

INTERNATIONAL ELECTRONIC MUSIC

This record contains fine examples of three different types of electronic music: "pure" synthesized sounds (Perera), natural sounds modified by electronic processing (Johnson and Grippe), and sounds created by a computer (Melby). Both the Melby and Johnson pieces require that a live performer combine real time performance with that of the tape.

JOHN MELBY

TWO STEVENS SONGS (1975)

for Soprano and Computer-Synthesized Tape

Phyllis Bryn-Julson, soprano

Tape part computed at the Digital Computing Laboratory, University of Illinois and converted at the Godfrey Winham Laboratory, Princeton University

JOHN MELBY (b. 1941 Whitehall, Wis.) received a Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music; he studied composition at the University of Pennsylvania (M.A.) with Henry Weinberg and George Crumb, and at Princeton University (M.F.A., Ph.D.), with Peter Westergaard, J.K. Randall, and Milton Babbitt. In addition to many pieces composed either for computer-synthesized tape alone or the combination of live performers with computer-generated sound, his output includes piano music, string quartets, songs, and music for various other chamber-music and orchestral combinations. In 1976 he was Professor of Music at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His *91 PLUS 5* appears on CRI SD 310. The composer writes:

“The poetry of Wallace Stevens lends itself particularly well to musical settings; one need only recall the many settings of what is probably his best-known poem, *Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird* (Allan Blank's setting is on CHI SD 250). The reason for the great degree of compatibility between Stevens' poetry and music may have something to do with the ambiguity present in most of his poems, many of which can be interpreted in rather fundamentally different ways, all of which may be reasonable and equally valid approaches. This aspect of Stevens' work has attracted me for a number of years. The TWO STEVENS SONGS constitute the first in a projected series of compositions based on Stevens texts and written for various voice ranges. TWO STEVENS SONGS was written especially for Phyllis Bryn-Julson.”

RONALD PERERA

ALTERNATE ROUTES (1971)

Realized at the Bregman Electronic Music Studio, Dartmouth College

RONALD PERERA (b. Boston, 1941) received both A.B. and M.A. degrees in music from Harvard, where he studied composition principally with Leon Kirchner. In 1967, on a travelling fellowship from Harvard, he studied electronic music and computer composition with Gottfried Michael Koenig at the University of Utrecht. He was three times awarded Harvard University's Francis Boott Prize in choral composition, and has received awards or commissions from the Paderewski Fund, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, the Goethe Institute, and the National Endowment for the Arts. He taught at Syracuse University and Dartmouth College before joining the faculty of Smith College in 1971, where he is an Associate Professor of Music and director of the electronic music studio. He has written works for both conventional and electronic media, seven of which are published by the E.G. Schirmer Music Company, and is co-editor of *The Development and Practice of Electronic Music*, published by Prentice-Hall. The composer writes:

“ALTERNATE ROUTES was composed in 1971 at the Bregman Electronic Music Studio, Dartmouth College, for dancer/choreographer Alison Becker Chase, who was then directing the newly formed Dartmouth Dance Company. From the start of the composition I conceived of all the sounds as having kinetic properties: wild spins and runs versus infinitely delicate and subtle departures from complete stillness. The shape of the piece evolved as a tension between these opposing ideas of movement and the music alternates between two materials: one densely percussive, the other fragile and transparent.

“Another kind of alternation involved here has to do with a device on the synthesizer known as the electronic switch, which can route an input signal back and forth between two outputs. When an audio signal is alternately routed to two different speakers at a speed approaching an audio rate (around twenty times a second), a strange shimmering effect is created. This shimmering is a characteristic of the lighter of the two materials in the piece. All of the sounds are electronic in origin, and were produced on a Moog synthesizer.”

RAGNAR GRIPPE

MUSIQUE DOUZE (1975)

Realized at Electronmusikstudion (EMS), Stockholm

RAGNAR GRIPPE (born Stockholm, 1951) studied in Stockholm, Paris, and Montreal and privately with Luc Ferrari. He has composed an impressive body of electronic music at studios in those cities and has collaborated on numerous dance, theater, broadcast, and mixed media projects there and in the U.S.A. Since 1972, he has made his headquarters in Paris. The composer writes:

“MUSIQUE DOUZE is an attempt to oppose instrumental sounds to their electronic equivalents, and thus to apply different consequent functions to specific sequences. One might say that the electronic parts have a more linear function because of their static character while the instrumental sounds undergo intricate and rapid changes.

“The piece has a *delta* form where one finds the use of several similar sequences mixed in alternate ways and thereby providing totally different results. The piece was acoustically designed for the concert hall where it was first performed at the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation in Stockholm, using sixteen loudspeakers placed throughout the performing space.”

BENGT EMIL JOHNSON

DISAPPEARANCES (1974)

Mats Persson, piano

Tape part realized at Fylkingen's Studio, Stockholm

BENGT EMIL JOHNSON (b. 1936) lives in Stockholm and is active as poet, composer, and broadcaster. He has published eight books of poetry and has been very active in the field of so called “text-sound-composition” - tape compositions where texts are recorded and arranged with electroacoustic development and combined with other sounds, concrete and/or electronic. He has composed electronic, instrumental, and vocal music. Since 1966 he has been working for the Swedish Radio as a producer and planner of music programs. He is editor of the quarterly magazine *Nutida Musik* (Contemporary Music). The composer writes:

“DISAPPEARANCES was composed in 1974 and is dedicated to Mats Persson, the pianist, who has performed the piece on many concerts in Europe and Canada, including

the ISCM festival in Paris in October 1975. DISAPPEARANCES consists of a live part and a two-channel tape with pre-recorded piano sounds, arranged and transformed at Fylkingen's Studio in Stockholm with the help of composer Lars-Gunnar Bodin. The title refers to the rapid passages which — mainly in the beginning of the piece — appear and immediately disappear again.”

PHYLLIS BRYN-JULSON has a formidable reputation for her ability to sing the most difficult contemporary music as easily and beautifully as she sings the classics.

MATS PERSSON is a well-known interpreter of new piano music. During the last five years he has performed with the Swedish group Harpans Kraft, which performs new music of "classical" type, music written especially for the group by Swedish composers, and compositions worked out by the group as a collective.

This recording was made possible by grants from the Swedish Institute, and the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., from which John Melby received a Composers Grant in 1976.

Produced by Carter Harman

THIS IS A COMPOSER-SUPERVISED RECORDING

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)