

The Uncovered Ruggles

A subtle chain of countless rings
The next unto the farthest brings;
The eye reads omens where it goes,
And speaks all languages the rose;
And, striving to be man, the worm
Mounts through all the spires of form.
—*Ralph Waldo Emerson, "Nature" (1836)*

"Creation is soul-searching. Nothing is ever finished."

—*Carl Ruggles*

Carl Ruggles (1876–1971) was a maverick American composer of short works that project a sense of infiniteness. His musical vision was majestic. However, like rare precious stones, his inimitable works were cast in print only a handful of times. To get to the essence of Ruggles, one can dig through piles of unpublished drafts and near-complete works that he left behind after his death in 1971. The circumstances around these works tell much about the creative process of his music and the philosophies that guided his craft. The incomplete works reveal triumphant music that swells the Ruggles canon, and deepens appreciation of his accomplishments. This recording offers a glimpse at Ruggles's grander transcendent art. The story of the unpublished sketches, transcriptions, and eventual realizations spans the twentieth century.

In 1974 The University of Minnesota Gallery hosted an exhibition of art works by the composer/painter Carl Ruggles. John Kirkpatrick was on hand to perform *Evocations* at a concurrent lecture-recital in Scott Hall. The Schubert Club hosted a reception. It was a posthumous homecoming of sorts for Carl Ruggles, who began his career as a violin teacher and conductor in Winona, Minnesota, in 1907.

Those were halcyon days for Ruggles. He was embarking on a life with Charlotte, the contralto with whom he had fallen deeply in love. He was presenting his own transcriptions of works like Hollman's *Chanson d'amour* and composing cordial pieces with tender titles like *Valse de Concert*. He was enthusiastically received by local audiences. But the innocent tenure in Minnesota ended five years later. A major donor of the symphony orchestra appeared as a soprano soloist under Ruggles's baton. He told her just what he thought of her singing, and was summarily dispatched out of town.

In the program booklet accompanying the Minnesota exhibit of Ruggles's paintings, Nina M. Archabal noted, "Having observed that there are no straight lines and no exact symmetry in the natural world he tried to apply that observation to both his musical compositions and to his painting." Carl Ruggles's long career described a comparably winding path. He was born into a family of whalers in Cape Cod in 1876, trained at Harvard, sojourned in the Midwest, made significant contributions to the artistic climate of New York City in the twenties, and then retreated to northern New England for the rest of his years. His long compositional life is marked by meandering sketches, delayed premieres, and remarkably few published imprints. Musical works proceeded with increasing effort.

In contrast to the paintings, which were spontaneous and quickly born in afternoon sessions, Ruggles's early-morning composing was labored. Art, to Ruggles, depicted mountains; music raised them from the earth. He deliberated over trails of arching atonal melodies that sought plangent peaks. Although he was portrayed as a crusty New Englander, Ruggles sought a worldly musical language devoid of provincialism. As the Transcendentalist Emerson describes in the poem "Nature," Ruggles was "striving . . . [to] speak all languages [like] the rose." His abstract sonic art literally rises up in a chain of "countless rings": circular phrases of overlapping notes that result in sustained chords. In this way, the climactic peaks of Ruggles's music also "ring," as in tintinnabulation. His works are suffused with sequences of clangorous intervals: stacks of perfect fifths, layers of tritones, driving descents of minor ninths. Each interval setting forth "the next unto the farthest brings." His compositions aim ultimately toward music that "Mounts through all the spires of form."

Ruggles's efforts produced works of uncompromising ascendance that resonate long after they stop. They immerse one in earth-shattering, teeth-chattering, and ear-splattering vibrations. The titles he chose describe the reverberations: *Sun-Treader*, *Men and Mountains*, *Portals*. His sonic labor was thoroughly evident. The few finished pieces are distillations of alternate takes—sketched starts and stops whittled into finished products. Offshoots and extensions of ventured tacks surround the few finished works as thickets enveloping a cleared trail.

Ruggles sought nothing less than the boldest modernism. He rubbed up against consonance and resolution; he wanted music to bend according to his will. The path was by definition a hardscrabble road. There's an old saying that Carl related, "Stumbling blocks are stepping stones." It was an apt credo. Carl Ruggles lived ninety-five years and struggled to publish a small oeuvre of twelve works, just enough to fill one concert program.

Despite Ruggles's limited output, his early stabs at modernism attracted the attention of visionary composers in the 1920s such as Dane Rudhyar, Edgard Varèse, and Carlos Salzedo. Cultivating a prickly demeanor, he was determined to shock the mainstream gentry of American music. He became a founding member of a daring composers' consortium based in New York City, the International Composers Guild. It grew to be a moving force in the presentation and acceptance of modern music in America. Meanwhile, he took his blustery persona to Arlington, Vermont, where he derived satisfaction in railing at the establishment from afar. In a letter to Varèse he rants: "What the hell is music coming to? . . . The only thing for us to do is to go on making music as we feel it should be made."

For Ruggles, that meant pursuing his craft largely in private. He occupied himself daily by painting landscapes and still lifes, and sketching music. He created scores on large canvases, small postcards, laundry cardboard, butcher paper—sometimes one musical bar to a leaf. Graphite, charcoal, and paint embellished the pencil and ink scores. He would stand across the room, viewing each as a portentous model that might stand alone as artistic testament.

He expressed little distress that his steady toil was not resulting in more finished pieces. Rather, he displayed satisfaction with his limited output. "Creation is soul-searching. . . . When you start a work and it goes easily, then you may be suspicious," he avowed. Ruggles was after steadfast dissonance reaching for magnificence. He carried the torch of Transcendental philosophy shared by his close friend Charles Ives to a northern New England extreme, inhabiting and working at the farthest reaches of the Emersonian and Thoreauian ideals. Ruggles was the more reticent, impractical, and stubborn of the two sympathetic colleagues. He subsisted on a meager income, lived largely on the generosity of his benefactors, and generally avoided people, living in a converted schoolhouse. He enjoyed the avant-garde status that he attained in the 1920s from a distant vantage point for the next fifty years.

Ruggles was also less secure in his compositional skill than Ives. His early music education and apprenticeship as a freelance violinist in musical theater pit orchestras offered the beginnings of a career in gentility. But Ruggles was intent on attaining a conspicuous modernist aesthetic. Ives's daring manuscript drafts were hasty, but of determined purpose. Generally, his mind had already uniquely conceived where each individual work would go. Ruggles's mountainous sketches were more the result of trial and error. He abandoned his largest-scale work, the opera *The Sunken Bell*, after years of toil. He forged overlapping drafts of undetermined destination. He ruminated over short musical cells. Henry Cowell described entering Ruggles's studio, hearing the composer playing the same chord over and over and over again. Pounding out the notes, Ruggles exclaimed, "I'm giving it the test of time."

Ruggles worked like an inventor, enjoying time alone in his workshop. This fits in with the mindset of early American art. Joseph Reed wrote, "Europeans have a romantic myth of genius: It wells up like a spring within the man and then he creates like a god might—Keats's 'Godlike hardship.' Only Americans would emphasize the *invention* of art—emphasize the tinkerer's work over godlike myth."

Ruggles likely knew that his creative style was impractical. The professed attitude about his work resounds like the music itself: independent, sweeping, and unyielding. He could fiddle indefinitely with a measure of music. Yet when it came to inscribing the work for public hearing, the "moment of truth," so to speak, he lowered his rebellious guise and sought enablers. To prepare drafted works for performance, Ruggles turned throughout his career to well-schooled musicians. His latched on to performers and scholars interested in seeing his music come to fruition, not just for their enthusiasm, but for their guidance. They were the conduits for realization.

Charles Seeger sat up late nights with Ruggles in the 1920s examining *Men and Mountains*, *Angels*, *Toys*, and *Portals*. About the creation of *Portals*, Ruggles wrote: “This morning I wrote a *new* slow movement for cello solo and strings coming in. Really the best thing I’ve done. . . . It’s a new scheme of composition and emanates [*sic*] from not repeating any note until the 10th. Seeger says it’s the right track.” Henry Cowell saw to the publication and performance of *Lilacs*. When Nicolas Slonimsky sought to conduct *Sun-Treader*, it was Cowell who sat with Ruggles preparing the score and parts. “Nicolas . . . sails tonight for Europe with the *Sun-Treader*. You see, we have to have a score for him . . . ,” Ruggles admitted to Charlotte. Ruggles sought advice frequently from Julian DeGray, a local Bennington College pianist, and Franz Lorenz, a Vermont cellist. DeGray described his role as “midwife” to *Evocation No. 1*. Lou Harrison saw *Organum* to a completed and published state. John Kirkpatrick collaborated on the revising and publishing of *Evocations* in 1954 and became Ruggles’s closest musical adviser.

Even after publication Ruggles would further re-visit his works. He continued corresponding with Kirkpatrick for decades about the fine tunings of the four short “chants” that make up the one published solo piano set. Jim Tenney, a composer friend in Vermont, went through a similar process when he performed *Evocations* some forty years after Kirkpatrick began the collaboration. Ruggles continued suggesting changes to the published revised edition for each new performance. He subscribed to, as Ives coined it, Emerson’s “lack of interest in permanence.”

After the collaborations that led to the public concerts, Ruggles toiled more on his own. He was bringing an improvisational inquisitiveness to a steel-trap medium. In the 1950s Ruggles worked in a particularly cellular fashion. He filled short spiral-bound elementary school music primers with one measure per page; he drafted loose manuscript sheets and drew graphic visuals that fall somewhere between art and music. Of all his collaborators, John Kirkpatrick most fervently inquired about the status of his work. Ruggles continually alluded to new pieces. “I have two new piano works, both of which need polishing,” he wrote in 1947. He added, “I have a *new* ‘Evocation.’ Inertia keeps me from making a nice copy.” He sent teasers to Kirkpatrick in the 1950s: postcards containing a work’s closing measures, letters that contained openings, titles for projected works. “My piano writing is rather tentative, but you will know what to do,” he urged Kirkpatrick.

After Charlotte died in 1957, his reclusive nature took a firmer hold. “I’ve lost my inspiration!” he exclaimed. His daily habit of sketching music continued, but his resistance to sharing his work intensified. He balked at commissions for new compositions and rejected offers for gallery exhibits of his art work.

Ruggles’s behavior continued down an ornery path. Micah (his son), in a letter to John Kirkpatrick, portrayed it lovingly: “Very few people understand him, and realize that his bark is nothing but spent energy or perhaps a sour note that has escaped.”

During his life Ruggles destroyed many sketches that he felt failed him and those that may have belied, as Kirkpatrick put it, “his self-imposed taboos”—music that lapsed into consonance, music that repeated itself, music of a quieter dimension. He discarded most of his early works (even the pieces published when he was a young man), including almost all the sketches for his opera. But he saved the later ones. The early music that he destroyed, and some of the incomplete music he left behind, might have felt simply too pretty for him to divulge. Other drafts perhaps stumped him, as he became more frail. Still others may have satisfied him as singular visual totems of his aural art. That he cared about them was evident, for he inquired about having his sketches archived in Vermont.

At his death Ruggles left stacks of musical sketchbooks and loose fragments toward works that appeared to offer a significant contribution to his small published canon. Hearing the notes on those pages is akin to a tour of his workshop, and takes a vital path toward understanding the transcendent art of Ruggles.

The John Kirkpatrick realizations of the Ruggles sketches

The scores for the unknown works on this recording began as posthumous realizations by John Kirkpatrick from the disparate Ruggles sketches. With Kirkpatrick as trusted editor, Ruggles had shown preliminary sketch ideas to him over the years, some via letters. He left remaining drafts and miscellaneous fragments toward these acknowledged works at his death. Counting the material marked for *Affirmations* (or *Evocation No. 5*, or in one place, *Visions*—the title Kirkpatrick favored) there are more than a thousand potential contributions to this piece alone. Considering the mountain of viable

sketches, his past collaborations with the composer, and a thirst to hear more music of the reticent Ruggles, Kirkpatrick assembled various sketches into performable editions. They are remarkably tight in construction. Kirkpatrick described his approach to pulling Ruggles's works together "like stringing pearls." This CD offers the first recordings of four substantial piano works, two songs, and a work for violin and piano realized by John Kirkpatrick.

I first learned of *Valse Lente* and the other Ruggles pieces in the 1980s from Kirkpatrick during my studies with him. When Kirkpatrick died in 1991 his papers were left to Yale. They include his editorial work on the Ruggles manuscripts. Comparisons with the Ruggles sketches, also housed at Yale, reveal that the notes of the Kirkpatrick realizations are indeed transcribed directly from them. Where Kirkpatrick asserts editorial judgment is in occasional emendations—a completed phrase, a transposition, a tidied-up rhythm, an elaborated inner voice. Decisions as to the sequence of phrases that complete each work are largely speculations of Kirkpatrick. He detailed the sources and explained his decisions in commentary to the pieces. In some cases I made choices of my own (usually deletions) after combing through the Ruggles sketches and comparing them to Kirkpatrick's illuminating guesswork.

Kirkpatrick wrote, in an unpublished draft for a preface to the four piano works he realized from sketches:

During the 35 years I knew him, Ruggles always despised the idea of posthumous editorial tinkering. When the press seized on the false alarm that some of Ives's Fourth Symphony had to be reconstructed, I can still hear him: "How DARE they touch their hand to that!" His anger was fixed, and I could never convince him that nothing had been missing. But when he died in 1971, one of my first thoughts was of Carl and Charlotte and Charlie and Harmony having wonderful times together, moving freely in eternity and infinity, and perhaps forgetting somewhat about finite things like their New England sense of privacy. . . . And it seemed, given his small finished output and the stacks of sketches toward works he had obviously meant to finish, that something might be done simply by stringing along sketches, to enable communication of this eloquent music.

I began with three rules: to make faithful preliminary transcripts (making sure of all details), to use only what seemed worthy of Carl's aim toward what he called "the sublime". . . and to clarify comparisons of sources (showing exactly what I was doing). The further I went, the more it felt like old times (the way we used to go at the piano-scoring of *Evocations* and the two-hand arrangement of *Organum*.)

It was puzzling why Carl never finished these pieces. In each one, all the parts seemed to fall naturally into place.

Where there is no finished autograph, there is no ur-text, and this makes editorial judgments more loaded, especially considering Ruggles's private nature. But Ruggles's many starts and variations on similar musical material presents an undeniable challenge to the admirer of his very few finished public pieces. What to do with the sheets of manuscript that far outnumber the published output? Given Ruggles's belief in the power of the unfinished, is it not fair to follow the path that segued drafts of related motifs might take us? Why not listen to the constructions of an iconoclast?

Notes on individual works

Evocations: Four Chants for Piano (1937–1954)

Like Ruggles's many oil paintings and charcoal drawings, each *Evocation*, or *Chant*, branches upward from the germ of a single gesture. (Ruggles also sketched several covers for the publication of *Evocations*, which were eventually published with cover art by his friend Rockwell Kent.) The music develops organically, following a projection worthy of Emerson's poem *Nature*. In *Evocation No. 1*, and in many other works here, the originating germ is the perfect fifth (Do-Sol)—as perfect, immobile, and unyielding as a perfect fifth can be.

Each of the four *Evocations* is dedicated to a person central to Ruggles's life and career, someone who enabled him to compose. Following the visual art model, each is a kind of "portrait" of its dedicatee.

Evocations No. 1 is for Harriette Miller, the art patron and sculptor, whose sponsorship was crucial to Ruggles throughout his career. The two-part writing is often in unison, suggesting the strength of the bond to his benefactor.

Evocations No. 2 is dedicated to John Kirkpatrick, committed collaborator, pianist, and the sort of editor Ruggles would turn to for finalizing works throughout his career. The movement is marked *Andante con fantasia*. Here, Kirkpatrick's whimsical side is evident. During an extended canon, the two hands follow closely in imitation, evocative of intricate musical discussion.

Evocations No. 3 is for Ruggles's wife, Charlotte. It is marked "plangently" (like bells), and is the most impassioned of the set.

Evocations No. 4 is for Charles Ives. Marked by falling perfect fourths and smoldering ascents, it is the most peaceful and mystical chant of the four.

Visions (1935–50; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980)

Of the Kirkpatrick realizations, *Visions* (also titled *Affirmations* in some sketches) is most likely the projected fifth *Evocation*. Beginning with a chain of perfect fifths, (sketched in the manuscript marked "To John, May '45"), the piece proceeds in arching phrases. The music is bolstered throughout by strong octaves in both hands. As a conjectured editing of different sketch fragments, its span has a more rhapsodic quality than the *Evocations*, four movements Ruggles obsessively distilled to epigrammatic length. All four Kirkpatrick realizations follow a broader A–B–A scheme that befit their extensive sketches. For the middle section of this work, Kirkpatrick used sketches that predate the material for the outer sections, making for a detour, a "window," on a more serene setting. It contains a quiet pedal point on the note A, a kind of whispering dominant to the driving timpani opening to *Sun-Treader*. A later sketch used contained a quote: "I'm a lone eagle, A Talisman, Proclaiming the Shapes of Destiny." On the manuscript for the work's intended ending, Ruggles simply wrote, "sublime."

March (1940–43; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980)

March was dedicated to Ruggles's son, Micah, who was a military police sergeant during World War II. The beginning and ending of the work was delineated by Ruggles and sent to Kirkpatrick. The middle of the piece is taken by Kirkpatrick from a trumpet motif that existed as a separate sketch—perhaps for the abandoned opera *The Sunken Bell*. This military fanfare motif, and ensuing paraphrase is borrowed from Ruggles's visionary work *Portals*, and gives this work the most programmatic suggestiveness of the Kirkpatrick realizations. A Ruggles sketch for that work included Walt Whitman's two-lined poem:

What are those of the known but to ascend and enter the Unknown?
And what are those of life but for Death?

Parvum Organum (1945–7; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980)

When Ruggles wrote to Kirkpatrick about hoping to finish up some new piano works "which need polishing," *Parvum Organum* may have been one of them. Ruggles first sent Kirkpatrick the last eleven bars of "little organum." Also rooted in a melodic layering of perfect-fifth intervals, various overlapping sketches bound together in the same sketchbooks established the opening section and much of the middle section. A passage in parallel fourths and fifths voices the organum idea, and a sketch for a three-part orchestral work fit seamlessly before the ending. The piece is less consistently canonic than *Organum*, more rhapsodic and lyrical.

Valse Lente (1945–50; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980)

Valse Lente grew from two phrases that Ruggles sketched on the pages of a score for another piece. Kirkpatrick found that there were other sketches for similar music. All the sketches were in 3/4 time and related to the idea of a slow waltz. Kirkpatrick remarked, "shaping it up was more rejection than discovery." Ruggles was especially coy about pursuing this work after initially showing Kirkpatrick the opening. After repeated pleas, Kirkpatrick speculated that Ruggles considered this music particularly private. The work is the most sympathetic to the flower and sunset oil paintings of Ruggles. It is gentle and tender, though suffused with contrapuntal friction.

Mood (1918, ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1975)

Mood was the title Ruggles supplied on a sketch bearing the superscription: "Our world is young/ Young, and of measure passing bound/ Infinite are the heights to climb/ The depths to sound." Ruggles started life in music as a violinist, so Kirkpatrick was naturally intrigued by this only work in the medium of Ruggles's own instrument. Formative sketches for this piece were undated, but suggest that they were early, made around the same time as work on the abandoned opera, *The Sunken Bell* (1918–23). Unlike the piano realizations, which are extensions of multiple sketches that Ruggles shared with

Kirkpatrick, the few pre-dated sketches for *Mood* were edited by Kirkpatrick solely on his own research. As always, he faithfully transcribed the Ruggles sketches into clear copy. He then searched for the piece's "inner urgency." His balancing of the sketches into "four paragraphs" makes the final edited form of *Mood* Kirkpatrick's most speculative of the realizations. But its derivation from sketches for a violin and piano piece (also called "Prelude to a Tragedy" in one case) and music from the opera, makes for a uniquely individual setting and the only examples we have of music for those works.

Organum (1944, arr. for 2 pianos, 1946)

Organum was Ruggles's last published work in 1944. Originally called "Invention for Orchestra," he settled on the title *Organum* after a suggestion by Edgard Varèse, who helped see to its publication. Varèse's insightful title speaks to the elements of Ruggles's unvarnished style. Organum is polyphony used in liturgical music from the late ninth century to c. 1250, the first contrapuntal style emerging from Gregorian Chant. It is "syllabic," meaning there is only one note per syllable. Much of this canonic piece intuitively evokes the "Parallel Organum" style—strict homophony with parallel fourths, fifths, and octaves, (the type of part-writing that became taboo to classical and Romantic composers). Ruggles, with the help of Kirkpatrick, transcribed the orchestral work to create this two-piano version. Later, Ruggles was moved to submit a piano solo version (with Kirkpatrick's help) for publication in *The New Music* journal. Ruggles was happy to quote Virgil Thomson's review of the piece, saying "He seemed almost convinced that the *Organum* was real music, 'Noble, passionate, climatic, declamatory, violent in expression,' etc., etc., etc."

Songs

Toys (1919)

Come here, Little son, and I will play with you.
See, I have brought you lovely toys
Painted ships, and trains of choo-choo cars,
And a wondrous balloon,
That floats, and floats, and floats,
Way up to the stars.

—*Carl Ruggles*

Toys was published by The H.W. Gray Co. (Novello) in 1918, Ruggles's earliest acknowledged music, at age 42. It is a short song, but a substantial model for Ruggles's developing avant-garde dissonant style. *Toys* brought Ruggles to the attention of Edgard Varèse, who invited Ruggles to help form the International Composers Guild. The song was premiered in 1923 by Lucy Gates, soprano, and Rex Tillson, piano. An article by visionary composer Dane Rudhyar on Ruggles's music followed, and Ruggles became a leader in the New York modern music movement.

Toys was written as a birthday gift for Ruggles's four-year-old son, Micah. The image of toys—choo-choo trains, ships, and balloons—are a colorful counterweight to the soaring dissonance Ruggles adopts to describe his musical playfulness.

***Ich fühle deinen Odem* (1901)**

Ich fühle deinen Odem
Mich überall unweh'n
Wohin die Augen schweifen,
Wähn' ich, wähn' ich, Dein Bild zusehn,

Im Meere meiner Gedanken Kannst Du nur untersehn
Um, wie die Sonne,
Morgens Schön wieder,
Schön wieder aufzustehn.

—*Friedrich Bodenstedt* (1874)

Thy presence ever near me
My yearning spirit feels;
A heav'nly radiance round me
Thine own bright form reveals

And from my soul's dark waters,
Whose depths thy soul may claim
Thou risest as tomorrow's sun to cheer,
To cheer my heart again.

Published in 1901 by A.P. Schmidt, *Ich fühle deinen Odem* ("Thy Presence ever near me") is the earliest extant published work of Ruggles. He destroyed all the copies in his possession, but five sources have survived at the Library of Congress. The poem appeared in Friedrich Bodenstedt's (1819–92) *Lieder des Mirza-Schaffy*.

The musical setting pays tribute to the early European training Ruggles received at Harvard under the tutelage of John Knowles Paine. It shows comfort with Germanic art song style. As a classically trained violinist and conductor, Ruggles embraced the vocal music of his day. He married a young contralto, Charlotte Harriet Snell, whom he met accompanying a group of songs by Robert Franz at a concert in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

On the cusp of maturing his dissonant style and vanguard status, Ruggles stressed, in a lecture at the Whitney Studio Club in New York, "After Beethoven came Schubert, with his wonderous lyric flowing. . . . His influence on melodic utterance has been incalculable." Later Ruggles stated, "Music really begins with Wagner. . . . The impression [of his work] . . . is of the bigness, the weight, and height of the figure, the extent of the ground it occupies—a tract on which there is ample room for all of us to lodge, and then not diminish the area. . . ." The progression from Schubert to Wagner to metaphors of expansive landscapes describes aptly the organic evolution of Ruggles's intuitive atonality.

***Windy Nights* (1921)**

Whenever the moon and stars are set,
Whenever the wind is high,
All night long in the dark and wet,
A man goes riding by.
Late in the night when the fires are out,
Why does he gallop and gallop about?

Whenever the trees are crying aloud,
And ships are tossed at sea,
By, on the highway, low and loud,
By at the gallop goes he.
By at the gallop he goes, and then
By he comes back at the gallop again.

—*Robert Louis Stevenson* (1885)

A galloping setting of the Stevenson poem, Ruggles created this straightforward song around 1921. Though tonal and simply set, the voice and accompaniment treat the murky undertones of the poem with low staccato registers and spiced consonances. Ruggles said, “I was thinking of Mike when I did it—Mike on a horse.”

Prayer (1924)

If on a Spring night I went by
And God were standing there,
What is the prayer that I would cry
To Him? This is the prayer:
O Lord of Courage grave,
O Master of this night of Spring!
Make firm in me a heart too brave
To ask for anything!

—*John Galsworthy* (1912)

Ruggles related to John Kirkpatrick: “It may be that Charlotte asked me to make a hymn out of that thing.” Composed on the same double-leaf as “Windy Nights,” it dates around 1924.

Exaltation (1958)

Charlotte Ruggles died in 1957. Carl grieved for her, and did not complete a commission or published work for the rest of his fourteen years. He did, however, compose a hymn, *Exaltation*, which harks back to the tonal style of the early songs Ruggles composed when they first met. He said simply, “Charlotte always wanted me to write a hymn for her.” Kirkpatrick wrote, three years before Ruggles died, “The surprise is to find so much of the lyrical intensity peculiar to Carl’s dissonant idiom carrying over into this diatonic plainness. It is still his most recently finished composition.”

Angels (1920, rev. 1943) (arr. for piano by John Kirkpatrick, 1946)

Originally composed for six muted trumpets, John Kirkpatrick transcribed *Angels* for piano solo as a way to round out short piano recitals of Ruggles’s music.

Angels is a hymn rooted in Ruggles’s early relatively melodic vocabulary, but sophisticated in the rhetoric of his incantational style. The work is short, but expansive, a ribbon of stretched melodies that are distilled in Ruggles’s published works. Carol Oja, writing in “The Ecstasy of Carl Ruggles,” describes his celestial vision: “The ‘apt distant glow’ of *Angels* . . . despite [its] textural fullness, can be heard as projecting a ‘void.’” *Angels* rises and dissipates like vapor from the multi-part harmonies of Ruggles’s craggy musical terrain.

—*Donald Berman*

Donald Berman’s recordings *The Unknown Ives* (CRI) and *The Unknown Ives, Volume 2* (New World Records) have been widely acclaimed. He was artistic director of the *Music of the American Academy of Rome* series at Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall in Fall 2002, and a featured performer at New York City’s Miller Theater and Zankel Hall in 2003. He has performed and lectured extensively, most recently as a guest of the Rubin Academy of Tel Aviv, Israel. Other recent work has ranged from Mozart concertos with the Columbus Symphony to American Music retrospectives, to recitals linking Haydn and Schubert with new music. Prizewinner of the 1991 Schubert International Competition and a member of the Dinosaur Annex Music Ensemble, he received a Visiting Artist Fellowship at the American Academy in Rome in 1998. He has been featured by the League/ISCM at Merkin Hall, the *Masters of Tomorrow* series in Germany, the French Cultural Services (Fauré Sesquicentennial), and many others. His appearances include NPR programs and with the Martha Graham and Mark Morris dance companies. He has premiered works for Collage, Real Art Ways, Core Ensemble, and on his series *Firstworks* for First Night Boston and *Pioneers and Premieres*. Berman co-directs the New Music Ensemble at Tufts University. He studied with Leonard Shure at the New England Conservatory, John Kirkpatrick, George Barth at Wesleyan University, and Mildred Victor in White Plains, New York. Please visit donaldbermanpiano.com for more information.

Soprano **Susan Narucki**'s recent appearances include performances with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony, John Adams and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the Schoenberg and Asko Ensembles on Great Performers at Lincoln Center and at the Netherlands Opera. Current season highlights include appearances with Pierre Boulez and the Cleveland Orchestra, the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, and the Orion String Quartet. In addition to her 2001 Grammy Award-winning disc of George Crumb's *Star-Child* (Bridge), she may be heard on Sony Classical, Philips, Angel, Chandos, Nonesuch, New World, Decca, and many other labels.

Pianist **Christopher Oldfather**'s eclectic career on all keyboard instruments has taken him as far as Moscow and Tokyo. The New York Philharmonic, the New World Symphony, and Ensemble Modern in Germany have all presented him as soloist, and he is a longtime member of Boston's acclaimed Collage New Music ensemble. The Juilliard Quartet has invited Mr. Oldfather to perform in Washington with them, and he and the Quartet's violinist Robert Mann recorded Elliott Carter's Duo, receiving two Grammy Award nominations in 1990.

Violinist **Daniel Stepner** is first violinist of the Lydian String Quartet, in residence at Brandeis University. He is also concertmaster of the Handel and Haydn Society, Artistic Director of the Aston Magna Festival, and a founding member of the Boston Museum Trio. He teaches at Brandeis and Harvard universities and has recorded chamber and solo music of Vivaldi, Bach, Handel, Marais, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Brahms, Ives, Harbison, Child, Shapero, and Wyner, among others.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Angels. London Gabrieli Brass Ensemble. Helios 55018.

The Complete Music of Carl Ruggles. Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Michael Tilson Thomas conducting; and others. Columbia M2 34591. (LP)

Men and Mountains. Cleveland Orchestra, Christoph von Dohnanyi conducting. London/Decca 443776.

Sun Treader. Cleveland Orchestra, Christoph von Dohnanyi conducting. London/Decca 443776.

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Publishing information

Exaltation, Evocations, Toys, Organum, Angels. Theodore Presser Company

Ich fühle deinen Odem. A.P. Schmidt

Visions, March, Parvum Organum, Valse Lente, Mood, Windy Nights, The Prayer. The John Kirkpatrick manuscripts, used by permission of The Irving S. Gilmore Music Library of Yale University.

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Producers: Donald Berman and Joel Gordon

Engineer: Joel Gordon

Digital mastering: Joel Gordon

Tracks 1–8 were recorded April 8–9, 2003, at Sonic Temple, Roslindale, Massachusetts. Tracks 9, 15, and 16 were recorded September 21, 2004, at Jordan Hall, Boston, Massachusetts. Tracks 10–14 were recorded October 10, 2004, at Recital Hall, Purchase College, State University of New York, Purchase, New York.

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Since this is largely a disc of unpublished music, I am indebted to the collections at The Irving S. Gilmore Music Library at Yale University and Librarian Suzanne Eggleston-Lovejoy, Archivist Richard Boursy, and Head Librarian Kendall Crilly. They pointed me in the right direction, caringly sorted oversized manuscripts, and scanned and photocopied pages of messy charcoal and graphite. I also thank my intrepid producer Joel Gordon, and my wife, Meredith, for cherishing the atonalities.

The research and preparations that led to this CD are a direct result of fastidious work by my mentor John Kirkpatrick (1905–1991), the American pianist, editor, and fervent colleague to emerging composers. His detailed transcriptions of Ruggles's handwritten sketches, preservation of all the materials Ruggles sent to him, and desire to foster the maturation of Ruggles's musical style (while honoring its early manifestations) shows heroic tenacity in the face of Ruggles's spitfire and crankiness toward the music establishment. Kirkpatrick's asserting influence brings this music to light for public scrutiny. Much of Ruggles's powerfully ruminative music is preserved as a result of Kirkpatrick's intercession. After Ives died, Ruggles wrote to Kirkpatrick about a posthumous performance of the *Fourth Symphony*. "It's a good thing, a most fortunate thing that *you* are on the job. Order out of Chaos!" One can imagine this comment as a portentous hope for his own works.

—*Donald Berman*

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THE UNCOVERED RUGGLES: Premiere recordings of unpublished sketches, transcriptions, and realizations by John Kirkpatrick

DONALD BERMAN, PIANO

80629-2

Evocations: Four Chants for Piano (1937–1954)

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. <i>Evocation No. 1: Largo</i> (to Harriette Miller) | 2:03 |
| 2. <i>Evocation No. 2: Andante con fantasia</i> (to John Kirkpatrick) | 2:49 |
| 3. <i>Evocation No. 3: Moderato appassionato</i> (to Charlotte Ruggles) | 1:34 |
| 4. <i>Evocation No. 4: Adagio sostenuto</i> (to Charles Ives) | 3:31 |
| | |
| 5. <i>Visions</i> (1935–50); ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980) | 6:21 |
| 6. <i>March</i> (1940–43; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980) | 4:51 |
| 7. <i>Parvum Organum</i> (1945–7; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980) | 4:42 |
| 8. <i>Valse Lente</i> (1945–50; ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980) | 5:12 |
| | |
| 9. <i>Mood</i> (for violin and piano) (1918, ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1975)
Daniel Stepner, violin | 4:55 |
| | |
| 10. <i>Organum</i> (1944, arr. for 2 pianos, 1946)
Christopher Oldfather, piano 2 | 6:07 |

Songs

- | | |
|--|------|
| 11. <i>Toys</i> (1919) | 1:28 |
| 12. <i>Ich fühle deinen Odem</i> (1901) | 2:14 |
| 13. <i>Windy Nights</i> (1921, ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980) | 1:22 |
| 14. <i>Prayer</i> (1924, ed. J. Kirkpatrick, 1980)
Susan Narucki, soprano | 1:13 |
| | |
| 15. <i>Exaltation</i> (1958) | 1:29 |
| 16. <i>Angels</i> (1920, rev. 1943) (arr. for piano by John Kirkpatrick, 1946) | 3:26 |

Total time: 53:27

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