

FAYE-ELLEN SILVERMAN

New World Records 80355

**Restless Winds
Speaking Alone
Passing Fancies**

RALPH SHAPEY

**Kroslish Sonate
Concertante No. 1 for trumpet and 10 players with**

ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL CONTEMPORARY ENSEMBLE

STEPHEN MOSKO, conductor

DAVID SHOSTAC, flute

JOEL KROSNICK, cello

GILBERT KALISH, piano

CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

RALPH SHAPEY, conductor

RONALD ANDERSON, trumpet

Faye-Ellen Silverman (b. 1947) has been prolific throughout her career. She has written a wide variety of orchestral and chamber-music works, which have been performed by major ensembles throughout America and in Europe and Asia. Winner of the Parents League Competition at age 13, she received an award that included a Carnegie Hall performance of her piano work *Sunset and Twilight* (1960). A graduate of Barnard College, Harvard University, and Columbia University, she studied composition with, among others, Otto Luening, Vladimir Ussachevsky, Leon Kirchner, and Jack Beeson.

In Silverman's work, the harmonies are clear and inviting, the moods unambiguous, the orchestrations remarkably deft. Most of her works have been written for chamber ensembles (her large-scale orchestral scores include *Winds and Sines* [1981], and *Adhesions* [1987]). *Passing Fancies* (1985), whose patron, Paul Fromm, is remembered in the initials of its title, is a five-movement work played without pause. Each section is highly differentiated in mood, tempo, and orchestration; together they are parts of an integrated whole, "a narrative," according to the composer, "which will only make complete sense once the work has been heard in its totality."

Restless Winds (1986) is the second of Silverman's woodwind quintets, the first being *Windscape* (1977). Silverman has written that

In this short work, five different ideas--each with its distinct tempo, timbre, and melodic or gestural material--are intercut. No idea remains present for too long, however, since the winds are too "restless" to stay on a conventional course. The ordering of these ideas (which often vary with each appearance) is meant to seem unpredictable. The nonchalant bassoon material—a meandering melody that continually gets diverted--unifies the composition, however, via its appearance at the beginning, at the end, and within the work.

Among the most effective of Silverman's pieces is *Speaking Alone* (1976), which, like the *Three Movements for Saxophone Alone* (1971), *Memories* for viola (1974), *Oboesthenics* (1980), and *Volcanic Songs* for harp (1983), relies on individual virtuosity. A solo tableau for flute, this work calls for special effects such as harmonics and whistle tones, yet remains affecting in its simplicity.

Ralph Shapey (b. 1921), our most interesting iconoclast since Charles Ives, is a man of unyielding integrity whose music is uncompromising in its challenges both to audiences and performers and who, throughout his career, has studiously eschewed the trite and meretricious. Despite numerous public honors—among them a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1982—Shapey has never sought general accessibility or approbation. A composer of works with granitic textures and imposing profiles, Shapey is, to quote the historian Leonard Meyer, a "radical traditionalist."

Shapey's music has a palpable physicality. As noted in the *American Grove*, by 1958, when Shapey composed the orchestral *Ontogeny*, "he had begun to think of his music in relation to preconceived, concrete images." *Writing of Rituals* (1959), Andrew Porter mentioned how the work explores "central, unchanging images from different aspects, under different lights, against different backgrounds."

The Concertante No. 1 for Trumpet and 10 Players (1984) and the *Kroslish Sonate* (1985) both confirm Porter's perception. In the context of Shapey's total output, each piece consolidates an aspect of his interests. Most generally, these works are among the recent additions to the large and significant corpus for varied ensembles written by Shapey since 1946, the year of his first string quartet. Although he has composed large-scale works for orchestra, he has reserved most of his energies for smaller forces.

More specifically, the *Concertante* and *Kroslish Sonate* give evidence of Shapey's stylistic consistency through the years. His musical language, in these works as in works since the late 1950s, is an amalgam melding the serialism of Schoenberg (as filtered through Stefan Wolpe, with whom Shapey studied) with the instrumental brashness of Edgard Varese (whose music he has often conducted). Characterizing the music are rugged contrapuntal textures and a sense of taut, compressed expression. Yet despite similarities among them, each work is individualized in shape and in sound.

In Shapey's scores, structure is pellucid. The *Concertante* balances its outer movements against a central elegy, called Song. Furthermore, the Prologue to the first movement is set in equilibrium with the Epilogue of the third. Material heard at the outset returns at the end, albeit in modified fashion (as Porter suggests). At the start of the work a trumpet fanfare states a tone row, which is followed by an instrumental ritornello articulated in deliberate eighth notes; at the work's end, the trumpet solo recurs (and is echoed by its retrograde), but the ritornello which once followed is now reorchestrated and set against it as background. Finally, pervading and unifying the work is a dotted rhythmic motive. First heard in the percussion at the start of the opening movement Variations, it grows in importance throughout the score and is most fully realized at the beginning of the Rondo, where it is used soloistically and lends the movement its rhythmic impetus.

Unifying the *Kroslish Sonate* is a stately Maestoso characterized by dotted and syncopated rhythms. Heard at both the outset and end of the first and last movements, these austere motivic pillars frame a variety of more genial music, including a lyrical passage marked *bel canto* in the opening movement and a propulsive and frenzied quasi scherzo in the last. Here as elsewhere, Shapey's music (to quote Paul Fromm) gives "rugged expression to volcanic passions."

—George Gelles

George Gelles *was a Contributing Editor to the Britannica Book of Music, and wrote articles for the New Grove Dictionary. He is Executive Director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra in San Francisco.*

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Faye-Ellen Silverman

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Ralph Shapey

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SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Faye-Ellen Silverman

Oboesthenics. James Ostryniec, oboe. Finnadar 90008.

Ralph Shapey

(See also Selected Discography for NW 254 and NW 333.)

Configurations. Sophie Sollberger, flute; Robert Black, piano. New World Records NW 254.

The Covenant. Elsa Charleston, soprano; Contemporary Chamber Players of the University of Chicago, Ralph Shapey conducting. CRI SD 435.

Fantasy Variations. Maryvonne Le Dizes-Richard, violin; Jean-Claude Henriot, piano. New World Records NW 333.

Producers: Elizabeth Ostrow (Silverman works, Kroslish); Judith Sherman (Concertante)

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The Artists

*Restless Winds**

Anne Whaley, flute
Randall Wolfgang, oboe
Theodore Oein, clarinet
Philip Gottling, bassoon
David Wakefield, horn

*Speaking Alone**

David Shostac, flute

*Passing Fancies**

Nadine Asin, flute/piccolo
Randall Wolfgang, oboe
John Warren, clarinet/bass clarinet
Philip Gottling, bassoon
David Wakefield, horn
Chris Gekker, trumpet
Michael Powell, trombone
Jonathan Haas, percussion/timpani
Carole Cowan, violin
Nancy Hill, violin
Jeffrey Irvin, viola
William Grubb, cello
Lawrence Wolfe, bass
Stephen Mosko, conductor

*Recorded at the Aspen Music Festival, Colorado, by members of the Artist Faculty of the Aspen Music Festival and School, August 1986

Kroslish Sonate

Joel Krosnick, cello
Gilbert Kalish, piano

Recorded at the Sommer Center, Concordia College, Bronxville, New York, April 1987

Concertante No. 1 for Trumpet and 10 Players

Ronald Anderson, trumpet
Contemporary Chamber Players of the
University of Chicago
Carole Morgan, flute/alto flute/piccolo
Marc Fink, oboe/English horn
John Bruce Yeh, clarinet/E flat clarinet/bass clarinet
Peter Brusen, bassoon
Collins Trier, bassoon
Douglas Hill, horn
Peter Labella, violin

Sharon Polifrone, viola
Elaine Scott Banks, cello
Douglas Waddell, percussion
Ralph Shapey, conductor and music director

Recorded at Mandel Hall, Chicago, Illinois, April 1987

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Faye-Ellen Silverman

- 1- Restless Winds (5:20)
- 2- Speaking Alone (4:46)
- 3- Passing Fancies (16:39)
(in five movements, played without pause)

Ralph Shapey

- Kroslish Sonate
- 4- I. (5:31)
 - 5- II. (13:05)
 - 6- III. (5:22)

- Concertante No. 1 for Trumpet and 10 Players
- 7- Prologue (0:55)

- 8- I. Variations (2:39)
- 9- II. Song (2:07)
- 10- III. Rondo (1:43)
(II and III played without pause)
- 11- Epilogue (2:13)

This recording was made possible with a grant from the Fromm Music Foundation.

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