herald Tribune* commented:

The man fits his music. Dr. Mennin is friendly and charming, but no one can trifle with him. He knows what he wants and usually gets it. Whatever is placed in his charge is administered with imagination.

This estimate is faulty in that it carries over into his music an implication of diplomatic neutrality. A few years later, in a piece for *The New York Times*, Martin Mayer wrote:

There is not much in any of his seven symphonies that would flabbergast, say, Richard Strauss. All of them are what an older fashion would have called thoroughly composed—coherent, sonorous, written with fine sensitivity to the capabilities of the orchestral instrument.

What this misses, and what one seldom hears mentioned in any discussion of Mennin, are the dramatic fire and glowing lyricism that illuminate so much of his music. That the man knows technically what he is doing every inch of the way and that he is able to discuss his procedures so lucidly should not diminish for listeners the intensity of his expression. Mennin has declared "Music reflect the soul of the composer, and there *is* such a thing as soul." Too few have seen this as applicable to his own work.

Like Diamond's, Mennin's idiom is tonal and traditional; but from Mennin's point of view there are no clear antecedents. His mind has always operated independently. One may find something of Harris's long melodic line in his diction (in the finale of the Third Symphony,

Hendl points out, one of the melodies, when stated in its entirety, consumes fifty-seven bars) or Schuman's clarity in his formal structure, but Mennin admits no direct influence save possibly that acquired in his study of medieval and Renaissance music. "I am not the revering type," he said recently. "I revere pieces, not people."

Unlike Diamond, Mennin also sees himself as an American composer. What this means to him stylistically is a tendency toward an asymmetry and great flexibility of rhythm, melody, and structure. "For an American composer melodies will have unpredictable contours. The American mentality does not fit into neat categories." Mennin is very much opposed to the anonymous international sound that in the past generation became a hallmark of the avant-garde. "Fortunately, today younger composers are showing a stronger interest in being themselves, whereas only a while back having something to say was considered old-fashioned."

Because Mennin's creative mind operates best with abstractions ("I don't isolate myself from the world, but I don't let it engulf me either"), what he has had to say has been expressed most cogently in symphonic form. But for him "symphonic form" is a loose designation. "It is like a novel, as free as that. There is no such thing as bad form, only bad composers. A symphony can be anything, but it requires stamina. A symphony is not something that can be tossed off over a weekend. It is cultivated by those who believe in it. I've heard about the death of the symphony ever since I began composing. Then I had difficulty with my elders. I was told I was too young to write symphonies—mostly by people who never wrote them. To them it seemed a dead end."

At the core of the Mennin symphony lie structure, no matter how asymmetrical, and the conviction that what there is to be said is worth saying. The musical ideas must stand on their own, but, as Mennin has said, ideas in themselves are no more valuable than the composer's use of them. What interests him beyond the power of the germ itself is its expansion, the myriad guises it can assume. And implicit in the expansion is contrast, not only between the ideas but in the various ways they are handled. Perhaps none of his symphonies illustrates his procedures better or with more concentration than the Seventh, the *Variation-Symphony*. Here, in one movement divided into five sections, serenity abuts violence, the calmly beautiful is interrupted by frenetic agitation, the dramatic is brushed aside by ethereal repose. The variations are variations in all aspects: rhythmic and structural as well as harmonic and melodic. "In my work there has always been some element of violence," says Mennin, "and the element of contrast. Here they come out with a vengeance."

The first section of the Seventh Symphony, Adagio, begins with a growling ominous exposition in the cellos and double basses that is almost immediately relieved by a high tremolo in the violins, thus stating both the principal theme of the entire work as well as the basic concept of sudden and brilliant contrast. There is an intense buildup before the opening of the second section, a scherzo marked Allegro in which Mennin characteristically achieves excitement by an intricate deployment of orchestral choirs. The third section, Andante, begins with a metrically restless subdued dialogue between strings and woodwinds and ends with the principal theme developed into a full fugal climax. The fourth section, Moderato, makes additional variations on material again first heard in the cellos and basses, and again pits choir against choir to achieve new effects of sonic impressiveness. The brief final Allegro vivace opens with a repeated-note treatment of the prime motif and grows quickly to a climactic point of shattering reiteration.

The Seventh Symphony, like so much of Mennin's music, is the result of a commission, this one from the Association of Women's Committees for Major Symphony Orchestras. It was first performed by the Cleveland Orchestra (which had commissioned the piano concerto of 1958) under George Szell on January 23, 1964. Later in the season Szell played the work in New York with his home orchestra and in four concerts he guest-conducted with the New York Philharmonic.

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*The World of Paul Klee* (Jacob Avshalomov, Portland Junior Symphony) CRI 140.

### Peter Mennin

- Canto for Orchestra* (Max Rudolf, Cincinnati Symphony) Decca DL-7 10168.  
"Canto" and "Toccata" from *Five Pieces for Piano* (Grant Johannesen) Golden Crest GC-5-4065.  
*Canzona* (Frederick Fennel, Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble) Mercury MG-50084.  
Cello Concerto (Janos Starker; Jorge Mester, Louisville Orchestra) LOU S-693.  
*Concertato for Orchestra* (Hans Swarowsky, American Recording Society Orchestra) Desto 6416E.  
Piano Concerto (John Ogden; Igor Buketoff, Royal Philharmonic) RCA LSC-3243.  
String Quartet No. 2 (Juilliard String Quartet) Columbia ML-4844.  
Symphony No. 3 (Dmitri Mitropoulos, New York Philharmonic) Columbia ML-4902; rereleased on CRI SD-278.  
Symphony No. 4, "The Cycle" (Abraham Kaplan, Camerata Singers and orchestra) Desto 7149.  
Symphony No. 5 (Howard Hanson, Eastman-Rochester Orchestra) Mercury 75020; (Robert Whitney, Louisville Orchestra) LOU 613.  
Symphony No. 6 (Robert Whitney, Louisville Orchestra) LOU 545-3.

## ***the artists***

*Leonard Bernstein* is well known as conductor, composer, and author. He is Laureate Conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and was the Philharmonic's Music Director from 1958 to 1969. He has conducted major orchestras and opera companies in the United States and Europe. His compositions range from symphonic, choral, and chamber works to ballet and film scores and musical comedies. Through television programs and through his Norton Lectures, Mr. Bernstein has attained a reputation as an eloquent educator. He has made well over one hundred records, a good proportion of which include important scores by contemporary American composers. He may be heard as pianist in Aaron Copland's Piano Sonata on New World Records NW 277.

*Jean Martinon* (1910-1976) attended the Paris Conservatory, where he studied composition with Albert Roussel and conducting with Roger Desormière and Charles Munch. From 1951 to 1963 he was successively music director of the Concerts Lamoureux, the Israel Philharmonic, and General Music Director in Düsseldorf. In the fall of 1963 he was appointed Music Director of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He assumed directorship of France's Orchestre National early in 1968, and in 1974 he was named Music Director of the Resedentie Orchestra of The Hague. Martinon was also a distinguished composer, writing in all forms, from instrumental pieces to a grand opera (*Hecube*). During his career he made numerous recordings, the most recent of which include the complete orchestral works of Ravel and Debussy for EMI/ Angel.

*The New York Philharmonic* was founded in 1842. Among its more celebrated permanent conductors have been Arturo Toscanini, Artur Rodzinski, Dimitri Mitropoulos, Leonard Bernstein, Pierre Boulez, and, beginning with the 1977-78 season, Zubin Mehta. Since the 1930s the Philharmonic has made hundreds of recordings for Victor, and, since the 1940s, for Columbia.

*The Chicago Symphony Orchestra*, the third oldest symphonic organization in the United States, was founded in 1891 by Theodore Thomas. Its conductors have included Frederick Stock, Artur Rodzinski, Fritz Reiner, Jean Martinon, and Sir Georg Solti. The orchestra has made many recordings for the Victor, Columbia, Deutsche Grammophon, EMI/Angel, and Decca/London labels.

### **Side One**

**Total time 18:54**

DAVID DIAMOND: *SYMPHONY NO. 4*

1 Allegretto	5:46
2 Adagio	6:18
3 Allegro	6:42

*(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)*

The New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein, conductor  
(Recorded January 13, 1958; originally issued on Columbia MS 6089)

### **Side Two**

**Total time 26:28**

PETER MENNIN: *SYMPHONY NO. 7 ("VARIATION-SYMPHONY")*

*(publ. Carl Fischer, Inc.)*

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Jean Martinon, conductor  
(Recorded November 29, 1967; originally issued on RCA LSC 3043)

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