

JOHN ALDEN CARPENTER

New World Records 80321

Sea Drift

HENRY HADLEY

Scherzo Diabolique

DANIEL GREGORY MASON

Chanticleer (Festival Overture)

QUINCY PORTER

Dance in Three-Time

Daniel Gregory Mason, Quincy Porter, John Alden Carpenter and Henry Hadley believed in the conservation of traditional musical values, advocated contemporary music accessible to the concert public, and crafted compositions of the highest order. For them, abiding music, whatever modernisms it introduced, built on the examples of its predecessors.

They were active mostly during the first half of the twentieth century, when audiences in America were still relatively small and Europeans dominated music making and repertoire. The younger American colleagues of these four composers were embracing dissonant post-triadic styles, repudiating traditional practices, and refusing to entertain the concert public. To these young modernists, music that sounded euphonious failed to pass the test of up-to-dateness, and what pleased the larger public was seen as reactionary and tainted. They demanded individualistic and innovative statements, however eccentric and off-putting. And since World War II, in a time of clashing avant-garde ideologies and of audiences increasingly suspicious of all twentieth century music, the works of these four composers exist mostly as hearsay. They deserve better.

Daniel Gregory Mason (1873-1953)

Chanticleer Festival Overture

Mason was a composer, an educator, and a writer of books on music intelligible to the nonmusician. He was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, and was grandson to Lowell Mason, the noted educator; nephew to William Mason, the concert pianist; and son to Henry Mason, cofounder of Mason & Hamlin, the piano company. Mason's music teachers included the New Englanders John Knowles Paine (New World Records NW 206 and 262-263) and George Chadwick (NW 266) and the French composer Vincent d'Indy. Throughout most of his adulthood, he taught at Columbia University.

Mason prized mid-European, especially Brahmsian, romanticism and musical emotionalism that was polished and of dignified propriety. In his compositions, harmony is rich, melody sings expressively, yet structure is tightly controlled. His Americanism comprises the traditional sounds of New England and the Old South. He composed mainly chamber and orchestral works. Worth knowing are his Clarinet Sonata (1915), *String Quartet on Negro Themes* (1919), Second Symphony (1930), and Third Symphony (*Lincoln*) (1937).

Mason prefaces the score of *Chanticleer* (1926) with a motto from Thoreau's *Walden*: "I do not propose to write an ode to dejection, but to brag as lustily as Chanticleer in the morning, standing on his roost, if only to wake my neighbors." Above the opening measures is another *Walden* quotation: "All climates agree with brave Chanticleer. He is more indigenous even than the natives. His health is ever good, his lungs are sound, his spirits never flag." The overture opens cheerfully with loud insistent

string chords, assertive rhythms, and an exuberant first theme, resembling a sublimated cock's crow, in the trumpet. The sound is open, diatonic, and folksy Anglo-American. Shortly, dynamics soften and a second theme begins, more syncopated and chromatic than the first, and suggestive of American popular music. A quotation from Thoreau's *Winter* occurs here in the score: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, bless Him for wildness...and bless Him for hens, too, that croak and cackle." The two themes are developed and recapitulated in a classical sonata-allegro structure. Additionally, an integrative progression of five, sometimes six, block chords is heard throughout the work, often in a modal sequence. *Chanticleer* captures Thoreau's brisk mood with understandable and enjoyable music.

Quincy Porter (1897-1966)

Dance in Three-Time

Porter was born in New Haven, where his father was a professor at Yale University, and he first studied locally with Horatio Parker (NW 206, 247) and later with Vincent d'Indy and Ernest Bloch. He became an educator (Cleveland Institute of Music, Vassar College, New England Conservatory, and Yale) and a professional violist. Porter is best known for his chamber works, the ten string quartets in particular, but has also won respect for his orchestral compositions. Dignified melody mostly in conjunct motion, effortless polyphony, clear textures, and seamless structures are outstanding features of his music.

Dance in Three-Time (1937), for chamber orchestra, is firmly built by a skilled craftsman who has wedded French Impressionism to German *Durchführung* (sense of development). Two elements dominate the work, a brief opening horn call and a stepwise melodic answer in solo wind lines and in strings. After a climax, the melodic material recurs in expanded form and mingles now and again with the horn motive. A third section gives prominence to staccato rhythmic wind lines. Quickly a longer variant of the melodic motive builds up in the strings. Then the woodwinds also turn lyrical and combine with the motive first heard in the horn. The work concludes with a solo violin playing a new variant of the melodic theme, followed by a soft intonation of the horn call. No great drama or passion affects the music; lucidity and elegance are the aim. The piece succeeds by utterly charming the listener, not by overwhelming him.

John Alden Carpenter (1876-1951)

Sea Drift

Carpenter was born in Park Ridge, Illinois. His teachers were John Knowles Paine, Edward Elgar, and Bernhard Ziehn. From 1909 to 1936 he dedicated his working hours to his father's shipping-supply business in Chicago and his free time to musical composition. Picturesque whimsy, lively wit, and jazz-derived popular idioms are found in four of his most enjoyed works, the orchestral suite *Adventures in a Perambulator* (1914), the Concertino for Piano and Orchestra (1915), the ballet pantomime *Krazy Kat* (1921; NW 228), and the ballet *Skyscrapers* (1926). A sensitive melding of French art-song and American popular-song styles is found in his songs. Especially attractive are the cycles *Gitanjali* (1913; NW 247) and *Water Colors* (1918).

The mood of the impressionistic tone poem *Sea Drift* (1933) varies from meditative to rhapsodic to evocative. Whitman's sea poems in *Leaves of Grass*, grouped under the heading *Sea Drift*, were the inspiration for these seascapes, reveries, fantasies, and threnodies of loss and separation. The desire to write a sea piece had occurred to Carpenter as early as 1915, but every effort had proved unsatisfactory. He was, of course, aware of Debussy's *La Mer* and of the Delius and Vaughan Williams

compositions inspired by Whitman's poems. Then, in 1933, he finally completed his own sea composition. Despite the critics' diligent search for hints of Debussy, Delius, and Vaughan Williams, the composition sounds far more like itself than like any other work.

Sea Drift opens with quietly moving low strings. The main melodic motive is soon followed by a second motive in the oboe. These motives recur throughout the work, either as first stated or in inversion, retrograde, or retrograde inversion. There is no purely musical development; rather, these metamorphoses of the motives subtly modify their expressive implications. The impression is of an almost unvaryingly slow, melancholic, moody, vaguely defined "drift" from the first sound to the conclusion. Occasionally a climax wells up like a giant wave, but the music invariably subsides into quiet. A middle section, marked off by a harp arpeggio, exploits more open harmonies and a very altered redirection of the introductory motivic material. After the English horn plays a melody exploiting an inverted variant of the opening motive, the musical passages become more intensely lyrical. The strings lead the orchestra into a last climax before the music fades to silence.

Henry Hadley (1871-1937)

Scherzo Diabolique

During the twenties and early thirties, Hadley was a frequently-performed composer and a noted conductor both here and abroad. His orchestral programs consistently included American works. Hadley was born in Somerville, Massachusetts. He studied theory with George Chadwick in Boston and Eusebius Mandyczewski in Vienna. Colorful programmatic orchestral compositions were his forte, although he also wrote songs, chamber music, and stage works. Among his outstanding pieces are his Second Symphony (*The Four Seasons*) (1901), the tone poem *Salome* (1905), the orchestral rhapsody *The Culprit Fay* (1909), and the opera *Cleopatra's Night* (1918). The opera succeeded so well with the public that the Metropolitan Opera mounted it for two seasons. Hadley's stylistic characteristics include exotic sound, brilliant orchestration, warm melody, and, where appropriate, piquant modernisms.

The *Scherzo Diabolique* (1934), written for the Chicago World's Fair, stems from "a harrowing personal experience during a terrifying automobile ride at night, exceeding all speed limits," depicted in music recalling "the hazards of fast driving, the onrushing myriad headlights of approaching autos, the whirring and whizzing of cars as they pass." Ominous brass chords and short, swift, nervous phrases in woodwinds and strings abound; melody is absent; perfect cadences and stable tonal areas are avoided; the listener is kept in suspension until the end. The work is a persuasive trifle and should be enjoyed as such.

—Nicholas Tawa

Nicholas Tawa is Professor of Music at the University of Massachusetts and a cofounder of the Sonneck Society. He has written extensively on American music.

The Albany Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1931 as the People's Symphony of Albany, and was renamed the Albany Symphony Orchestra in 1935. The orchestra regularly performs contemporary American music in its subscription concerts; it is a five-time recipient of the ASCAP award for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music. They have also recorded George W. Chadwick's Symphony No. 2 and Horatio Parker's A Northern Ballad for New World (NW 339).

Julius Hegyi was trained at the Juilliard School. He has been Music Director of the Albany Symphony Orchestra since 1965, and received in 1983 the Alice M. Ditson Award from Columbia University for service to American music.

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Daniel Gregory Mason:

1- Chanticleer Festival Overture 12:58

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Quincy Porter:
2- Dance in Three-Time 9:18
(publ. American Composers Alliance)

John Alden Carpenter:
3- Sea Drift 15:24
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)

Henry Hadley:
4- Scherzo Diabolique 7:17
(publ. Carl Fischer, Inc.)

Albany Symphony Orchestra
Julius Hegyi, Music Director & Conductor

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