

WILLIAM SHARP, baritone
Winner of the 1987 Carnegie Hall
International American Music
Competition for Vocalists

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Works by

VIRGIL THOMSON

PAUL BOWLES

LEE HOIBY

RICHARD HUNDLEY

JOHN MUSTO

ERIC KLEIN

STEVEN BLIER, piano

American art song has traveled a long way from the parlors of 19th-century America. The turn of this century brought its adolescent rebellion in the iconoclastic hands of Charles Ives, followed by an impressive, if somewhat retrospective, era heralded by such composers as Bacon, Chanler, Nordoff, and early Thomson. But by mid-century, what should have been a time of full adulthood was instead a curiously fallow period (which Philip L. Miller attributes to composers abandoning melody and Ned Rorem attributes to singers, audiences, and benefactors abandoning the recital).

In the melting pot of 20th-century America composers have chosen many different paths, searching out inspiration in their European antecedents, American ancestors, New World folklore, jazz, and even the exotic East; they have tried a multiplicity of styles, from neoclassicism to atonality, from post-romanticism to dodecaphony. Ruth C. Friedberg, in her perceptive three-volume study *American Art Song and American Poetry*, observes that despite this eclecticism, three common elements permeate the American song: the endeavor to create the sound and feel of American speech (in all its permutations); the search for a new, uniquely American spiritual order; and, perhaps most strikingly, an impulse toward simplicity. Exercising what Friedberg call this "national artistic urge to cut away the dead wood," many of our finest lyric composers have found that all roads lead to the same place: the "mainstream" American art song, a self-contained piano-vocal work that strives to communicate the emotional life of a poem.

It is this discovery that has undoubtedly led to the current flowering of American art song. In the 1980s, the elder statesmen among our composers are finally coming into their own, and fresh young composers are emerging. Where songs were once, in the words of Ned Rorem, "an even less marketable commodity than squid eggs or poetry," today we see a growing band of sympathetic young interpreters, seminal (albeit modest) subsidy on the personal, public, and governmental levels, and small but enterprising presenters and recording companies dedicated to acknowledging and supporting this form. Thus, this album is more than a sampling of the American art song: it is a testament to its good health.

Virgil Thomson (b. 1896)

"Thomson has the gift to be simple; his notes come down where they ought to be, in the place just right," declared Andrew Porter. "But his simplicity is that of a master, not a naïf." The massive and

chameleon-like oeuvre of the by-now-legendary Virgil Thomson is rooted in his Missouri Baptist boyhood, couched in simple diatonic harmony, laced with high-church chant and popular-dance rhythms, and tempered by the Left-Bank aesthetics of early-20th-century Paris.

Thomson's operas and orchestral and chamber works have somewhat overshadowed his intriguing catalogue of songs. "At the Spring" (1955), is a poem by Jasper Fisher, first published in 1633. Its intention, on Thomson's part, is illustrative and comic, a kidding of the standard spring song. The spare, genteel contrapuntal accompaniment to "If Thou a Reason Dost Desire to Know" (1955) gains density and harmonic tension as it propels the song to its surprisingly sensual, almost graphic climax. "John Peel" (1955) celebrates the exploits of that early-19th-century Cumberland huntsman immortalized by his friend J.W. Graves. Thomson fits the poem out in hunting-horn style, with hearty arpeggiated triplets that, harmonized sparsely at first, broaden out into horn-choir sonority.

The sweetly confessional "Prayer to St. Catherine" (1959) is the last of four songs comprising *Mostly About Love*, a cycle on poems of Kenneth Koch. Witty strokes include Thomson's suggestion of tolling bells and his trenchant thumbnail sketches of Saints Nicholas and Joanna.

The mini-cycle *Two by Marianne Moore* (1963) utilizes a pair of texts by one of this century's most engaging poets. In "English Usage," Moore pillories "word diseases" that infect our language. Thomson gives this manifesto a spiky setting, and makes its startlingly serious closing couplet appropriately authoritative. "My Crow Pluto" sets out to satirize Poe's "The Raven." Moore chooses that bird's more prosaic cousin, the crow, as a vehicle for some virtuosic word-play. She mints an argot, "madinusa" (i.e., "made in U.S.A."), which she calls "pseudo Esperanto" and which sounds like a sort of guidebook Italian bloated with "o" vowels. Thomson clothes her whimsy in the grandiose operatic style he had used earlier for settings of Gertrude Stein's "Susie Asado" and "Preciosilla" (1927).

Paul Bowles (b. 1910)

Paul Bowles, sparsely represented on disc and known chiefly among a handful of recital-going cognoscenti, is American art song's best-kept secret. It is perhaps surprising to realize that Paul Bowles, the homespun composer of vigorous, witty, jazzy songs, is the same person as Paul Bowles, the broadly cultured author of dark, brooding, sprawling fiction. According to Ned Rorem, "His professional life has...been sliced cleanly in two, with no seeming connection between the pieces." After the publication of his highly successful first novel *The Sheltering Sky*, Bowles essentially forsook musical composition but, fortunately for us, not before producing an estimable body of intriguing songs, as well as music for plays, films orchestra, piano and chamber ensembles.

Bowles' intensely original idiom developed without the help of any formal compositional study. The restless New Yorker barely endured one semester at the University of Virginia before he set out for Paris, where he studied with Nadia Boulanger, Vittorio Rieti, Aaron Copland, and Virgil Thomson. Early on, he developed a peripatetic lifestyle, bouncing back and forth between Europe, Mexico, Morocco, and the U.S., and finally took up residence, more or less, in Tangiers in 1946.

Bowles is a master of texture and atmosphere, but the most arresting feature of his songs is their remarkable prosody. Said Thomson, "The texts fit their tunes like a peach its skin."

The earliest songs recorded here are two 1935 settings Gertrude Stein texts. "A young man who first made Gertrude Stein's acquaintance by writing engaging letters from America is Paul Frederick Bowles," reports the author in *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*. "Gertrude Stein says of him that he is

delightful and sensible in summer but neither delightful nor sensible in the winter....Gertrude Stein liked him immensely." Deciding that Bowles' middle name suited him better than his first name, Stein dubbed him "Freddy," and her solicitude toward him is evident in Bowles' musical rendering of her letter to him. The three verses of "April Fool Baby," on a typically eccentric Stein text, are separated by slaphappy dances. Though Bowles allows the final verse to become sentimental, he returns in the last three bars to business as usual.

"A Little Closer, Please" (1941) is the Pitchman's Song from William Saroyan's play, *Love's Old Sweet Song*. Beginning with a quirky recitative and evolving into a jaunty march, Bowles limns one of Saroyan's amiably anarchic antiheroes. "Secret Works" (1943) is a lush ballad redolent of the bittersweet harmonic language of Kurt Weill, on a text by the composer. "My Sister's Hand in Mine" (1945) is a song from *A Quarreling Pair*, a puppet play by the composer's late wife, Jane Bowles. The eerie verse is suffused with a surrealistic, dreamlike ambiance, underlined by an ostinato triplet figure for the piano. "Sleeping Song" (1946) is a tender strophic lullaby on an uncharacteristically paternal text by the childless Bowles. "Three" (1946) is set to a text by Bowles' friend Tennessee Williams. The terse, rueful poem, contrasting three loves, is framed in the singsong cadences of a children's rhyme, and Bowles treats it in a suitably reticent way.

Blue Mountain Ballads (1946) is easily Bowles' best-known musical work. The eponymous "Blue Mountain" is in a landscape of the mind, a mythical amalgam of the Deep South towns of poet Tennessee Williams' youth. "Heavenly Grass," the song of a down-home visionary, charting the course of a soul's journey from "a walk in heavenly grass" down to earth's "far" and "fast" pace, to an eventual return to the source. Within the folk-like transparent texture, Bowles juxtaposes modality with a gleaming G major. In "Lonesome Man," Bowles brings one of Williams' quintessential outcasts to pungent life. The syncopated ragtime figure in the accompaniment is derived from the rocking chair alluded to in the poem. "Cabin," the only song of the set cast in narrative rather than dramatic monologue form, is a tight little parable in which the cabin, ravaged by the elements, is a metaphor for ruined innocence. In "Sugar in the Cane," Bowles employs the syncopations and jangling octaves of ragtime, as well as blue notes, to conjure Williams' evocation of blues lyrics, saturated with innuendo and hot with possibility.

Lee Hoiby (b. 1926)

"The triads are a natural pleasure, like ripe fruit," says Lee Hoiby, "and why shouldn't we enjoy them?" For nearly four decades, Hoiby has cultivated a tonal vocabulary. The Wisconsin-born composer was encouraged to focus on vocal music by Gian Carlo Menotti, his teacher at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute. This advice has resulted in Hoiby's composing seven stage works, more than fifty songs, and more than a dozen choral works.

In "What If..." (1986), Hoiby heightens the haunting atmosphere of Coleridge's illusory fragment. "Jabberwocky" (1986) unfolds in episodic, quasi-operatic style, echoing the mock-heroic tone of Carroll's familiar verse. Both singer and pianist render onomatopoeic definition to Carroll's picturesque nonsense.

Richard Hundley (b. 1931)

Born in Cincinnati and raised in Kentucky, Richard Hundley was educated at the Cincinnati College Conservatory. In 1957 Hundley moved to New York City, and studied with Israel Citkowitz and William Flanagan. Although he has written a piano sonata and some chamber works, Hundley has concentrated his compositional efforts chiefly on vocal music.

Termed "an impassioned lyricist" by critic Thor Eckert Jr., Hundley employs a tonal harmonic vocabulary which places him directly in the lineage of romantic Lied. His gracious, singable works have won him such noteworthy champions as Betty Allen, Judith Blegen, Rosalind Elias, Anna Moffo, Paul Sperry, Teresa Stratas, and Frederica von Strade. "Sweet Suffolk Owl" (1979), a piquant miniature built on a handful of chords, hints at the reason for their enthusiasm.

John Musto (b. 1954)

The son of a jazz guitarist, John Musto spent his Brooklyn boyhood steeped in American popular music. He turned to classical music as a piano major at the Manhattan School of Music, and, sparked by his improvisational experiences in jazz, eventually gravitated toward composition. His output so far is dominated by songs, including settings of Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Eugene O'Neill, Dorothy Parker, and anonymous Elizabethan poets. Musto is presently at work on his first large piece, a piano concerto.

The song cycle *Recuerdo* (1987) was written for William Sharp and Steven Blier. Its title (Spanish for "remembrance") points out the unifying thread that connects the three disparate poems. "Echo" sensitively traces the contours of Christina Rossetti's mystical poem. In almost jarring contrast, "Recuerdo" is a romantic vignette of Millay's jazz-age New York. Finally, "A Last Song" is a lyrical elegy, rising to an impassioned peak, dedicated to the memory of Jeffery French, a friend of the composer, and set to a section of a Louise Bogan poem.

Eric Klein (b. 1960)

This album marks the recording debut of young New York composer Eric Klein. From New Haven, he attended Bennington College, where his principal instructors were Vivian Fine, Henry Brandt, and Jeffrey Levine. Klein's keen tandem interests in music and poetry first began to merge in art songs as early as 1975. He has completed more than fifty works to date, including settings of texts by Lewis Carroll, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and Dylan Thomas.

"Kidnap Poem" (1984) opens Klein's eight-song cycle *A Love Anthology*, which is comprised of ruminations by such diverse poets as Ginsberg, Whitman, and Rilke. In "Kidnap Poem" Klein captures, with propulsive rhythms and bluesy harmonies, the tangy uptown flavor of Nikki Giovanni's fanciful verse.

—Cori Ellison

Cori Ellison has written articles, program notes and translations for the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Opera, and Carnegie Hall.

Virgil Thomson:

1- *A Prayer to Saint Catherine*
(Kenneth Koch)

If I am to be preserved from heartache
and shyness
By Saint Catherine of Siena,
I am praying to her that she will hear my

prayer
And treat me in every way with kindness.

I went to Siena to Saint Catherine's
own church
(It is impossible to deny this)
To pray to her to cure me of my heartache
and shyness,
Which she can do, because she is a
great saint.

Other saints would regard my prayer
as foolish.
Saint Nicolas, for example.
He would chuckle, "God helps those who
help themselves,
Rouse yourself! Get out there and do
something about it!"

Or Saint Joanna. She would say, "It is
not shyness
That bothers you. It is sin.
Pray to Catherine of Siena." But that is
what I have done.
And that is why I have come here to cure
my heartache.

Saint Catherine of Siena,
If this song pleases you, then be good
enough to answer the prayer it contains.
Make the person that sings this song less
shy than that person is,
And give that person some joy in that
person's heart.

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2- If Thou a Reason Dost Desire to Know
(Sir Francis Kynaston)

If thou a reason dost desire to know,
My dearest Cynthia, why I love thee so,
As when I do enjoy all thy love's store,
I am not yet content, but seek for more;
When we do kiss so often as the tale
Of kisses doth out vie the winter's hail:
When I do print them on more close

and sweet
Than shells of scallops, cockles when
they meet,
Yet am not satisfied: when I do close
Thee nearer to me than the ivy grows
unto the oak: when those white arms
of thine
Clip me more close than doth the elm
the vine:
When naked both, thou seemest not to be
Contiguous, but continuous parts of me:
And we in bodies are together brought
So near, so near, our souls may know each
other's thought without a whisper:
yet I do aspire
To come more close to thee, and to be
nigher,
Know, 'twas well said, that spirits are
too high
For bodies, when they meet, to satisfy.

Two by Marianne Moor

3- *English Usage*
(Marianne Moore)

Make a fuss
and be tedious.

I'm annoyed?
yes; am

avoid "adore"
and "bore";

am, I
say, by

the word
bore, bored;

refuse
to use

"divine"
to mean

something
pleasing:

terrific color
for some horror.

Though flat
myself, I'd say that

"Atlas"
(pressed glass)

looks best
embossed.

I refuse
to use

"enchant,"
"dement";

even "fright-
ful plight"
(however justified)

or "frivol-
ous fool"
(however suitable).

I've escaped, eh?
am still trapped

by these word diseases.

No pauses,
the phrases

lack lyric
force;
sound caprick-like

Attic Afric
Alcaic

or freak
calico Greek.

(Not verse
of course)

I'm sure of this:

Nothing mundane is divine;
Nothing divine is mundane.

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4- *My Crow Pluto*
(Marianne Moore)

Of:

my crow
Pluto,

the true
Plato,

azzurro-
negro

green-blue
rainbow,

Victor Hugo,
it is true

we know
that the crow

"has wings" how-
ever pigeon-toed

inturned on grass. We do
(adagio)

Vivo-
rosso

"corvo";
although

con dizio-
nario

io parlo
Italiano-

this pseudo
Esperanto

which, savio
ucello,

you speak too-
my vow and motto

(botto e totto)
io giuro

e questo
credo:

lucro
e peso morto.

And so
dear crow-

gioiello
mio-

I have to
let you go;

a bel bosco
generoso,

tuttuto
vagabondo,

serafino
uvacceo.

Sunto,
oltremarino

verecondo
Plato, addio.

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5- *John Peel*
(John Woodcock Graves)

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay,

D'ye ken John Peel at the break o' the day,
D'ye ken John Peel when he's far away
With his hounds and his horn in the
morning?
For the sound of his horn brought me from
my bed,
And the cry of the hounds, which he oft-
times led,
Peel's "view halloo" would awaken
the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Yes, I ken John Peel, and Ruby too,
Ranter and Ringwood, Bellman and True;
From a find to a check, from a check
to a view,
From a view to a death in the morning.

For the sound of his horn brought me from
my bed,
And the cry of the hounds, which he oft-
times led,
Peel's "view halloo" would awaken
the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

Then here's to John Peel from my heart
and soul,
Let's drink to his health, let's finish the bowl;
We'll follow John Peel thru fair and foul.
If we want a good hunt in the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from
my bed,
And the cry of the hounds, which he oft-
times led,
Peel's view halloo" would awaken
the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

D'ye ken John Peel with his coat so gay?
He lived at Troutbeck once on a day;
Now he has gone far far away,
We shall ne'er hear his voice in
the morning.
For the sound of his horn brought me from
my bed,
And the cry of the hounds, which he oft-
times led,

Peel's "view halloo" would awaken
the dead,
Or the fox from his lair in the morning.

6- *At the Spring*
(Jasper Fisher)

At the Spring
Birds do sing;
Now with high,
Then low cry:
Flat, acute;
And salute
The sun, born
Ev'ry morn.
He's no bard that cannot sing
The praises of the flow'ry Spring.

Flora queen
All in green,
Doth delight
To paint white,
And to spread
Cruel red
With a blue
Colour true.
He's no bard that cannot sing
The praises of the flow'ry Spring.

Faithful loves,
Turtle doves,
Sit and bill
On the hill.
Country swains
On the plains
Run and leap,
Turn and skip.
He's no bard that cannot sing
The praises of the flow'ry Spring.

Pan doth play
Care away.
Fairies small,
Two foot tall,
With caps red
On their head
Dance around
On the ground.

He's no bard that cannot sing
The praises of the flow'ry Spring.

Richard Hundley:

7- *Sweet Suffolk Owl*

(Anonymous Verse, 1619)

Sweet Suffolk owl, so trimly dight,
With feathers, like a lady bright,
Thou sing'st alone, sitting by night,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

Thy note, that forth so freely rolls,
With shrill command the mouse controls;
And sings a dirge for dying souls,
Te whit, te whoo! Te whit, te whoo!

Lee Hoiby:

8- *What if...*

(Samuel Taylor Coleridge)

What if you slept?
And what if in your sleep you dreamed?
And what if in your dream you went to
 heaven and there plucked a strange and
 beautiful flow'r?
And what if when you awoke, you had the
 flower in your hand?
Ah! What then?

9- *Jabberwocky*

(Lewis Carroll)

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought-
So rested he by the Tumtum tree
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffling through the tulgey wood,
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two! And through and
through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Eric Klein:

10- *Kidnap Poem*
(Nikki Giovanni)

ever been kidnapped
by a poet
if I were a poet
I'd kidnap you
put you in my phrases and meter
you to Jones beach
or maybe Coney island
or maybe just to my house
lyric you in lilacs
dash you in the rain
blend into the beach
to complement my see
play the lyre for you
ode you with my love song
anything to win you
wrap you in the red Black green
show you off to mama
yeah if I were a poet I'd kid
nap you

("Kidnap Poem" p. 27 from *The Women and the Men* by Nikki Giovanni. Copyright ©1970, 1974, 1975 by Nikki Giovanni. Reprinted by permission of William Morrow and Company, Inc.)

Paul Bowles:
Blue Mountain Ballads

11- *Heavenly Grass*
(Tennessee Williams)

My feet took a walk
In heavenly grass
All day while the sky shone clear as glass,
My feet took a walk
In heavenly grass.
All night while the lonesome stars
 rolled past,
Then my feet come down to walk on earth
And my mother cried
When she give me birth.
Now my feet walk far
And my feet walk fast,
But they still got an itch for heavenly grass.

12- *Lonesome Man*
(Tennessee Williams)

My chair rock-rocks by the door all day
But nobody ever stops my way,
Nobody ever stops by my way.
My teef chaw-chaw on an old ham bone
An' I do the dishes all alone,
I do the dishes all by my lone.
My feet clop-clop on the hardwood floor
'cause I won't buy love at the hardware
 store,
I don't want love from the mercantile store.
Now the clock tick-tocks by my single bed
While the moon looks down at my sleepless
 head,
While the moon grins down at an ole fool's
 head.

13- *Cabin*
(Tennessee Williams)

The cabin was cozy
And hollyhocks grew
Bright by the door
Till his whisper crept through.
The sun on the sill was yellow and warm
Til she lifted the latch for a man or a storm.
Now the cabin falls to the winter wind

And the walls cave in where they kissed
and sinned.
And the long white rain sweeps clean
the room
Like a white-haired witch with a long
straw broom!

14- *Sugar in the Cane*
(Tennessee Williams)

I'm red pepper in a shaker,
Bread that's waitin' for the baker.
I'm sweet sugar in the cane,
Never touched except by rain.
If you touched me God save you,
These summer days are hot and blue.

I'm potatoes not yet mashed,
I'm a check that ain't been cashed.
I'm a window with a blind,
Can't see what goes on behind.
If you did, God save your soul!
These winter nights are blue and cold!

(Tennessee Williams: *In the Winter of Cities*, © 1946 by G. Schirmer, Inc. Reprinted by permission of
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15- *Sleeping Song*
(Paul Bowles)

Baby, baby, who's my love?
Who's gonna shut those eyes?
Who's the one that's always good?
Who never cries?

Baby, baby, don't wake up.
It's lovely where you are.
Daddy'd like to go with you
Ever so far.

Baby, baby, lying there,
You look mighty small.
Wonder if the Lord looked down,
He'd see you at all.

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16- *April Fool Baby*
(Gertrude Stein)

It seems to be a note to she the sweet
sweetie
But actually it's April Fool to tender she
My sweetie
She is all me my sweetie
April full of fool which is me for my sweetie

Dear April which made she to be
All to he
April Fool to his sweetie which is she
Tenderly excessively sweetly
My April Fool baby

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17- *A Little Closer, Please (The Pitchman's Song)*
(William Saroyan)

The words for this song are from Love's Old Sweet Song by William Saroyan. © The William Saroyan Foundation.

18- *Three*
(Tennessee Williams)

One I kept
Two I lost
Three is shelter'd under frost.

One I tired of
Two still wanted.
Three the starry meadows haunted.

One was faithful
Two was clever
Three stayed in my heart forever.

(Tennessee Williams. In the Winter of Cities. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp.)

19- *Letter to Freddy*
(Gertrude Stein)

My dear Freddy,
I did not answer sooner because being a
little troubled about you I wanted to see

Harry first. Now I have and as it seems that
you are really not well don't you think it
would be best to come to Paris where you
can be looked after, and then we all can
decide what you ought to do. You poor
boy, it's bad to be all alone and I do think
that you had better come here, don't you?
Always,
Gertrude Stein

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20- *Secret Words*
(Paul Bowles)

Far within your face I saw the night
And in the night I saw the stars
And then the stars became your eyes
Awaiting secret works from me
But that can never, never be
Because I know the night has sealed
your heart.

Oh, sing a song of lands where we might
 have wandered, long, long ago.
Sing a song of days when the earth
 was younger
Days we'll never know.

Far within the night I heard the sea,
And on the sea I heard the wind
And then the wind became your voice
Entreating secret words from me
But this shall never, never be.
The dark has sealed your heart.

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21- *My Sister's Hand in Mine*
(Jane Bowles)

I dreamed I climbed upon a cliff,
My sister's hand in mine.
Then searched the valley for my house
But only sunny fields could see
And the church spire shinning.
I searched until my heart was cold

But only sunny fields could see
And the church spire shining.

A girl ran down the mountainside
With bluebells in her hat.
I asked the valley for her name
But only wind and rain could hear
And the church bell tolling.
I asked until my lips were cold
But wakened not yet knowing
If the name she bore was my sister's name
Or if it was my own.

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John Musto:

Recuerdo

22- Echo

(Christina Rossetti)

Come to me in the silence of the night;
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes
 as bright
As sunlight on a stream
Come back in tears,
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

O dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter
 sweet,
Whose wakening should have been
 in Paradise,
Where souls brimful of love abide
 and meet;
Where thirsting longing eyes
Watch the slow door
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live
My very life again though cold in death;
Come back to me in dreams, that
 I may give
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:
Speak low, lean low,
As long ago, my love, how long ago.

23- *Recuerdo*
(Edna St. Vincent Millay)

We were very tired, we were very merry--
We had gone back and forth all night on
the ferry.
It was bare and bright, and smelled like a
stable--
But we looked into a fire, we leaned across
a table,
We lay on a hilltop underneath the moon;
And the whistles kept blowing, and the
dawn came soon.

We were very tired, we were very merry-
We had gone back and forth all night on
the ferry;
And you ate an apple, and I ate a pear,
From a dozen of each we had bought
somewhere;
And the sky went wan, and the wind came
cold,
And the sun rose dripping a bucketful of
gold.

We were very tired, we were very merry,
We had gone back and forth all night on
the ferry.
We hailed "Good morrow, mother!"
to a shawl-covered head,
And bought a morning paper, which
neither of us read;
And she wept, "God bless you!" for the
apples and pears,
And we gave her all our money but our
subway fares.

("Recuerdo" by Edna St. Vincent Millay. From *Collected Poems*, Harper & Row. c 1922, 1950 by Edna St. Vincent Millay. Reprinted by permission.)

24- *A Last Song (In memoriam Jeffery French)*
(Louise Bogan)

Goodbye, goodbye!
There was so much to love, I could not love
it all;
I could not love it enough.

Some things I overlooked, and some I
could not find.
Let the crystal clasp them
When you drink your wine, in autumn.

(Excerpt from "After the Persian" from *The Blue Estuaries* by Louise Bogan. Copyright © 1951, 1968 by Louise Bogan. Used by arrangement with Farrar, Straus & Giroux, Inc.)

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Paul Bowles

Blue Mountain Ballads. Donald Gramm, bass-baritone, Richard Cumming, piano. Desto D411-12/DST 6411-12.

Five Songs. Paul Sperry, tenor, Irma Vallecillo, piano. GSC 105.

"Once a Lady Was Here," Song of the Old Woman." Donald Gramm, bass-baritone, Donald Hassard, piano. New World 80243.

Lee Hoiby

"Anatomy Lesson and Scene" from *Summer and Smoke*. William Parker, baritone, William Huckaby, piano. New World 80305.

Night Songs. Carolyn Heafner, soprano, Lee Hoiby, piano. CRI 50462.

Richard Hundley

"The Astronomers," "Come Ready and See Me." Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano, Martin Katz, piano. Columbia Masterworks Im 37231.

"For Your Delight," "Postcard From Spain." John Reardon, baritone, Bliss Hebert, piano. Serenus SRE 1019/SRS 12019.

Four Songs. Paul Sperry, tenor, Thomas Muraco, piano. Serenus SRS 12078.

Ten Songs. Paul Sperry, tenor, Irma Vallecillo, piano. GSC 105.

Virgil Thomson

Four Songs From William Blake. Mack Harrell, baritone, Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor. CRI 398.

The Mother of Us All. Santa Fe Opera, Raymond Leppard conducting. New World 80288/289.

Praises and Prayers. Betty Allen, mezzo-soprano, Virgil Thomson, piano. CRI 207.

"Prayer to St. Catherine." Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano, Martin Katz, piano. Columbia Masterworks IM 37231.

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WILLIAM SHARP, baritone, was winner of the 1987 Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition. He has appeared as soloist with the New York Philharmonic, the St. Louis Symphony, the Mostly Mozart Festival, and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, among others, and in recital at the Library of Congress. He has also participated in the Aspen Music Festival, the Colorado Music Festival and the Marlboro Festival. His opera credits include appearances with the Minnesota Opera, the Chicago Opera Theatre, and New Haven's Long Wharf Theatre. Sharp gave his New York recital debut in 1983 at the 92nd St. "Y." That same year, he was the recipient of the highest prize in the prestigious Geneva International Competition for Singers. He has recorded for Vox-Turnabout, Newport Classics, Columbia, Nonesuch, and CRI.

Steven Blier, piano, first came to prominence as pianist and arranger for the noted cabaret singer Martha Schlamme. Since then, he has appeared in recital with Evelyn Lear, Roberta Peters, Gianna Rolandi, John Cheek and Jan Opalach, among others. His repertoire also includes blues, ragtime and stride piano works by composers ranging from Copland to Eubie Blake. Blier's Collaboration with William Sharp goes back ten years, and culminated in their first prize performance at the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition. Currently on the faculty of SUNY-Purchase, he is also founder and co-artistic director of the New York Festival of Song.

The Carnegie Hall International American Music Competitions were created to focus attention on the large repertoire of recital music written by American composers since 1900. By rewarding distinguished performers of this repertoire, the competitions were designed to interest performers, students, and teachers in this music; by presenting the first-prize winners (and the winning programs) in public appearances and concert tours, it is hoped that audiences and managers will come to regard this music as part of the standard repertoire, a literature still dominated by pre-twentieth-century European music.

Since 1981 the Competition has been sponsored by Carnegie Hall, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation. It was formerly known as The Kennedy Center/Rockefeller Foundation International Competition for Excellence in the Performance of American Music.

This is the ninth album in the series of recordings by the first prize-winners, presenting selected repertoire from the program that is not otherwise available on disc.

Preliminary rounds of the 1987 Competition for Vocalists were held in Chicago, London, New York, and San Francisco. The judges were Charles Bressler, Thomas Grubb, Nan Nall, Marni Nixon, and William Parker. The semifinal and final rounds, held at Carnegie Hall in New York, were judged by Jan DeGaetani, Ellen Faull, Paul Hume, Gerard Souzay, Paul Sperry, Benita Valente, and John Wustman.

The second prize winner was Mary Ann Hart, and Carl Halvorson won third prize.

This recording was made possible with a grant from the Carnegie Hall International American Music Competition, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation.

William Sharp, Baritone
Steven Blier, Piano

Virgil Thomson

- 1- A Prayer to St. Catherine (2:37)
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
- 2- If thou a Reason Dost Desire to Know (2:35)
(publ. Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc.)

Two by Marianne Moore

- (publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
- 3- English Usage (1:59)
 - 4- My Crow Pluto (1:59)
 - 5- John Peel (3:15)
(publ. Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc.)
 - 6- At the Spring (1:25)
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Richard Hundley

- 7- Sweet Suffolk Owl (1:30)
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Lee Hoiby

- 8- What if... (3:09)
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
- 9- Jabberwocky (4:42)
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)

Eric Klein

- 10- Kidnap Poem (3:01)
(© Eric Klein)

Paul Bowles

- Blue Mountain Ballads
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
- 11- Heavenly Grass (2:24)
 - 12- Lonesome Man (1:10)
 - 13- Cabin (1:46)
 - 14- Sugar in the Cane (1:23)
 - 15- Sleeping Song (1:57)
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 - 16- April Fool Baby (1:40)
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 - 17- A Little Closer, Please (1:28)
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 - 18- Three (1:37)
(publ. Hargail Music Press)

- 19- Letter to Freddy (1:23)
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
20- Secret Words (2:27)
(© Paul Bowles)
21- My Sister's Hand in Mine (1:15)
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John Musto
Recuerdo
(publ. Southern Music Publishing Co., Inc.)
22- Echo (6:22)
23- Recuerdo (4:17)
24- A Last Song (2:25)
(in memoriam Jeffery French)

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