

SHADOWCATCHER : **works by Mel Powell, William Schuman, Eric Ewazen**

New World Records 80587

The concert band and brass quintet featured here are creatures born in the nineteenth century and came about when the brasses became fully functional as chromatic instruments. With the advent of effective rotary and piston valves, trumpets, horns, euphoniums, and all their relatives no longer relied on finger holes, keys, or hand-stopping to produce notes outside the natural harmonic series. The fact that they could produce all notes with equal intensity and play in any key enabled them to join with the woodwinds and in ensembles and share their limelight. Although these particular groups did not exist before the romantic era, ensemble music for woodwinds and for brass had already played a lengthy and musically significant role in history for several centuries.

Giovanni Gabrieli and Giovanni Bassano in Italy and Johann Pezel and Samuel Scheidt in Germany wrote *canzoni* for groups of cornetti and sackbuts that matched the aesthetic level of the consort of viols which in the seventeenth century had only recently become a clearly defined instrumental chamber ensemble. Wind ensemble music can trace its origins back to before the fifteenth century to the establishment of the *Stadt-pfeifer*. These were individuals who formed aggregations of shawm, zink, cornetto, rauschpfeife, and recorder players, along with assorted other attention-getting musical civil servants. Such groups served the ceremonial musical needs of towns from the late Middle Ages through the Renaissance and beyond.

A shift of emphasis away from public venues for music had occurred by the time of the classical era. Although the *Stadt-pfeifer* served as public employees in the role of musical town criers, a change came in the eighteenth century as royalty and nobility engaged staffs of indentured servants to provide musical accompaniment to private activities ranging from churchgoing to the hunt to soirées. To accompany the hunt and for entertainment of household guests in general, winds were the instrument of choice for practical reasons. Players on horseback could loop horns around their torso and shoulder and signal the stages of the hunt. Riding back to the chateau, these hornists would serenade their patrons and their guests. By the time of the classical era, composers had turned their attention to expanding these serenades beyond rudimentary calls and dance forms and had begun writing extended pieces for wind ensembles. Combinations of paired oboes, clarinets, horns, and bassoons were well suited for playing these works; the wind *harmonie* was one of the band's progenitors and also was the term utilized whenever composers wished to feature the wind section in a composition. Mozart's three best-known wind serenades (K. 361 in B flat, K. 375 in E flat and K. 388 in C minor) are familiar examples of this genre. Beyond these landmark contributions, the repertoire of classical wind music was added to by composers ranging from both Haydn brothers, Beethoven, Pleyel, and Salieri to such less well-remembered journeymen as Josef Myslivecek, A. C. Cartellieri, Franz Hoffmeister, Franz Krommer, and Georg Druschetzky. As this body of music steadily grew in the Old World, across the Atlantic Thomas Jefferson considered keeping just such a wind ensemble in his employ; David Moritz Michael was turning out numerous suites and *Parthien* (New World 80490-2, 80531-2, 80538-2, and 80580-2) for Moravian church musicians to play in the Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, vicinity; and a wind octet plus snare drum was formally established as the U. S. Marine Band in 1798.

As the classical era gave way to the nineteenth century, a cottage industry of transcribers turned out innumerable octet versions of operas and symphonies. These reductions for *harmonie* served roughly the same function as the parlor piano and the phonograph later did in bringing concert and

stage music to a wider public. Richard Franko Goldman (1910–1980) credits the German bandmaster Wilhelm Wieprecht (1802–72; see notes to New World 80266-2) with creating the concert (as opposed to military or marching) band, but its original repertoire remained limited until the late nineteenth century. There were the notable exceptions of compositions by Etienne-Nicolas Méhul, François-Joseph Gossec, and Hyacinthe Jadin that Goldman notes, in addition to Mendelssohn’s Notturmo in C minor for 11 winds and the monumental *Symphonie funèbre et triomphale* of Berlioz, but when Wieprecht’s ensembles went beyond marches and ceremonial music, they generally played arrangements of popular “classics.” Original music for band started to appear in abundance only in later decades.

Building on a brass band foundation established by Claudio Grafulla, Harvey Dodworth (New World 80556-2), and others, Patrick Sarsfield Gilmore began a barnstorming career in the Civil War years dedicated to bringing the band into the American concert spotlight. Gilmore and his successors, Creatore, Pryor, Sousa, and Goldman father and son, were to lead bands that became immensely popular cultural institutions spanning more than a century. As the prominence of concert bands increased, their repertoire also blossomed. Many of the new works were written in the functional genres of marches, dances, and cornet or trombone solos, but now original overtures, fantasies, and suites were being composed for band. Victor Herbert, bandmaster of the 22nd Regiment of the National Guard of New York State from 1894 through 1898, was an early contributor, with his fantasies on national airs and the “March King” himself, John Philip Sousa, mined concert material from his operettas. Edwin Franko Goldman (1878–1956) founded the New York Military Band in 1911, which became The Goldman Band in 1928. From its earliest years, it encouraged “legitimate” composers to use the band as a medium for their works. Goldman and other bandmasters, like Capt. Francis E. Resta at West Point, commissioned and presented band works by prominent composers as varied as George Chadwick, Percy Grainger, Leo Sowerby, Darius Milhaud, Henry Cowell, and Arnold Schoenberg, enriching the concert band repertoire. Of the works on this recording, two of the three sections of William Schuman’s *Triptych* and Mel Powell’s *Capriccio* were premièred by the Goldman ensemble, while Eric Ewazen (born 1954) has cultivated a close working relationship with one of our foremost brass quintets.

Having studied with notable representatives of several different “schools,” Eric Ewazen has developed his own style without having to waste undue energy re-fighting the polemical music wars of the previous several decades. Generalities always risk attack and easy demolition, but it is safe to say that the second half of the twentieth century has produced composers that are, for the most part, more concerned with finding a voice that most clearly communicates their personal inspiration to their audience than with carrying a compositional mentor’s battle flag.

Shadowcatcher was commissioned by the renowned American Brass Quintet, to which the composition is dedicated. The piece was premiered by this group, accompanied by the Butler University Wind Ensemble on October 25, 1996, in a performance directed by Robert Grechesky. Ewazen often uses traditional musical forms and finds inspiration in written texts and pictorial images to create a piece’s profile: *Shadowcatcher* clearly fits this pattern. In the preface to his score for this work, the composer tells of the source of his inspiration and provides insight into the concerto’s formal devices:

“Edward Curtis, the great American photographer who traveled throughout the American West during the early decades of the twentieth century, took literally tens of thousands of photographs of native American Indians. He chronicled their ancient lifestyle—capturing a time and place destined

to disappear in the face of the modern age. His mysterious, beautiful, and powerful photographs had a distinctive play of light and dark, and the Indians dubbed him the “Shadowcatcher.” Four of his photographs are the inspiration for this concerto for brass quintet and wind ensemble:

1. Offering to the Sun (Tewa, 1925)—between the rock cliffs at San Idelfonso, a Tewa Indian, clutching feathers, raises his arms in supplication to the brilliant sunrise. The opening brass quintet music, with free rhythms and ornamentation, is influenced by traditional Indian flute music—complex and improvisational. A quiet, prayerful chorale leads to music portraying the beauty and excitement of a new day.
2. Among the Aspens (Chippewa, 1926)—portrait of a tepee in the midst of a thick grove of aspen trees bordering a stream. An introduction, consisting of stylized Indian drumbeats and pentatonic melodies leads to a scherzo portraying the rushing waters of the innumerable streams and rivers of the Chippewa nation.
3. The Vanishing Race (Navaho, 1904)—on horseback, a group of Indians in silhouette slowly ride into an uncertain darkness—an uncertain future. Using motives and rhythms of Indian memorial songs commemorating the dead, the music is alternately noble, sad, tragic, angry, and accepting.
4. Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon (Kwakiutl, 1914)—dancers surrounding a smoking fire. The ancient Kwakiutl of the Pacific Northwest Coast had a belief that the eclipsed moon was being swallowed by a creature of the night sky. By lighting a bonfire of old clothes and hair, they believed the stench would make the monster sneeze, thus disgorging the moon. The music is a programmatic portrayal of this legend. A dark, cold night with clouds rolling in front of the moon leads to the gradual lunar eclipse. Using heavy Indian drumbeats, the fire is lit and the frenetic dance begun. The dance culminates in a brass quintet cadenza—a sneeze—and the quiet return of the moon as feelings of joy and peace bring the work to a close.”

William Schuman (1910–1992) was unquestionably one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century American music, and his “day gig” as an administrator for, successively, G. Schirmer, Sarah Lawrence College, The Juilliard School, and Lincoln Center makes his musical legacy of more than 100 compositions all the more remarkable. The *New England Triptych* is the work that comes to most minds when Schuman’s name is mentioned. He shared Charles Ives’s delight in American hymn tunes and music of the people. He was also a friend and colleague of the foremost twentieth-century proponent of the hymn and fuguing tune, Henry Cowell, from the 1930s onward. Given these influences, it is not surprising that he would put considerable effort into creating a “fusion,” as he put it, of the music of the eighteenth-century hymnodist, William Billings, with his own. His first attempt was the orchestral piece the *William Billings Overture* of 1943. It received its premiere with the New York Philharmonic under Artur Rodzinski the following year, but Schuman was not satisfied with it, and withdrew it in favor of a reworked composition in three movements that was commissioned by André Kostelanetz, who gave it its first performance with the University of Miami Symphony on October 26, 1956. This work, *New England Triptych*, quickly entered the repertoire of American symphony orchestras and an arrangement of the third movement, *Chester*, for concert band appeared close on its heels, played by the University of Louisville Band in January 1957. This section takes Billings’s tune that, with new lyrics, was a popular marching song used by the Continental Army, and surrounds it with a defiant fife-and-drum martiality.

Moving backward through the sections, the band version of *When Jesus Wept* was next to appear. Premiered in New York City by the Goldman Band under Richard Franko Goldman on June 18, 1958, it has the following brief text:

When Jesus wept the falling tear
In mercy flowed beyond all bound;
When Jesus groaned, a trembling fear
Seized all the guilty world around.

This is set as a round and, in the band version, features a quiet and poignant dialogue between solo cornet and baritone.

Seventeen years passed before the final installment of the arrangement appeared. One of its earliest performances was given, appropriately enough, at Lincoln Center's Damrosch Park Bandshell by the Goldman Band on June 18, 1975. This section is mostly declamatory in nature, with jagged, propulsive figures driven by brass and timpani. Though this movement is not seized with quite the aggressive, warlike spirit of *Chester*, the text still exhorts:

Be glad then, America,
Shout and rejoice.
Fear not, O land,
Be glad and rejoice.
Hallelujah.

Melvin Epstein was born in New York City on February 12, 1923, and was using Mel Powell as his professional name by the time he became a pianist and arranger for Benny Goodman. He was then sixteen, having been spotted playing in a club and anointed for greatness by Art Tatum. With the advent of World War II, his talents and accomplishments got him assigned to Glenn Miller's Army Air Force Band. This very nearly became Powell's final engagement, but he was bumped at the last minute from Miller's flight—which disappeared over the English Channel. Barely five years after first gaining attention as a pianist, Powell realized that his career was not fulfilling his musical needs. As he often explained it, jazz was a performer's art, and only classical music would give sufficient importance to the composer he knew he was destined to be. After a halfhearted stint as a composer on the MGM payroll in Hollywood, he headed for Yale to study with Paul Hindemith. Powell became Hindemith's assistant and eventually succeeded him as head of the composition department. The final segment of his life was spent at the California Institute of the Arts as provost and then as a professor of composition. In 1990, he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his concerto for two pianos, *Duplicates*. Powell died on April 27, 1998, honored and respected, though his compositions never attained the popularity enjoyed by his work as a teenage jazz prodigy. His friend Milton Babbitt summed up his improbable-sounding life history, "Were there not a Mel Powell, we would not dare to invent him."

The *Capriccio* for concert band was written in 1950 and premiered the same year by the Goldman Band in New York. It occupies the stylistic middle ground of Powell's first attempts to leave his jazz origins behind. It displays none of the compositional "difficultness" of the later-period Powell so often mentioned in the same breath with Babbitt and Elliott Carter. Hindemith and the neo-classical works of Stravinsky are more present in spirit here than in any of the stripped-down (in the Webernian sense) scores that Powell was to painstakingly produce in the sixties and seventies.

Though one could detect dark undercurrents and proto-serialist imprints, it is much easier to simply enjoy this work, which is rhythmically ingratiating, harmonically transparent, and which concisely states its case, ending somewhat abruptly well before outstaying its welcome.

Peter Hirsch has worked as archivist, librarian and cataloger for the Institute for Jazz Studies and The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. He has been a freelance musician for more than thirty years and has played second horn in the Goldman Band since 1975.

Eric Ewazen was born in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1954. His composition teachers at the Eastman and Juilliard Schools and at Tanglewood have included Samuel Adler, Milton Babbitt, Gunther Schuller, and Joseph Schwantner. He has had works performed by the American Brass Quintet, the Greenwich (Connecticut) Symphony, and the Borealis Quintet (many of them commissions) at the Aspen, Tanglewood, Tidewater, and Caramoor festivals and elsewhere. He has taught at the Hebrew Arts School and the Lincoln Center Institute. Ewazen is on the faculty of The Juilliard School and has been a lecturer for the New York Philharmonic Musical Encounters Program since 1992. He has been composer-in-residence with the St. Luke's Chamber Ensemble and will occupy the same position for the International Horn Society at its June 2001 meeting in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His music appears on the Summit, Albany, Hyperion, Well-Tempered, and other labels, and this is his third recording in association with the American Brass Quintet.

The **Juilliard Wind Ensemble** is comprised of students who are members of Juilliard's regularly performing symphonic ensembles—the Juilliard Orchestra, the Juilliard Symphony, and the New Juilliard Ensemble. Performing annually in Alice Tully Hall, the Ensemble presents not only traditional repertoire, but also American and world premieres of numerous works.

When the **American Brass Quintet** gave its first public performance forty years ago, brass chamber music was relatively unknown to concert audiences. That modest debut on December 11, 1960, marked the beginning of an international concert career for the ensemble that includes performances in Europe, Central and South America, the Middle East, Asia, Australia, and all fifty of the United States; a discography of over forty-five recordings; and the premieres of more than one hundred new works for brass. Its achievements have served as an inspiration to a whole new generation of brass quintets worldwide. ABQ commissions by Bruce Adolphe, Jan Bach, William Bolcom, Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Eric Ewazen, David Sampson, Gunther Schuller, Ralph Shapey, Robert Starer, Virgil Thomson, and Charles Whittenberg, are considered some of the most significant contributions to the repertoire. The ABQ's long-standing commitment to the modern brass repertoire, along with the performance of their own editions of Renaissance, Baroque, and nineteenth-century brass repertoire, have firmly established this ensemble as the leader in the field of serious brass chamber music today. The American Brass Quintet has been in residence at the The Juilliard School since 1987, and at the Aspen Music Festival since 1970.

Mark Gould has led an active and varied musical life since joining the Metropolitan Opera orchestra as lead trumpet in 1973. In the United States, Mr. Gould has appeared as guest conductor and trumpet soloist with the Seattle Symphony, San Diego Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, and Hartford Symphony orchestras, as well as at festivals such as the Vermont Mozart Festival, the Waterloo Music Festival, the Madeira Bach Festival, and the Caramoor Festival. He also conducts and directs the New York Trumpet Ensemble and the Main Street Band, which is dedicated to bringing American wind band masterpieces to light. Mr. Gould has performed frequently as principal trumpet with the New York Philharmonic and has made guest appearances and recordings with the Canadian Brass, Empire Brass, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center,

and the Mostly Mozart Festival in New York. In addition, Mr. Gould travels regularly to Europe and the Pacific Rim countries to perform and present clinics and master classes. He has been on the Juilliard faculty since 1982.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Eric Ewazen

Ballade, Pastorale and Dance for flute, horn and piano. Albany TROY 371.

Dagon II. David Taylor, bass trombone. New World 80494-2.

Frost Fire, "...to cast a shadow again", Quintet for Trumpet and Strings, Sonata for Horn and Piano. Well-Tempered Productions WTP 5172.

William Schuman

Newsreel. Keystone Wind Ensemble, Jack Stamp conducting. Citadel 88132. Also includes band works by John Barnes Chance, Vincent Persichetti, Samuel Barber, Norman Dello Joio, Robert Russell Bennett, and other American composers.

Symphonies Nos. 3, 5 & 8. New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein conducting. Sony Classical 63163.

Symphony No. 7. Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Lorin Maazel conducting. New World 80348-2.

Symphony No. 10. Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra, Leonard Slatkin conducting. RCA Victor Red Seal 61282-2.

Three Colloquies for Horn and Orchestra. Philip Myers, horn; New York Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta conducting. New World 80326-2.

Mel Powell

Duplicates (Concerto) for 2 pianos and orchestra; *Modules*. A. Feinberg and R. Taub, pianos; Los Angeles Philharmonic, David Alan Miller conducting. Harmonia Mundi HMU 907096.

String Quartet. The Colorado Quartet. Albany TROY 259.

Woodwind Quintet. The New York Woodwind Quintet. New World 80413-2.

American Concert Music for Band

American Concert Band Masterpieces. Works by Samuel Barber, Robert Russell Bennett, Morton Gould, Vincent Persichetti, Walter Piston, and William Schuman. Eastman Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Frederick Fennell conducting. Mercury LP MG 40006.

Made in America. Works by David Diamond, Jacob Druckman, Robert Kurka, and Dana Wilson. Cincinnati Wind Symphony, Eugene Corporon conducting. Klavier CD KCD 11051.

A Trip to Coney Island. Works by C. L. Barnhouse, Andrew Herman, David Wallace Reeves, Thomas H. Rollinson, Albert C. Sweet, and Theo. Moses Tobani. New Columbia Brass Band, George Foreman conducting. Dorian Discovery CD 80153.

Trittico. Works by Norman Dello Joio, Vittorio Giannini, and Vaclav Nelhybel. Dallas Wind Symphony, Frederick Fennell conducting. Reference Recordings CD RR 52.

Winds of Change: American Music for Wind Ensemble from the 1950s to the 1970s. Works by Robert Russell Bennett, Henry Brant, Ross Lee Finney, Vincent Persichetti, and Hale Smith. The Northwestern University Symphonic Wind Ensemble, John P. Paynter conducting. New World 80211-2.

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Mel Powell

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Eric Ewazen (b. 1954)

Shadowcatcher (1996)

(publ. by Southern Music Co.)

1. I. Offering to the Sun 7:23

2. II. Among the Aspens 9:09

3. III. The Vanishing Race 7:26

4. IV. Dancing to Restore an Eclipsed Moon 8:42

American Brass Quintet; Juilliard Wind Ensemble; Mark Gould, conductor

William Schuman (1910–1992)

New England Triptych (1956)

(publ. by Merion Music, Inc.)

5. I. Be Glad Then, America 5:03

6. II. When Jesus Wept 6:45

7. III. Chester Overture 5:45

Juilliard Wind Ensemble; Mark Gould, conductor

Mel Powell (1923–1998)

8. *Capriccio for Band* (1950) 6:23

(publ. by Templeton Music)

Juilliard Wind Ensemble; Mark Gould, conductor

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