

David Leo Diamond has followed the path traveled by other significant American composers, a path that led him to Europe via Paris, Rome, and Florence and finally, back home. Born in Rochester, N.Y. in 1915, he studied at the Cleveland Institute, the Eastman School with Bernard Rogers (1933-34), and at the Dalcroze Institute in New York with Paul Boepple and Roger Sessions (1934-36).

After further work with Sessions, Diamond continued that tradition among American composers begun by the young Aaron Copland, who after World War I had moved to France to study with Nadia Boulanger at the newly opened school at Fontainebleau. In 1936 Diamond, then studying with Boulanger, worked on the ballet *Tom*, with Léonide Massine, to a scenario by E. E. Cummings. His first successful orchestral piece, *Psalm* was written there that summer, and it won in the following year the Juilliard Publication Award. The contacts he made in Paris with novelist André Gide and composers Maurice Ravel, Albert Roussel, and Stravinsky broadened his artistic and philosophical ideas. From this period his music was performed by leading conductors, including Hermann Scherchen, Serge Koussevitzky, and Dimitri Mitropoulos. Diamond's *Rounds* won the New York Music Critics Award in 1944. In 1951 he was appointed Fulbright professor at the University of Rome and in 1953 he settled in Florence, where he remained until 1965, when a series of fiftieth-birthday celebrations lured him home to conduct performances of his music with the New York Philharmonic, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, and other ensembles. In 1966 Diamond was elected a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He was awarded the William Schuman award in 1985 for his life's work as a composer.

Francis Thorne has written of David Diamond for the *New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (1986):

Diamond's symphonies, quartets, and songs are the core of a very large and varied output. Clear structures, often evolved from contrapuntal or sonata-allegro procedures, are frequently fashioned into unusual one- or two-movement forms; among the later works are many masterly fugues and sets of variations. Diamond's writing for the orchestra is brilliant, and his work shows an intensely individual lyricism, occasionally austere but more often romantically tinged. His harmony has developed gradually from a diatonicmodal to a more chromatic style without losing a strong personal character. Diamond's meticulous craftsmanship and his sensibility have assured his position as a twentieth-century classicist.

The music on this CD was released on Grenadilla Records over a span of seven years; the *Vocalises* were released in 1977, the Quintet in 1978, and the two violin-and-piano sonatas in 1984. Richard Gilbert, the producer of these discs and founder of Grenadilla Records, in 1996 wrote a reminiscence of his experiences in making these recordings:

It was my good fortune that the Clarinet Quintet was produced by the extremely gifted team of Joanna Nickrenz and Marc Aubort. Joanna is a genius with a fabulous ear. I do not think anyone could have done a better job. My personal kudos to them both. We all knew that Maestro David Diamond was to be at these sessions and his reputation preceded him. On the first night he arrived (we were already 45 minutes

into the session), he looked, listened, and said, "I'm leaving, everything is in good hands, I will only get in the way." With that, we all sighed with relief.

These performers, led by Lawrence Sobol, had to endure awful conditions due to the faulty heating system of the Rutgers Presbyterian Church, in New York City. To eliminate the minor cacophony of whistles, bumps, and dings, it had to be turned off. Unfortunately, it was winter and the temperature steadily dropped. By the halfway point the musicians' breath was clearly visible. The cold played havoc with the instruments, especially the clarinet. Mr. Sobol had many tricks up his sleeve to prevail. It's a glorious performance, beautifully captured by the Nickrenz/Aubort team (who also produced the *Vocalises*).

Robert McDuffie and William Black were afforded the luxury of RCA's Studio A, where many great recordings have been made over the years. These were relatively easy sessions, as these artists were prepared and as smooth as they were brilliant, going through their paces with ease and grace. There is a story however, that can be told. McDuffie is a gifted performer with flawless technique. One passage, however, gave him trouble, and we finally took a break after a number of less-than-satisfactory takes. I knew that the artistic success of this recording hinged on this passage, so I threw the gauntlet down and said: "It sounds as though it's too difficult a passage for you," (or something like that). McDuffie was visibly upset, and that's exactly the reaction I wanted. We resumed the session and McDuffie's elevated adrenaline level vaulted him, in that first take, to perfection. He looked up toward the production room with the biggest ear-to-ear grin I ever saw. With that, the sonata session was complete.

(Notes for the Grenadilla albums written by David Diamond have been incorporated below.)

The Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano, in four movements, was composed between the years 1943 and 1946 in New York City. It had its world premiere on February 17, 1948 at Carnegie Hall, with Joseph Szigeti (one of the greatest violinists of his generation) and the pianist Josef Lhévinne. Technically, its premiere took place on February 6, 1948, at an afternoon Peabody Conservatory recital in Baltimore. Virgil Thomson, the music critic of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, wrote in his review of the New York concert:

". . . in four movements . . . it has the most continuously sustained intensity of expression that your reporter has yet encountered in Mr. Diamond's work. It is full of what it is saying and doing. What it is saying is private things; in that sense the work is Neo-Romantic. What it is doing is oscillating constantly between angular tunes of an angry character and flowing, rhapsodic ones. . . . The musical texture is everywhere high-class and occasionally very personal. The violin writing is at all times apt, sonorous, and free. It is not without a certain impressiveness, too, for its musical invention and for its sustained expressivity. It may well turn out to be a repertory work."

And Olin Downes, the eminent critic of *The New York Times*, wrote: "David Diamond's Sonata is a very serious work, written vigorously and with a bold and personal treatment of the classical form. The first movement has fine sweep and stride, and the slow movement a contrapuntal structure and

harmonic stress which makes one desire more intimacy with it, and indeed with the whole sonata."

The composer Frederick Jacobi had invited me in the mid-1930s to a series of recitals that Szigeti was giving at Town Hall. Being a friend of the violinist, after the recital Mr. Jacobi introduced me to the tall, handsome and very distinguished gentleman, who at once said, 'I know about you from many musicians. Will you write a work for me, perhaps a Sonata?' I composed my First Violin Concerto in 1936 and sent it to Mr. Szigeti. He was impressed, tried in vain to perform it with orchestras in this country, every management and manager discouraging him about performing "modern music." As the years passed, my friendship with Szigeti grew. But no sonata seemed to come forth. I was depressed by the rejection of the Concerto, and my personal life was tough. Somehow, in 1943 I began to make sketches for this sonata. I played parts of completed sections with Paul Moor. I was encouraged. Having finally obtained a position-playing violin in the Hit Parade Orchestra, my financial difficulties were eased. Then Cheryl Crawford commissioned me to compose the incidental music for Margaret Webster's production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which I conducted in its successful New York season. On and off I would work on the sonata, playing it through with the marvelous young Leonard Bernstein, just beginning his remarkable career, and with Dimitri Mitropoulos, who had commissioned my *Rounds* for string orchestra. After many snags in the last movement, the work was finally completed in 1946. With Paul Moor I gave several performances for friends and for Carl Fischer's Gustave Reese, who admired it but said they could not publish so large a provocative (sic!) work. (It was indeed considered harsh, and Irving Kolodin said it "hacked away."). It would be Nathan Broder at G. Schirmer who was impressed enough to publish the work. Recording dates were often set up by Goddard Lieberson at Columbia Records, but here too bad luck struck, with psychosomatic shoulder attacks by Szigeti's pianist, Bussotti. Then Isaac Stern was to have learned, performed, and recorded it, but a busy schedule to this date prevents him from performing the work. At last, with the remarkable young McDuffie it has its first recording with the equally wonderful William Black.

The three *Vocalises* for Soprano and Viola were composed during the month of November 1935 in New York City. They were first performed at the third Composer's Forum Laboratory sponsored by the WPA Federal Music Project in New York City on February 12, 1936, in the auditorium of the Federal Music Building at 110 West 48th Street. The performers were Louise Taylor, soprano, and John Howell, violist. Small revisions in the work were made in August of 1956. The work is dedicated to Virgil Thomson.

The first two *Vocalises* have thematic and rhythmic materials in common and are played without pause, or a very slight one. The third makes use of an ostinato figure alternately given to voice and viola. They were in no way intended as vocal exercises alone, but more conceived as three duologues of give-and-take between voice and viola in which certain intimate as well as more obvious operatic gestures could take place within a chamber music concept.

The Quintet for Clarinet, Two Violas and Two Cellos was completed on September 13, 1950, at Rochester, New York, and had its first performance on March 10, 1952, by David Oppenheim, clarinetist, Nathan Gordon and Lillian Fuchs, violists, and Aaron Twerdowsky and Bernard Greenhouse, cellists, at a Musicians Guild Concert in New York's Town Hall.

The first movement begins and ends with the clarinet alone, stating basic motivic and thematic ideas to be used during the entire work. From these two versions, one the retrograde of the other, the entire first movement's materials are derived. The movement is in modified *sonata-allegro* structure.

The second movement is a *scherzo* with a trio section built on rhythmic figures of the *scherzo* proper. The third movement is a spacious and expressive *andante-adagio* fashioned out of the two previous movements' materials. It ends with a *motif* from the first movement's opening clarinet solo. In this movement, the second cello's C string is tuned down to B to accommodate the strong B major-B minor tonalities. The fourth movement is in *rondo* form, utilizing thematic and rhythmic figures as well as harmonic combinations from the first three movements. The instrumental choice of clarinet, two violas, and two cellos was made to capture a quality of Rembrandtian, Brahmsian, even Regerish, autumnal richness of texture and emotions. Many decades of admiration for the Brahms and Reger chamber works surely influenced the glow of my work. This admiration remains constant today.

The three Preludes and Fugues from the set of fifty-two (in two volumes) for piano comprise a small area of a project I set for myself as challenge and discipline. Of course Bach's great *Well-Tempered Clavier* was the guiding light, so to speak. I had just returned from Paris in the early spring of 1939, and had notebooks full of counterpoint and fugal studies done with Nadia Boulanger during my Guggenheim Fellowship stay (1938-1939), and as she had commented encouragingly about some of the fugue subjects, I decided to compose preludes as well. Between 1939 and 1942, while at Yaddo in Saratoga Springs and at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, I set myself the task of trying to complete a prelude and fugue a day. This did not always happen. They cover all the keys in sharps and flats and in enharmonic alternate versions. The fugue subjects are never academic, the contrapuntal rules are obeyed within reason, the fugal structure is sometimes strict, sometimes free. The piano writing does not try to capture the spirit of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The three heard here are from the first volume--in C Major, E minor, and C sharp minor.

The Sonata No. 2 received its first performance at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., on December 11, 1981. It was commissioned by the McKim Fund and is dedicated to these performers.

The introduction to the first movement consists of an unaccompanied *motif d'appel* (*allegretto*) for the violin, followed by a secondary *motif* (*adagio*) for the duo, leading to an *allegro* version of both *motifs* followed by the principal section (*adagio*), a long-breathed cantilena for the violin. The remaining sections are developmental--introductory *motifs* are incorporated into the developed materials and act as demarcation areas for the movement. A short epilogue-like section (*adagio*) ends the movement.

The second movement's thematic materials are derived from the first movement's *motifs d'appel* and main *Adagio* theme. The movement is cast first in *rondo* form, introducing intervallic and rhythmic elements to be incorporated into the second half of the movement, a fugue. The fugue subject is built out of the names of our performers (especially emphasizing the notes B, E, and F, as well as D, A, and C), a clearly diatonic series of pitches balanced out by a counter-subject of chromatic pitches. Material from the first movement is incorporated into the fugal episodes.

—Notes edited by Howard Klein

William Black has been a featured performer at the Kennedy Center, Wolf Trap, the Library of Congress and the Musique d'Été festival, and has performed with numerous orchestras and on concert series throughout the United States, Canada, Great Britain, Austria, France, Belgium, The Netherlands, Germany and Italy. He has performed extensively in several countries in Asia, and was the only performer from the U.S. to be invited to perform at the First Shenyang International Music

Festival in the People's Republic of China. As an interpreter of contemporary music, Mr. Black has premiered numerous works, including compositions by Aaron Copland and David Diamond. His long association with Diamond includes world premiere performances of the Concertino for Piano and Small Orchestra, the Second Sonata for Violin and Piano, and the *Prelude, Fantasy and Fugue*. Mr. Black is a recipient of a Solo Recitalist Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Robert McDuffie's career encompasses concerto appearances, solo recitals, and chamber music. He has appeared as soloist with the Chicago, San Francisco, Pittsburgh, Houston, Atlanta, National, and Montreal Symphonies, the Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Minnesota Orchestras, the Orchestra del Teatro alla Scala, Moscow State Orchestra, Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Czech Philharmonic, Prague Chamber Orchestra, and all of the major orchestras of Australia. Mr. McDuffie's recording for Angel of the William Schuman Concerto for Violin and Orchestra and Leonard Bernstein's Serenade for Violin and Orchestra earned him a 1990 Grammy nomination. His first recording for Telarc, *Viennese Favorites with the Cincinnati Pops*, was released in August, 1996, and his recording of the Samuel Barber Concerto with the Atlanta Symphony, also for Telarc, will be released in February 1997. A native of Georgia, Robert McDuffie has been profiled for NBC's *Today Show*, CBS *Sunday Morning*, PBS's *Charlie Rose Show*, and *The Wall Street Journal*. He has performed four private recitals at the request of the United States Supreme Court. Mr. McDuffie is a member of the board of directors of the Harlem School of the Arts, where he also serves as chairman of the artistic committee. He lives in New York with his wife and two young children.

Louise Schulman performs worldwide as a viola soloist and chamber music artist. She has appeared frequently with Speculum Musicae, the Group for Contemporary Music, the Philomusica Chamber Ensemble and others, and has recorded chamber works for Grenadilla Records, Vox Columbia, Nonesuch, and CRI. Ms. Schulman is also very active in the field of Renaissance and Baroque music, performing on lute, vielle, viola, and baroque violin.

Lucy Shelton is an active performer of contemporary music, having appeared with the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, "Y" New Music, and at the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado. As a member of the New York Vocal Arts Ensemble, the Waverly Consort, and the New York Pro Musica, she has toured the United States, South America, and Europe. Her trio with flute and harp, The Jubal Trio, won the 1977 Walter Naumburg Chamber Music Award. A native Californian, Ms. Shelton graduated from Pomona College in flute and voice and earned an M.A. in voice from the New England Conservatory.

Lawrence Sobol has performed extensively throughout America and Europe as a soloist with orchestra, in recital, and in chamber music programs. Mr. Sobol was the winner of a Ford Foundation Grant (1964-65) to study at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, Maryland, and later received degrees from the Manhattan School of Music. He studied with Harold Wright, David Weber, Ignatius Gennusa, Herbert Blayman, and Rudolph Jettel.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Ceremonial Fanfare. Keystone Wind Ensemble, Jack Stamp, conductor. Citadel CTD 88108.

Concerto for Small Orchestra. New York Chamber Symphony, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Delos DE 3093.

Kaddish. Janos Starker, cello; Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Delos DE 3103.

Symphony No. 1. Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Delos DE 3119.
Symphony No. 2. Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Delos DE 3093.
Symphony No. 3. Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conductor. Delos DE 3103.
Symphony No. 5. The Juilliard Orchestra, Christopher Keene, conductor. New World 80396-2.
Tantivy. Cincinnati Conservatory Wind Symphony, E. Corporon, conductor. Klavier KCD 11051.
The World of Paul Klee. Portland Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, Jacob Avshalomov, conductor. CRI
CD 634.

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Sigman, M. "The Facets of David Diamond." *Symphony* 43: 32-5, no. 1, 1992.
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DAVID DIAMOND (b. 1915) 80508-2

Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano (publ. G. Schirmer, ASCAP)

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|---|-----|--------|
| 1 | I | (7:23) |
| 2 | II | (3:51) |
| 3 | III | (5:26) |

4 IV (5:26)
Robert McDuffie, violin; William Black, piano

5 *Vocalises* for Soprano and Viola (publ. Southern Music Publ., ASCAP) (5:11)
Lucy Shelton, soprano; Louise Schulman, viola

Quintet for Clarinet, Two Violas and Two Cellos (publ. Southern Music Publ., ASCAP)
6 I (5:03)
7 II (3:58)
8 III (6:46)
9 IV (4:24)

Lawrence Sobol, clarinet; Louise Schulman, Linda Moss, violas; Timothy Eddy, Fred Sherry, cellos

Preludes and Fugues for Piano (publ. David Leo Diamond)
10 Prelude in C major (1:14)
11 Fugue in C major (1:25)
12 Prelude in E minor (1:59)
13 Fugue in E minor (1:08)
14 Prelude in C sharp minor (1:23)
15 Fugue in C sharp minor (2:03)
William Black, piano

Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano (G. Schirmer, ASCAP)
16 I (7:03)
17 II (6:13)
Robert McDuffie, violin; William Black, piano

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