

The Vision of Francis Goelet

When and if the story of music patronage in the United States is ever written, Francis Goelet will emerge as the single most important individual supporter of composers as well as musical institutions and organizations that we've ever had. Unlike donors of buildings—museums, concert halls, and theaters—where names of donors are often prominently displayed, music philanthropy is apt to be noted when a piece is first performed and then is likely to fade into history. In the course of Francis Goelet's lifetime he commissioned more symphonic and operatic works than any other American citizen. He paid for or contributed toward the staging of seventeen productions at the Metropolitan Opera, including three world premieres: Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* and *Antony and Cleopatra* and John Corigliano's *The Ghosts of Versailles*—but his most significant contribution was the commissioning of new music, starting in 1967 with a series of works to celebrate the New York Philharmonic's 125th anniversary. Several of these have become twentieth-century landmarks. In 1977 he commissioned a series of concertos for the Philharmonic's first-desk players, and to celebrate the Philharmonic's 150th anniversary in 1992, he paid for another thirty-six works. Beginning with the American Composers Orchestra's tenth anniversary he commissioned twenty-one symphonic scores, primarily from emerging composers. When New World Records was created in 1975 by the Rockefeller Foundation to celebrate American music at the time of our bicentennial celebrations, he was invited on the board and became its vice-chairman. At the conclusion of the Bicentennial he underwrote New World Records on his own, and this recording is a result of a continuation of his extraordinary legacy.

Hopefully because of Leon Botstein and others like him, the Goelet patronage will not just fade away, but will continue to be an example of what real artistic commitment is all about. We've never needed such a commitment more than we do now in this age of cultural gimmickry.

—Schuyler G. Chapin

Aaron Copland's last major orchestral work, *Inscape* (1967), completes a line of development that began essentially with the *Piano Variations* (1930) and continued intermittently over the composer's creative lifespan. These are the chromatic works, the lean or even severe antidotes to his more popular style. Over the course of this development one finds Copland taking an increasing interest in the techniques associated with the twelve-tone method.

Inscape opens loudly with a blazingly dissonant chord that is reiterated with slight changes in scoring. It is in fact a twelve-note row sounding as one vertical sonority. Struck and rolled cymbals give a violent touch to this opening, which is immediately followed by quietly expressive duets in the woodwinds. The contrast could hardly be more extreme: density, assertiveness, and full compass followed by spareness, hesitation, and isolated register. Throughout the work the two types of material contend, each moving in degrees toward the other's character before reverting to type. After a final gentle duet, *Inscape* ends with a crashing chord similar to that of the opening.

Copland derived his title from Gerard Manley Hopkins's puzzling phrase "instress of inscape," which the scholar W. H. Gardner explicated as a "quasi-mystical illumination, a sudden unity, which gives meaning to external forms."

In Copland's words, "this description . . . applies more truly to the creation of music than to any of the other arts." *Inscape* was given its premiere on September 13, 1967 at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor by the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Bernstein conducting.

Aaron Copland was born in Brooklyn, New York, on November 14, 1900; he died in North Tarrytown, New York, on December 2, 1990. The most celebrated and influential American composer of his time, Copland excelled at orchestral music and ballet. But his instrumental, solo vocal, choral, and film music all endure as mainstays of the American repertoire.

Roger Sessions's Symphony No. 8, composed in 1968, is dedicated to his daughter Elizabeth. The work is in two compact movements that are joined together without a pause between them. Particularly notable about the opening is the use of maracas, bereft of their customary ethnicity, to provide quiet, sizzling accompaniment to a melody that begins high and features notes that are widely spaced. This striking passage frames the entire work, coming as it does at the end of the second movement. It makes one other brief appearance near the end of the first movement. The tragic tone of that first movement, solemn and dirge-like, gives way to virile exuberance in the faster tempo of the second movement. Throughout, the idiom is richly chromatic; musical space is articulated at its limits by tuba and contrabassoon below and piccolo and glockenspiel above. Andrew Imbrie has written of the rhythmic aspects of this work, calling particular attention to its metrical freedom. The music surges forward despite a complex network of counterpoint.

The first performance took place on May 2, 1968; the New York Philharmonic was conducted by William Steinberg.

Roger Huntington Sessions was born in Brooklyn, New York, on December 28, 1896; he died in Princeton, New Jersey, on March 16, 1985. He wrote an opera, *Lancelot and Elaine*, at age thirteen and entered Harvard the following year. His precociousness extended to languages: He became fluent in French, German, Italian, and Russian. Sessions's nine symphonies and two operas (*The Trial of Lucullus* and *Montezuma*) form the bedrock of his large catalogue. An influential teacher, he held positions at Smith, University of California at Berkeley, and Princeton.

To modulate one's voice means to vary the tone, to avoid monotone. To modulate in music has traditionally meant to change the key center, the tonality. In recent composition another usage has emerged: tempo modulation, which involves changing the speed of the beat by keeping some fraction of that beat common in the shift to another beat. Thus the triplet in one tempo might become the eighth-note in a faster tempo.

George Perle's *Transcendental Modulations* (1993), which title evidently arose from a slip of a tongue intending "Transcendental Meditations," can be said to reflect all three meanings—and more. This just-over-twenty-minute work presents a succession of character images, contrasting in mood and including even a trace of jazz in the bass pizzicatos toward the end. Musical ideas (such as the bubbling-up of clarinets at the opening) reappear at different pitch levels (such as down a sixth in bassoons at bar twenty-four) to effect changes in tonality (as well as timbre). Twelve distinct tempos are carefully linked by common pulses. The result is what Michael Steinberg has called "a piece made of vividly profiled ideas."

George Perle, drawing on sources from surprising corners, has stated his overall intention as follows:

What do I want to say in my music? Whatever ultimate purpose may be, or may not be, hinted at in my title, to begin with I would answer the question by borrowing the words of the late Paul Desmond, alto sax with the Dave Brubeck Quartet in the 50s and 60s: "The things I'm after musically are clarity, emotional communication on a not-too-obvious level, the kind of form in a chorus that doesn't hit you over the head but is there if you look for it, humor, and construction that sounds logical in an unexpected way." I don't think that is inconsistent with another aim, for which I will borrow the words of Italo Calvino, who looks for "such structures as [will] enable me to unite density of invention and expression with a sense of infinite possibilities."

A major statement by one of America's most distinguished composers, *Transcendental Modulations* received its premiere on November 21, 1996 with Jahja Ling conducting the New York Philharmonic at Avery Fisher Hall.

George Perle was born in Bayonne, New Jersey, on May 6, 1915. The largest portion of his catalogue is devoted to chamber music (including nine string quartets) and solo instrumental works (especially for piano); but his orchestral music includes two Sinfoniettas, two piano concertos, and a violin concerto. Among his many awards are the Pulitzer Prize (for Wind Quintet No. 4), a MacArthur Fellowship, and two Guggenheim Fellowships. In addition to his accomplishments as a composer, George Perle is an influential music theorist and teacher; he is widely recognized as the principal authority on the operas of Alban Berg.

The unusual title of **Bernard Rands's** "... where the murmurs die ..." (1993) is a fragment from an early poem of Samuel Beckett, a writer to whom the composer has more than once turned for inspiration. Rands describes Beckett's literary approach as "the continuous recycling and re-juxtaposition of tiny language modules. . . ." Viewing his own work, he identifies three musical correlates of such modules—a folk-like melody, a dotted rhythm, and a pitch decorated by its lower and upper neighboring tones. Heard at the very opening in the muted cellos, these are, he writes, "gradually embellished and transformed until they create a complex network of relationships and references within an elaborate texture." An impressive line given strongly in the upper register of the trumpets is the convincing culmination of this procedure.

An Italianate lyricism and clarity pervade this delicately scored work showing, perhaps, the influence of Rands's early studies with Luigi Dallapiccola and Luciano Berio. Contributing to the distinctive coloration is the elaborate use of different types of mutes in the brass instruments. Correspondingly, the strings are often instructed to place their bows close to the bridge, creating the glassy timbral effect known as *sul ponticello*.

The world premiere of "... where the murmurs die ..." took place on December 11, 1993, at Avery Fisher Hall by the New York Philharmonic, Leonard Slatkin conducting.

Bernard Rands was born in Sheffield, England, on March 2, 1934; he became an American citizen in 1983. He has published more than one hundred works, mainly instrumental and vocal but with one stage piece and some use of electronics. His *Canti del Sole* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1984; his *Le Tambourin* won the Kennedy Center Friedheim Award in 1986. A dedicated teacher, Mr. Rands currently occupies the Walter Bigelow Rosen Professorship in Music at Harvard.

—Richard Wilson

Richard Wilson is composer-in-residence of the American Symphony Orchestra.

The **American Symphony Orchestra** was founded in 1962 by Leopold Stokowski with a mission to "perform concerts of great music within the means of everyone." As part of Lincoln Center Presents Great Performers, the orchestra performs thematically organized concerts at Avery Fisher Hall, linking music to the visual arts, literature, politics, and popular culture, often in collaboration with museums and other cultural institutions. With its bold programming, innovative presentation, and commitment to music education, the American Symphony Orchestra seeks to make great music a relevant, accessible, and enjoyable experience for all kinds of listeners. In addition to its main subscription series at Lincoln Center, the American Symphony Orchestra performs a lecture/concert series with audience interaction at Columbia University's Miller Theatre called *Classics Declassified*. It is also the resident orchestra of the new Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts at Bard College, where it is presented in a winter concert series, as well as the summer Bard Music Festival. The American Symphony Orchestra also works with a variety of music education programs at high schools in Manhattan and New Jersey.

The American Symphony Orchestra has toured the world, and made numerous recordings and broadcasts. Under Leon Botstein, it inaugurated São Paulo's new concert hall, and made several tours of Asia. Its most recent recording is Strauss's opera *Die ägyptische Helena* with Deborah Voigt, which was recently released by Telarc to outstanding acclaim. This recording joins the American Symphony's recording of Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae*, also from Telarc. In addition, Ernst von Dohnányi's Harp Concertino will soon be available from Bridge Records. Other recordings with Leon Botstein include *Franz Schubert: Orchestrated* on the Koch International label, with works by Joachim, Mottl, and Webern, and on the Vanguard Classics label Johannes Brahms's Serenade No. 1.

Leon Botstein is Music Director of the American Symphony Orchestra and of the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra. He is also Artistic Director of the Bard Music Festival. He performs with orchestras and opera companies throughout the world. Upcoming highlights include the staged premiere of Dukas's *Ariane et Barbe-bleue* with New York City Opera, and *Die ägyptische Helena* in Madrid with Deborah Voigt. With the American Symphony Orchestra he has recorded live performances of Strauss's operas *Die ägyptische Helena* and *Die Liebe der Danae*, Dohnányi's Harp Concertino, Brahms's Serenades, and music of Schubert. Among his other recordings are Chausson's opera *Le roi Arthur* with the BBC Symphony; Gavriil Popov's Symphony No. 1 and Shostakovich's Themes and Variations, Op. 3; Liszt's *Dante Symphony* and *Tasso* and Glière's Symphony No. 3, "Il'ya Muromets," all with the London Symphony Orchestra. With the London Philharmonic he has recorded Max Reger's *Böcklin Tone Poems* and *Romantic Suite*; Bartók's Concerto for Orchestra; music

of Karol Szymanowski; symphonies of Karl Amadeus Hartmann; Dohnányi's D-Minor Symphony, and Bruckner's Fifth Symphony (Schalk edition). Previously for New World Records, Mr. Botstein recorded music of Ernst Toch with the NDR—Hamburg.

Leon Botstein is a prominent scholar of music history, the editor of *Musical Quarterly*, and the author of numerous articles and books. For his contributions to music he has received awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and Harvard University's prestigious Centennial Award, as well as the Cross of Honor, First Class from the government of Austria. Since 1975, he has been president of Bard College in New York where he also holds the Leon Levy Chair in Arts and Humanities.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Aaron Copland

The Complete Music for Solo Piano. Leo Smit. Sony Classical 66345.

Concerto for Clarinet and Orchestra. Stanley Drucker, clarinet; New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein conducting. Deutsche Grammophon 431672-2.

Connotations. Juilliard Orchestra, Sixten Ehrling conducting. New World Records 80368-2.

A Copland Celebration, Volume 2: Chamber Music and Rarities. Sony Classical 89326.

Copland Conducts Copland. Includes *Appalachian Spring*, *Fanfare for the Common Man*, and *Rodeo*. Sony Classical 90403.

Symphony No. 3. New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Leonard Bernstein conducting. Deutsche Grammophon 419170-2.

George Perle

Complete Wind Quintets. The Dorian Wind Quintet. New World Records 80359-2.

Concerto No. 1 for Piano. Michael Boriskin, piano; Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz conducting. Albany Records 292.

Piano Works. Michael Boriskin. New World Records 80342-2.

Serenade No. 3 for Piano and Chamber Orchestra. Richard Goode, piano; Gerard Schwarz conducting. Nonesuch 79108.

Sinfonietta No. 2. Seattle Symphony Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz conducting. Albany Records 292.

Bernard Rands

Canti dell'Eclisse. Thomas Paul, bass; The Philadelphia Orchestra, Gerard Schwarz, conducting. New World Records 80392-2.

Canti Trilogy. Douglas Ahlstedt, tenor; Lucy Shelton, soprano; Thomas Paul, bass; Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Gil Rose conducting. Arsis CD 156.

Concerto for Cello, Piano and Percussion. Andrew Mark, cello; Hugh Hinton, piano; Michael Parola, percussion; Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Edwin London conducting. Albany Records 355.

Le Tambourin, Suites 1 and 2; Ceremonial 3. The Philadelphia Orchestra, Riccardo Muti conducting. New World Records 80392-2.

String Quartet No. 2. Mendelssohn String Quartet. Bis 1264.

Roger Sessions

Black Maskers Suite. Juilliard Orchestra, Paul Zukofsky conducting. New World Records 80368-2.

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra. Robert Taub, piano; The Westchester Philharmonic, Paul Lustig Dunkel conducting. New World Records 80443-2.

Piano Sonatas Nos. 2 and 3. Robert Helps. New World Records 80546-2.

Symphonies Nos. 4 and 5. Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Christian Badea conducting. New World Records 80345-2.

When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd. Esther Hinds, soprano; Florence Quivar, mezzo-soprano; Dominic Cossa, baritone; Tanglewood Festival Chorus, John Oliver; Boston Symphony Orchestra, Seiji Ozawa conducting. New World Records 80296-2.

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Bernard Rands

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Rands, Bernard. "I sing only for myself . . ." *Musical Times* 128 (September 1987), pp. 477–80.

Roger Sessions

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Sessions, Roger. *Roger Sessions on Music: Collected Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

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Francis Goelet (1926–1998), Chairman

THE VISION OF FRANCIS GOELET

This recording is a tribute to the vision of Francis Goelet (1926–1998), perhaps America's single most important individual in support of composers as well as musical institutions and organizations. The works on this CD represent a part of the extraordinary legacy of his commissions.

THE AMERICAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
LEON BOTSTEIN
80631-2

Aaron Copland (1900–1990)

1. *Inscape* (1967) 12:12
(publ. by Boosey & Hawkes)

Roger Sessions (1869–1985)

Symphony No. 8 (1968) 14:15
(publ. by Theodore Presser Co.)
2. Adagio e mesto 6:17
3. Allegro con brio 7:58

George Perle (b. 1915)

4. *Transcendental Modulations* (1993) 25:50
(publ. by Galaxy Music Corp.)

Bernard Rands (b. 1934)

5. ... *where the murmurs die...* (1995) 13:56
(publ. by E.C. Schirmer)

Total time: 66:15

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