Modern music is not what it was. From the refreshingly relaxed viewpoint of the 1980s, what was once hailed as avant-garde now decidedly derrière. The traditions of Western music are regaining their status as patrimony, and tonality itself has taken on new life. In Jacob Druckman's words, “This is a very exciting transition moment in music—the looking backward. It is the first sign of release.”

Of the three composers recorded here, it is Jacob Druckman (born in Philadelphia in 1928) who has changed the most in his approach to composition. After years of involvement with serial techniques, it was in Windows (winner of the 1972 Pulitzer Prize for music) that he began to readmit elements of the musical past into his work. Since then, pieces like Mirage (1976) and Aureole (1979) have played with materials borrowed, respectively, from Debussy and Bernstein. The more distant past, in the shape of the 17th-century Italian composer Pier Francesco Cavalli, has provided a jumping-off point in several other works.

Scored for a fairly large orchestra, including electric piano and electric organ, Chiaroscuro was commissioned by Lorin Maazel and the Cleveland Orchestra in honor of the United States Bicentennial, with the help of a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts. It received its first performance on April 14, 1977, just four weeks after the score was completed. Here the influence of the Italian past is metaphorical, rather than specifically musical.

The titles of Druckman's works—Incenters, Windows, Aureole, Prism—often display an interest in visual or spatial concepts. This time, he set out to give musical expression to the Italian Renaissance sense of chiaroscuro—chiaro means “clear” or “light,” oscuro, “obscure” or “dark.” The effect is gestural, strongly atmospheric, full of sudden flashes of color and lowering banks of shadow. Putting aside traditional formal patterns, the composer creates a cogent replacement for them through his keen sense of music as an art that subsists in time: the “light” and “dark” elements are placed, now in simultaneous juxtaposition, now in telling isolation, in the shape of individual timbres and sharply differentiated modes of vibration.

Aftertones of Infinity, commissioned by the American Composers Orchestra, was completed in November 1978, and premiered by Lukas Foss and the American Composers Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall in New York City on January 29, 1979. In this work, which won Joseph Schwantner (born in Chicago in 1943) the 1979 Pulitzer prize for music, the time element takes center stage in a fascinatingly paradoxical way. Indeed, the very title is a paradox, combining as it does the notion of infinity with the notion of “after”-ness. Schwantner has fashioned a piece with passages of suspended animation
alternating with others where the rapid succession of chords or the onslaught of dynamic percussion create a poetic illusion—but only an illusion—of movement.

In such a style, “slow” and `fast” are equally illusory. There is something of the rapt mysticism of Olivier Messiaen in this music, with its tintinnabulating processions flecked with high harmonics. its gnomic outbursts of solemn, statuesque brass, its recurrent “celestial choir” passages sung by the orchestra members, and its telling use of tuned crystal glasses—“You can hear them,” Schwantner observes, “but you can't put your finger on the sound.” The piece takes its shape from a poem, written by the composer himself, a “kind of ‘creative generator’” that provides “a wellspring of extramusical images and ideas to which I would attempt to find appropriate musical analogues.” But instead of the specifically Roman Catholic imagery favored by Messiaen, it is the pantheism of a Whitman or a Coleridge that Schwantner's lines evoke:

Dreams from a dark millennium—
        empyreal visions, vague myriad tendrils floating
        on an eternal voyage,
        journeying primordial pathways
        through cosmic cauldrons,
        to afterworlds beyond the edge of
        forever.
        celestial voices echo the lost dreams
        of the children of the universe—
        the aftertones of infinity.

Stephen Albert, born in New York City in 1941, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1985 for his symphony RiverRun, completed the previous year. Albert's work sounds more obviously distant from old fashioned serialism than does that of his two colleagues. His brush with serialism was perhaps less intense, and certainly his rejection of it more rapid, than theirs. While he shares their readiness to take inspiration from extramusical sources—several of his works are settings or interpretations of James Joyce—it is his revitalization of thematic melody and traditional rhythmic articulation that makes his music more immediately accessible to a lay listener. But though Into Eclipse is classical in its sense of musical time, the direct way it moves from point A to point B should not prevent us from noting the subtleties of Albert's style. His blend of diatonic harmony with expressive chromatic inflections and of irregular rhythms with ostinato figures, striking a nice balance between dynamic and static elements, creates a language of vivid ritual feeling that is especially apt to his subject here.

Based on Seneca's Oedipus in an adaptation by the modern English poet Ted Hughes, Into Eclipse spans an expressive range, from agitation and horror to the self-blinded king's eventual inward-turned resignation. A song cycle laid out in five movements, it was composed in 1980-81 and also exists in a version for tenor and chamber ensemble. The full orchestral version recorded here was premiered on September 8, 1986 by Gary Lakes with Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony; it was revised in January 1989.
—Bernard Jacobson
Bernard Jacobson, a former music critic for the Chicago Daily News, is program annotator and musicologist for the Philadelphia Orchestra, and author of The Music of Johannes Brahms and Conductors on Conducting.

LUKAS FOSS has been music director of the Brooklyn Philharmonic since 1971. Previously he was music director of the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Milwaukee Symphony; he was also a professor of music at UCLA. He studied composition with Paul Hindemith and conducting with Fritz Reiner at the Curtis Institute and with Serge Koussevitzky at Tanglewood. An outspoken advocate of contemporary music, Foss has conducted most of the leading orchestras in the United States and Europe.

LEONARD SLATKIN has been music director of the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra since 1979. He made his conducting debut with the Youth Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall in 1966, and his European debut in 1974 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Slatkin conducts major orchestras and opera companies throughout the United States, Europe, and Asia, and has enjoyed a continuing association with orchestras such as the Chicago Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the London Philharmonic, and the Minnesota Orchestra. Slatkin has recorded extensively with the Saint Louis Symphony (including two New World discs) and with other orchestras.

GERARD SCHWARZ is music director of the Seattle Symphony, Lincoln Center's Mostly Mozart Festival, and the New York Chamber Symphony, and serves as principal conductor of the Waterloo Festival in Stanhope, New Jersey. Schwarz has premiered contemporary works by more than twenty-five composers throughout his career, including David Diamond, Henri Lazarof, and Alan Hovhaness. He began his musical studies with piano lessons, and later studied trumpet with William Vacchiano. Schwarz has recorded for the Delos, Nonesuch, Angel, and New World labels, among others.

GARY LAKES has been acclaimed world-wide both as heldentenor and one of the leading interpreters of the great romantic tenor roles. His performances at the Metropolitan Opera include Don José in Carmen and Siegmund in Die Walküre, an opera he has recorded with James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra. His recording of Ariadne auf Naxos, also with James Levine, won the 1988 Grammy Award for Best Opera Recording. He has appeared as guest soloist with such conductors as Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti, Lorin Maazel, and Daniel Barenboim.

THE JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA is comprised of over 100 students from around the world, and performs a full season of orchestra, opera, and dance programs at Juilliard. The orchestra has performed in Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and on tour abroad. Its first tour of the Far East was made in June 1987, where the orchestra performed in the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, and Japan.

INTO ECLIPSE

I. Prologue and Riddle Song
Show us a simple riddle
Show us lift everything aside

Show us a riddle

What has four legs at dawn
Two at noon three at dusk

And is weakest when it has most?

“I will find the answer” is that an answer?

Show us a riddle

“I will find the answer” is there an answer?

Show us the answer

II. Oedipus I
And I was happy fleeing from my father
Fleeing, yes, but unafraid
Till I stumbled, as God in heaven saw me,
I stumbled on this kingdom.
Fear came after me
It followed me
The fear, someday, I'd kill him
I would kill my father.

And worse! That other worse!

What could be worse?

The words stick
It is not possible.

My father's bedchamber
My mother's bed
I would marry my mother

Murder him!

The dog star the lion
One on top of the other

A double madness
Everyday closer!

I was terrified—I was so terrified
But the fear came with me
It followed me
And it grew till it now surrounds me
Fear, my shadow
I stand in it
Like a blind man in darkness.

Oedipus!
Get out of this land
Get away from these cries
This unending funeral.

Oedipus!
This air that you've poisoned
With the curse that you carry.

Oedipus—get away!
Oedipus—run!
As you should have done long ago
The truth is not human
It has no mercy
Do not force it
Away from these cries
This land of death.

Oedipus! Oedipus!

**III. A Quiet Fate**

If only our fate was ours to choose
You would see me on quiet waters
Whose airs are gentle
Full sail but a light wind

No more than a breath
Easy voyage that is best
No blast no smashed rigging
No flogging downward into cliffs
Under surge
Nothing recovered

No vanishing
If Fate were ours to choose.

Give me a quiet voyage
Neither under cliffs
Nor too far out
On the black water
Where the depths open
The middle course is the safe one

The only life
Easily on
To a calm end
Surrounded by gains.

**IV. Ghosts**
I see things in darkness moving
Many pale masks lifted sinking
I see writhing things
And they come!

A growing sound a humming
That seems to silence everything
Like a vast flock of autumn starlings

A rushing gloomy wind of twitterings
Beating up at the light
Swirling back and round and round

They came
A growing sound

And they come grabbing at the earth
The tree roots at our clothes

In their pale ghostly voices
Till at last one of them
Lays hold of the earth
And clings there
His face pressed in the earth
“I am the man you murdered
Your father
I shall break your heart

O men O men drive him away
O men O men take the earth from him
His father will take the light!”

**V. Oedipus II**
All is well
I like this darkness
My father has been paid
What he was owed
All is well.

I wonder which god I've pleased
Which of them has brought me peace
Given me this dark veil for my head
Pleasant

The light that awful eye
That never let me rest
And followed me everywhere
All is well
At last you've escaped it
You killed your father
It's abandoned you
It's left you to your new face
The true face of Oedipus

From Ted Hughes' adaptation of Seneca's Oedipus. Reprinted with permission of Mr. Hughes and by arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc.

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Joseph Schwantner
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Stephen Albert

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Jacob Druckman


Joseph Schwantner


Consortium VIII: Sparrows. Lucy Shelton, soprano (on Sparrows); Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall conducting. Smithsonian Collection N-022.


Wind, Willow, Whisper... Da Capo Chamber Players, CRI SD 441.

Jacob Druckman


To Wake the Dead. Lucy Shelton, soprano; Twentieth Century Consort, Christopher Kendall conducting. Smithsonian Collection N-027. Delos DCD-1016.

Producers: Elizabeth Ostrow (Chiaroscuro, Aftertones of Infinity); Judith Sherman (Into Eclipse).

Engineers: John Newton, Henk Kooistra

Chiaroscuro recorded November 18, 1988; Aftertones of Infinity recorded February 13, 1989, both at the Juilliard Theater, New York. Into Eclipse recorded April 13, 1989, at the Manhattan Center, New York.
THE JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA

1. Jacob Druckman: *Chiaroscuro* (15:03)
   (publ. Boosey and Hawkes, Inc.)
   Lukas Foss, conductor

2. Joseph Schwantner: *Aftertones of Infinity* (14:45)
   (publ. C. F. Peters Corp.)
   Leonard Slatkin, conductor

Stephen Albert: *Into Eclipse* (30:01)
(publ. G. Schirmer, Inc.)
3. I. Prologue and Riddle Song (6:42)
4. II. Oedipus I (3:21)
5. III. A Quiet Fate (7:14)
6. IV. Ghosts (4:56)
7. V. Oedipus II (7:19)

Gary Lakes, tenor; Gerard Schwarz, conductor

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