

CRI 240

RICHARD HOFFMANN

String Trio

Paul Zukofsky, violin; Jean Dupouy, viola; Robert Sylvester, cello.

DONALD MARTINO

Fantasy Variations

Paul Zukofsky, violin

Trio

Paul Zukofsky, violin; Arthur Bloom, clarinet; Gilbert Kalish, piano

RICHARD HOFFMANN was born in Vienna (1925), raised in New Zealand, where he emigrated in 1935, and settled in the United States in 1947. He began studying the violin at the age of 5 and had his first public performance (of an orchestral suite) when he was 10. After academic studies in New Zealand, he sent manuscripts to Arnold Schoenberg, who thereupon accepted him as a scholarship pupil. From his arrival until Schoenberg's death in 1951, Hoffmann worked closely with the great composer, becoming his amanuensis and secretary. Simultaneously, he began teaching and studying for his Ph.D. at U.C.L.A., and remained in teaching positions there until he moved to Oberlin (1953); he is now Associate Professor of Music of the Oberlin College Conservatory of Music.

Out of Hoffmann's close association with Schoenberg grew his technique of composition which, though serial in method, uses tone-rows that are not necessarily dodecaphonic. In practice, every element of his music — the intervals, metres, rhythms, timbres and dynamics — is systematically organized.

The STRING TRIO was begun in 1961 (Altmünster, Austria) and, after approximately a year's interruption, completed in 1963 (Los Angeles, California).

Of its construction, Mr. Hoffmann writes:

“The piece is in a single movement (approximately 15 minutes). The kaleidoscopic treatment of the musical substance in detail (fragmentation, juxtaposition, rotation); the confluence of a number of coequal contrasting sections (elision, dovetailing); the interaction of disparate elements; rhythmic dissonance; conflicting dynamics (even with sustained sonorities); the notation of each instrument on three staves (upper: **sul ponticello** or **sul tasto**, the middle: **arco**, the lower: **pizzicato** or **col legno**), and localized **accelerandi** and **ritardandi** — all are designed to create the maximum possible illusion of multidimensional movement and to emulate in sound the inherently unstable characteristics of a **mobile**. This is done without recourse to the arbitrariness and forced spontaneity of improvisation, but rather, within the paradoxical framework of rigid control and matrix-like construction.”

DONALD MARTINO, one of the rising stars in an advanced school of composition, last appeared on CRI as composer of CONCERTO FOR WOODWIND QUINTET (CRI 230), as a result of his American Academy of Arts and Letters award in 1967. The enclosed compositions were recorded as the result of an award by the American Composers Alliance. Both display the composer's flair for careful and elegant technique, as well as his remarkable tonal imagination.

Martino has said that his FANTASY VARIATIONS for Violin (1962) combines the variation technique—always fundamental to the science of composition — with the freedom and unpredictable character of the fantasy. The work is in one movement with multiple sections. In some instances the sections are rough durational variants of each other, but more often the concept of continuous variation operates across structural boundaries.

Regarding the 12-tone-motivated procedures, Martino says:

“This was my first composition which employed timbre and register to stratify simultaneously-progressing total-set forms. The opening demonstrates a case of register, timbre and dynamics synchronized for the purpose of differentiating set-forms as well as set motif-members. Further use of synchronization and permutation of pitch adjuncts, coordinated with simultaneously interlocking, unfolding and overlapping sets, occurs as the piece progresses.”

Martino's TRIO for Violin, Clarinet, and Piano (1959) contains seven sections related in the manner of a simple rondo: A-B-A'-C-A"-B'-A"'". The A sections are moderate to fast in tempo; the B and C sections are permutations of each other, in that each section contains the same material reshuffled. The B sections are retrogrades of each other; although the first B section is incomplete, its completion in the second B section is only delayed by the appearance of A', C and A". The C section is independent of A and B. Timbre, register, dynamics and, to some extent, rhythm, play an important role in clarifying the pitch structure.

PAUL ZUKOFSKY is one of America's most remarkable young violinists, undertaking music of titanic difficulty and delivering it with consummate ease. His performances win the approval of the composers as well as the public. In addition to playing the solo work included here, he was responsible for organizing the performances of the other two works on this record. Not surprisingly, the renditions of his colleagues match his own for craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail.

The American Academy of Arts and Letters and its parent organization, the National Institute of Arts and Letters, are honorary societies with a distinguished membership of creative artists. They are chartered by an act of Congress and are devoted to the furtherance of the arts in the United States.

Through joint committees of selection, these societies every year award fifteen grants to young artists in recognition of distinction and promise. Four of these awards go annually to composers, in addition to the Marjorie Peabody Waite Award given every third year to an established composer of distinction.

In the spring an exhibition of the works of award winners in painting and sculpture is held at the Academy building. In 1956, it was decided to inaugurate a series of recordings with the similar purpose of calling attention to the works of award winners in music. This release, presented in collaboration with Composers Recordings, Inc., offers works by 1966 award winner Richard Hoffmann.

(Original Liner Notes from CRI LP Jacket)