

DAVID TAYLOR
Bass Trombone

New World Record 80494

MOONRISE WITH MEMORIES

Frederic Rzewski: *Moonrise With Memories* was commissioned by and written for David Taylor in 1978. Taylor specifically requested a piece for bass trombone, a piece that could not be played on a tenor instrument. He also suggested an accompanying ensemble of bass (or other low-range) instruments, but I chose instead a different arrangement. The soloist is accompanied by any six instruments that can play in the soprano range (more or less that of an oboe), so that the customary relation of melody and supporting parts is turned upside down. The form is an arch, ascending and descending on either side of a central song, which is based on a short poem, "World War II," by Langston Hughes.

The thinking behind this simple piece was influenced by, perhaps more than anything else, my reading of Colin Turnbull's book on Pygmy culture, *The Forest People* (Simon and Schuster, 1962). Without knowing a great deal about Pygmy music, I nevertheless felt strangely in tune with it, and in fact, used some heterophonic techniques, especially in the central semi-improvisatory section, that refer to the tradition. The bass trombone could be heard as the *molino* of Pygmy ceremony, a kind of long trumpet that is used to imitate the various voices of the forest, but above all to wake up the forest, to keep it awake, to make sure it continues its benevolent function of provider and source of life. It is usually brought out and played when something big goes wrong, or when somebody dies, and an optimistic answer to a threatening situation is needed. *Moonrise With Memories* is likewise intended as a modest contribution toward a music of optimism.

David Taylor: For just a few seconds at the very end, this piece calls for a multiphonic series of sounds. Although I had tried these effects before in other modern music, I wasn't completely satisfied with the results. This piece showed me that, used selectively, they could sound effective and not contrived. Although everything is precisely notated, the rhythm and harmony suggest a blues-like, improvisational style. The structure of the piece also affected my approach to improvisation. By playing this kind of sustained rhythmic curve, I developed confidence in my ability to sustain a rhythmic pattern, without a self-conscious dependence on time signatures and bar lines. The minimalist elements of this piece, the way the structures keep building, freed me to just get up and play without worrying where the bar lines were.

The unspecified accompaniment--for any six treble-clef instruments--allows me to change the sound of the piece at every performance, or to utilize whatever instrumentalists are available. For this recording, I imagined myself accompanied by Renaissance instruments and cimbalom; in the finished product, kazoos and dulcimer approximate the effect I was after.

I have tried to convey a common theme in my notes, the theme of experimentation. Each of these pieces provided me with ways to learn about myself and my relationship to music. Working with the composers--four people who seem to me to be into music for all the right reasons--has made me want to continue to explore, learn, and relate spiritually with all the music I play.

To me, New York in the late 1970s was the place for new music in this country. It seemed as though everyone was here, composing and getting new works performed. A new work makes news. Each of

these pieces was premiered at a different concert during the four years from 1978 to 1981, and I was impressed each time at how many ladies and gentlemen of the press turned out to hear a bass trombonist play. The excitement of those events helped me develop a rapport with the general concert-going public, and taught me a lot about concert performance.

Oh yes--one last point. Although some of what I've written here may seem very matter-of-fact and analytical, please note that all of these explanations are after the fact (I am writing this during the fall of 1984). While I was commissioning, practicing, and performing these pieces, I felt only the excitement, hope, fear, joy, pleasure, and spontaneous "accident" of making music.

REMEMBRANCE

David Liebman: The death of jazz pianist Bill Evans a few years ago affected me deeply. The influence of his touch and harmonies was profound among all jazz musicians. The pleasure of knowing him and playing with him will last me a lifetime. At about that time, Dave Taylor asked me to compose a piece featuring the bass trombone, something lyrical in mood, yet not sentimental. We decided the title would be *Remembrance*.

The basic musical premise in *Remembrance* is melody based on harmonic structure, much like jazz improvisation. The minor second (with its relatives, major seventh, and minor ninth) is the basic interval. Harmonically, there are major and minor triads of the same pitch juxtaposed against each other and, secondarily, some diminished and double-diminished chords.

For the jazz musician, to write specifically is a challenge to the mind, especially if he is not the performer. In jazz, we take interpretation so for granted that written jazz is usually very unspecific and loosely organized. Composing *Remembrance*, therefore, was a great learning experience. The most glorious moment came at the first rehearsal, when the ensemble played what I had written for the first time. I had never heard such beautiful sounds playing my music. The tones of these instrumentalists is what makes *Remembrance* come alive. Thanks to all these gentlemen, and to the memory of Bill Evans.

D. T.: The thought process behind this piece is different from the other three. The piece was notated, but the register, mutes, time field, and improvised solo were all up to me. Playing with a woodwind quartet was similar to playing with a string quartet, with the difference that in the woodwind group I sometimes became a stand-in for the French horn, creating something like a woodwind quintet. I did this by sitting in the midst of the group, and by using a bucket mute, which made a horn-like tone and helped me blend with the others. At more soloistic moments, I changed registers to separate myself, and went slightly in and out of the prevailing rhythm, that is, I tried to turn my part of the vamp section into the melody and make it expressive. The style of this piece allows that kind of free ensemble.

Remembrance was the first piece in which I used an ancient religious song as the basis of an improvisation--something I have since done more and more, in both my jazz and classical playing. The spiritual roots, timelessness, and simplicity of the material give me confidence. I am able to leave the song and return, turning it into a very personal statement.

DAGON II

Eric Ewazen: *Dagon II* explores a myriad of sonorities and effects, produced solely by the bass trombone. The work is written for solo performer and tape, the tape part consisting of eight tracks of bass trombone.

The piece is a study in violent contrasts, constantly moving from total tranquillity and silence to utter chaos and dissonance. The soloist often acts as an instigator, initiating the events and various sound worlds heard in the tape part, commenting on them, sometimes soaring above them, and once in a while becoming overwhelmed by them.

There are three main sections to the work: the first, which is unmetered, consists of a continual unfolding of increasingly agitated gestures. The sound world is dissonant, filled with clusters and hints of melodies that never materialize. The second section, which is metered, consists of a more consonant sound world in which one can also distinguish a definite melodic line. However, this relative quiet is quickly propelled into a final climactic burst of sound. The third section is simply a dénouement, in which the gestures become more and more sparse and eventually die out.

The effects heard in this work are created through the use of a variety of mutes, as well as glissandi, articulation, extremes of range, and the layering of these sounds on the tape.

My thanks to Dave Taylor for helping to realize this virtuosic piece.

D. T.: When Eric Ewazen and I met, he played a tape of a piece he had written for eight violoncellos. The use of the registers and glissandi reminded me of the similarities of my instrument to the cello. These things, combined with my need for a taped piece for concerts and my interest in using my studio skills, led me to a piece for eight overdubbed bass trombones. Eric and I met again, and I demonstrated my mutes, effects, tone qualities, slides, and so forth. We didn't see each other for quite some time, and then suddenly I needed a piece for a concert within four or five days. Eric told me that the conceptual work was more or less completed, and so while he transferred his thoughts to paper, I reserved a studio for two days later.

When we went to the studio, Eric had a system worked out for layering the tracks. The piece was divided into sections with a common time throughout. This gave it reference points similar to bar lines, although much more abstract, so that we could stop when we had to and not lose our place. We started recording at about 8 P.M., and finished at 5 or 6 A.M. We proceeded experimentally, keeping the sounds that worked and leaving out the ones that didn't. The notated sections took longest, but we took time over the improvisations as well. For example, I did many takes for the final glissando, because I wanted it to be slow enough, and yet still sound "in tempo."

Although this is a tape piece, I don't consider this composition to be "electronic music." We used nothing but the tone of the trombone, with no electronic gadgetry altering it. The closest we came to that was adjusting my distance from, and angle to, the microphone. I also varied the tone by using the mutes--not just putting them on and taking them off, but manipulating them to make smooth and gradual extensions of the instrument's colors.

During this piece the closeness of the collaboration was particularly rewarding for me, because there

was actually direct contact between my ideas about how a trombone could be played and the composer's ideas about the structure of the composition.

DUENDE QUIDDITAS

Lucia Dlugoszewski: Shattering the clichés of the instrument and the clichés of notation--the remaining hugeness strangely understood--if it is dark enough, can be called *duende*.

Duende Quidditas approaches structure through anti-development, anti-predictability--least-expected immediacy--spontaneity--in essence, leaping for the flexibility of the soul--dangerous, but alive.

It presupposes a wild extravagant Universe of swift time, swift dynamics, and even swifter change with simultaneously another very different imperative--the depth lived--as if no one were listening--suchness, *Quidditas*, of each unique, careful sound being heard, for the first time including even the *Quidditas* of a match being struck and blown out and another struck again and burning itself to the end.

Such music could never be attempted without someone like David Taylor, whose each leap of dynamics, or space, or phrasing, or darkness becomes a reckless act of hearing in the stunned mind. What strangeness does he evoke from his challenging instrument, a kind of exquisite daring of energy that can only be called passion, and even wilder and bolder, that deep defenseless dislocated tenderness that falls for miles.

D. T.: When I first looked at Lucia Dlugozweski's score, the incredible intensity, density, and velocity of the notation was frightening. Besides all of the normal fare, unless you've heard her music you can't quite conjure up the beauty of the color changes she gets from her mute markings, glissandi, and other specialized effects (things you never thought of as possible). When I practiced *Duende* slowly, I quickly realized that Lucia's music was totally controlled. The lines "layed well" on the instrument, so that at the correct tempi the notes flowed easily from the horn. All the mute changes and instrumental effects added amazing interest, and were totally practical. Although there are many meter changes, rhythmic density is gained through straightforward and relatively uncomplicated markings.

I met Lucia in the late Sixties through my friendship with Gerard Schwarz. Performing Lucia Dlugozweski's music was my first exposure to through composed American chamber music where I could perform music that was *so* difficult, requiring *so* much concentration, that I was taken out of myself--and the music felt improvised.

David Taylor's virtuosity ranges from the classical repertoire to contemporary works to jazz and popular music. Trained at The Juilliard School, he has appeared with the New York Philharmonic under Pierre Boulez, the American Symphony Orchestra under Leopold Stokowski, Ernest Ansermet, and Aram Khachaturian, and with Speculum Musicae, Steve Reich, the Ensemble for New and Newer Music, and the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. Mr. Taylor's lively interest in new works has led him to frequently commission compositions from the most vital composers of our day. Although much of his activity is in the fields of classical and contemporary music, Mr. Taylor has also been heard, both live and on recordings, with Duke Ellington (for whom

he recorded the New Orleans Suite), Thad Jones, and George Russell, and with popular artists from the Rolling Stones to Aretha Franklin to Frank Sinatra. He is the first bass trombonist to be given the Most Valuable Player award by the New York Chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences.

Lucia Dlugoszewski studied piano with Grete Sultan from 1952 to 1955 and music analysis with Felix Salzer at the Mannes College of Music in 1952-53; she also took lessons in composition from Edgard Varèse. She developed a close association with the Erick Hawkins Dance Company, for whom she wrote scores, was their musical director, and also invented a series of new percussion and friction instruments. She has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, grants from the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music and the Phoebe Ketchum Thorne Foundation, and an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters; in 1977 she became the first woman to win the Koussevitsky International Recording Award, for *Fire Fragile Flight*.

Eric Ewazen studied under Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Warren Benson, Gunther Schuller, and Joseph Schwanter at the Eastman School of Music, Tanglewood, and The Juilliard School, where he has been a member of the faculty since 1980. A recipient of numerous composition awards and prizes, his works have been commissioned and performed by many chamber ensembles and orchestras in the U.S. and overseas. His music has been heard at festivals such as Woodstock, Tanglewood, Aspen, Caramoor, and the Music Academy of the West.

For his soprano saxophone and flute playing, **David Liebman** ranks consistently near the top of reader polls conducted by *Down Beat* and other jazz publications. He began classical piano lessons at the age of nine and saxophone by twelve. His interest in jazz was sparked by hearing John Coltrane perform live in New York City clubs. Liebman pursued his jazz interest by studying with Lennie Tristano and Charles Lloyd. He has played in concert or on record with Miles Davis, Elvin Jones, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, and many others. Among the groups he has formed are Lookout Farm, the David Liebman Quintet, and Quest. He has lectured and conducted clinics in the U.S., Europe, Japan, and Australia, and contributed to periodicals such as the *Saxophone Journal* and the *Jazz Educators' Journal*.

Massachusetts native **Frederic Rzewski** has lived abroad for many years, in Rome and Liège, Belgium, where he has been Professor of Composition at the Royal Conservatory since 1977. He was already known as a performer of new piano music by 1966, when he co-founded Musica Electronica Viva, an experimental improvisation group in Rome. Folk melodies and texts concerning social justice are a frequent feature of his works.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

David Taylor

As a composer and performer:

Past Tells (or Orals). David Taylor, bass trombone; Paul Smoker, Herb Robertson, trumpets; Marty Ehrlich, Andy Laster, Jay Branford, saxophones; Mark Helias, bass; Phil Haynes, drums; Gary Schneider, conductor. New World Records 80436-2.

As a performer:

Charles Wuorinen. *Archaeopteryx; Archangel*. Koch International Classics 3-7110-2HI.

The Pugh-Taylor Project. Jim Pugh, trombone; Dave Taylor, bass trombone. DMP CD-448.

Lucia Dlugoszewski

Angels of the Inmost Heaven. Mark Gould, Louis Ranger, trumpets; Per Brevig, David Taylor, trombones; Martin Smith, horn; Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Folkways FTS-33902.

Space Is a Diamond. Gerard Schwarz, trumpet; Ursula Oppens, piano. Nonesuch H-71275.

Tender Theatre Flight Nageire. Gerard Schwarz, Edward Carroll, Norman Smith, trumpets; Robert Rouch, horn; David Langlitz, David Taylor, trombones; Lucia Dlugoszewski, percussion; Gerard Schwarz, conductor. CRI 388.

Eric Ewazen

Colchester Fantasy. American Brass Quintet. Summit DCD 133.

David Liebman

If Only They Knew. Timeless 151.

Memories, Dreams & Reflections. PM 22.

Open Sky. PM 1.

The Tree. SoulNote 1195.

Frederic Rzewski

De Profundis. Frederic Rzewski, piano. Hat Hut ART CD 6134.

Four North American Ballads. Frederic Rzewski, piano. Hat Hut ART CD 6089.

The Lost Melody. Zeitgeist. O.O. Discs OO 15.

The People United Will Never Be Defeated. Ursula Oppens, piano. Vanguard Classics OVC 8056.

Song and Dance. Speculum Musicae. Nonesuch H-71366.

Spots. Zeitgeist. O.O. Discs OO 15.

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Producer: David Taylor

Dagon II was recorded January 22, 1981, at Chelsea Sound Studios, NYC.

Recording engineer: Phil Bulla

Mixed by Fred Miller

Remembrance was recorded July 7, 1981, at Chelsea Sound Studios, NYC.

Recording engineer: Phil Bulla

Mixed by Fred Miller

Moonrise With Memories was recorded June 4, 1981, at RCA Studios, NYC.

Recording engineer: Judy Sherman

Duende Quidditas was recorded October 23, 1983, in a live performance at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum as part of a program presented by Orchestra of Our Time, Joel Thome, Music Director and Conductor.

Recording engineer: Miles Smith

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DAVID TAYLOR 80494-2
BASS TROMBONE

Frederic Rzewski (b. 1938)

1 Moonrise With Memories (publ. Sound Pool Music, BMI)

David Taylor, bass trombone; Louise Schulman, violin, voice; Bill Blount, clarinet; Allan Dean, trumpet; Robert Wolinsky, Fender Rhodes piano; David Carp, kazoo, recorder; Bill Moersch, marimba, dulcimer

David Liebman (b. 1946)

2 Remembrance (publ. Liebstone Music, BMI)

David Taylor, bass trombone; Bill Blount, clarinet; Stephen Taylor, oboe; Alan Cox, flute; Dennis Godburn, bassoon

Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

3 Dagon II (publ. Eric Ewazen Publishing, ASCAP)

David Taylor, bass trombone

Lucia Dlugoszewski (b. 1934)

4 Duende Quidditas (c Lucia Dlugoszewski)

David Taylor, bass trombone; Lucia Dlugoszewski, timbre piano

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