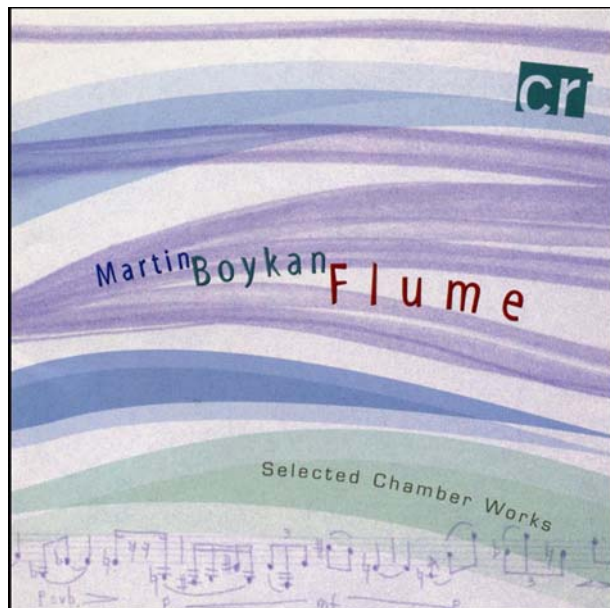


NWCR897

Martin Boykan

Flume



- Sonata for Violin and Piano (1994) (17:54)
1. Molto Moderato (5:48)
 2. Alla Marcia (3:33)
 3. Variations (8:33)
- Cyrus Stevens, violin; Donald Berman, piano
- A Packet for Susan* (2000) (19:59)
4. It Often Comes Into My Head (Walter Savage Landor) (1:58)
 5. The Good-Morrow (John Donne) (4:45)
 6. Bright Star (John Keats) (5:45)
 7. The Owl and the Pussycat (Edward Lear) (3:17)
 8. Well I Remember (after Walter Savage Landor) (4:14)
- Pamela Dellal, mezzo-soprano; Donald Berman, piano
9. *Flume* – Fantasy for Clarinet and Piano (1998) ... (10:40)
- Ian Greitzer, clarinet; Donald Berman, piano
- String Quartet No. 1 (1967) (18:56)
10. Sostenuto (6:38)
 11. Allegro (4:25)
 12. Interlude, Adagio espressivo (3:12)
 13. Leggiero (4:41)
- The Contemporary Quartet: Jeanne Benjamin Ingraham, violin; Thomas Kornacker, violin; Jacob Glick, viola; Christopher Finckel, Cello
- Total playing time: 68:06
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Notes

During the middle and latter part of the twentieth-century, serialism was much used by concert music composers residing in the United States. Inspired by the Second Viennese School, its adherents include some of the century's most important and influential names: Milton Babbitt, Ursula Mamlok, Donald Martino, Roger Sessions, and Charles Wuorinen, among others. Even composers not so closely associated with the aesthetic, such as Samuel Barber, Arthur Berger, Aaron Copland, Irving Fine, George Rochberg, and Igor Stravinsky, wrote successful music that utilizes its techniques. **Martin Boykan**, born April 12, 1931 in New York City and a member of Brandeis University's music faculty since 1957, has over many years time produced a splendid body of work rivaling that put forth by these aforementioned luminaries.

Surprisingly, Boykan's list of composition teachers reads like a "Who's Who" of mid-century stateside neoclassicism. Copland, Paul Hindemith, and Walter Piston guided the young man's development during his studies at Harvard (B.A., 1951), Yale (M.M., 1953), and the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood—and in fact, the music of his student days clearly shows this influence. But after a lengthy dabble with less rigorous means of ordering pitches (influenced notably by composers such as Elliott Carter and Seymour Shifrin, and, to a lesser extent, Hindemith) that lasted from his 1950s Fulbright Fellowship in Vienna until the late 1960s, the twelve-tone output of composers such as Webern eventually proved decisive on Boykan's muse, coloring all his mature

compositions to a certain degree. In general, his work shows a formidable, though never exhibitionist sense of craft and a challenging, yet always idiomatic feel for instrumental writing; Boykan was for many years an accomplished pianist (appearing with the Boston Symphony and the Brandeis Chamber Ensemble, among others) and his experience as a practical performer clearly informed his oeuvre with the latter quality.

String Quartet No. 1

The earliest of the selections presented on this release, String Quartet No. 1 (1967), was not actually Boykan's first essay in the genre (an unnumbered student work—now withdrawn—that dates from 1949 and bears Piston's fingerprints, carries that distinction). Winner of the 1967 Jeunesse Musicales prize, it shows this composer already forging an eloquent, somewhat brooding personal style within an East Coast ethos, not yet twelve-tone (based instead, according to Eleanor Cory's article in *Perspectives of New Music*, on one of a hexachordal and tetrachordal pitch collection) and fully laden with well-turned, consistent motivic figures that nonetheless exhibit much variety and suppleness in application. Modest similarities to traditional quartet literature can be heard here at times. In addition to second and third movements that are respectively scherzo-like and placid, one finds such things as a sonata-inflected recapitulation, led off by active low tessitura solo cello figures, about three-quarters of the way through the first movement. But one will search in vain for

lockstep neoclassic constructs—the forms generated are both imaginative and satisfying. One of the first pieces that Boykan considered mature enough to disseminate widely, it remains one of this composer's finest works.

Sonata for Violin and Piano

Beginning in the early 1990s, his music began to demonstrate a remarkable inward depth and ageless mastery, analogous in a certain way to the burnished late period output of Beethoven, Liszt, and Verdi. The remaining tracks heard here perfectly illustrate this. The three-movement Sonata for Violin and Piano (1994) contains a relaxed, yet subtly energetic manner of speech that meshes well with a sense of unfolding that is leisurely but never flaccid. Trills and gradually unwinding versions thereof are liberally sprinkled throughout movement one and make cyclic reappearances later, serving as a unifying device. And Boykan's evocations of marches (in the second movement) and variation techniques (in the finale) are entirely his own. One of many inspired strokes can be found in this variation set, which not only concerns itself with the initial thematic idea of the last movement, but also deftly incorporates hints of the two prior movements into its fabric.

Flume: Fantasy for Clarinet and Piano

Flume: Fantasy for Clarinet and Piano (1998) adapts ternary architecture to a unique end, embedding numerous attractive wrinkles within the expected formal delineation and prefacing it all with an extended introduction for solo clarinet that can stand on its own if need be. The comparatively busy center of the piece runs its material, replete with reiterated-note and trill-like gestures, from scherzando fleeciness to robust vivacity. And cleverly, echoes of the music persist in background fashion throughout the last structural division's evocation of beginning section items. As in the 1994 Sonata, the duo members are treated very much as commensurate partners, with the pianist encountering nearly as much exposed material as the clarinetist. Like a number of these late compositions, it's both clean and concise, not a whit too lengthy. Unusual in Boykan's post 1960s work, it does not employ serial techniques.

A Packet for Susan

There are those who complain that twelve-tone music can only conjure up dour, Expressionist moods. A cursory perusal of this literature, however, suggests otherwise. Note for

example the clever frothiness of Babbitt's *Phonemena*, the crepuscular hush of Rochberg's *Serenata d'Estate*, the dramatic ardor of Martino's *Notturmo*, the austere ritual feel of Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles*, or the friendly folksiness of the central movement to Copland's Quartet for piano and strings. Upon hearing *A Packet for Susan* (2000), it's almost certain that the perceptive listener will characterize it as serialism's supreme exponent of loving warmth and low-key whimsy. Scored for mezzo-soprano and piano, it's an affectionate bouquet of musical flowers composed for Boykan's wife, visual artist Susan Schwalb. Setting five top-quality poems ranging from the highly familiar (Edward Lear's "The Owl and the Pussycat"—might this be in part an homage to Stravinsky's last composition?) to the somewhat lesser known ("Bright Star" by John Keats and "Good Morrow" by John Donne), this delightful and irresistible piece embeds a noticeable number of perfect fourths and fifths within its still-dissonant serial sound world. Once again, the composer uses an imaginative larger structure, employing brief songs based on love poetry respectively written and inspired by Walter Savage Landor as a frame for the other, more substantial entries. And unlike some Atlantic Coast *tonemeisters*, Boykan's vocal writing is superbly done; there's no high, strained shrieking on inappropriate vowels, for example.

No less accomplished a maestro than Yehudi Wyner has (according to Howard Pollack's book *Harvard Composers*) declared Boykan to be the "most fluently brilliant musician I've ever known aside from Hindemith" and "one of the glories of our culture." After experiencing such a first rate clutch of works, it's hard not to concur with such an enthusiastic assessment. In short, this is a disc sure to appeal not only to devotees of the dodecaphonic aesthetic but also to any discriminating audience member with a sympathetic ear for non-triadic styles.

—David Cleary

David Cleary is a Boston-based composer and critic. His reviews appear in the *New Music Connoisseur*, *21st Century Music*, *The Enterprise* (Brockton, MA), and the book *All Music Guide to Rock* (2nd edition). Publications such as *The Performing Arts Career Directory* (Gale Research) and the forthcoming *Women and Music in America since 1900* (Oryx Press) also contain his writings on musical subjects.

Texts for A Packet for Susan

1. *It Often Comes Into My Head*

It often comes into my head
That we may dream when we are dead,
 But I am far from sure we do.
O that it were so! then my rest
Would be indeed among the blest;
 I should for ever dream of you.

—Walter Savage Landor

2. *The Good-Morrow*

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we lov'd? were we not wean'd till then?
But suck'd on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the seaven sleepers den?
T'was so: But this, all pleasures fancies bee.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desir'd, and got, t'was but a dreame of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking soules,
Which watch not one another out of feare;
For love, all love of other sights controules,
And makes one little roome, an every where.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
Let Maps to other, worlds on worlds have showne,
Let us possesse one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appeares,
And true plaine hearts doe in the faces rest,
Where can we finde two better hemispheares
Without sharpe North, without declining West?
What ever dyes, was not mixt equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none doe slacken, none can die.

—John Donne

3. *Bright Star*

Bright Star, would I were steadfast as thou art—
 Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
 Like nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
 Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
 Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
 Pillow'd upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
 Awake for ever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever,—or else swoon to death.

—John Keats

4. *The Owl and the Pussycat*

I

The Owl and the Pussy-cat went to sea
 In a beautiful pea-green boat,
The took some honey, and plenty of money,
 Wrapped up in a five-pound note.
The Owl looked up to the stars above,
 And sang to a small guitar,
'O lovely Pussy! O Pussy, my love,
 What a beautiful Pussy you are,
 You are,
 You are!
What a beautiful Pussy you are!'

II

Pussy said to the Owl, 'You elegant fowl!
 How charmingly sweet you sing!
O let us be married! too long we have tarried:
 But what shall we do for a ring?'
They sailed away, for a year and a day,
 To the land where the Bong-tree grows
And there in a wood a Piggy-wig stood
 With a ring at the end of his nose,
 His nose,
 His nose,
With a ring at the end of his nose.

III

'Dear Pig, are willing to sell for one shilling
 Your ring?' Said the Piggy, "I will."
So they took it away, and were married next day
 By the Turkey who lives on the hill.
The dined on mince, and slices of quince,
 Which they ate with a runcible spoon;
And hand in hand, on the edge of the sand,
 They danced by the light of the moon,
 The moon,
 The moon,
They danced by the light of the moon.

—Edward Lear

5. *Well I Remember*

Well I remember how you smiled
 To see me write our names upon
The soft sea-sand, - "O! what a child!
 You think you're writing upon stone!"
We have since fashioned what no tide
 Shall ever wash away, what those
Unborn shall find o'er ocean wide
 Entwining our two names again.

—after Walter Savage Landor

Pianist **Donald Berman** has been a member of Dinosaur Annex since 1987. He was 1998 Visiting Artist Fellow at the American Academy in Rome and a prizewinner in the 1991 Schubert International Competition, Germany. Berman has been featured soloist with the Columbus Symphony, at Merkin Hall in New York City, on the "Masters of Tomorrow" series in Germany, La Foce in Tuscany, Tanglewood, and with the Martha Graham and Mark Morris Dance companies. He developed the "Firstworks" program for First Night Boston and directs the Rome Prize Concerts in New York. Berman has premiered works for Nuclassix, Real Art Ways, Alea III, Core Ensemble, and on his Dinosaur Annex-produced series "Pioneers and Premieres." His solo recording *The Unknown Ives* (CD 811) and his performances with Dinosaur Annex on *Arthur Levering: School of Velocity* (CD 812), Ruth Lomon's *Songs of Remembrance* (CD 887) and Boykan's *City of Gold & Other Works* (CD 841) are issued on CRI.

Mezzo-soprano **Pamela Dellal** has sung under conductors Seiji Ozawa, Christopher Hogwood, Paul McCreesh, Bernard Labadie, Roger Norrington, and William Christie. Ms. Dellal has performed with ensembles such as the Lydian String Quartet, Boston Baroque, the Boston Early Music Festival, Aston Magna, the National Chamber Orchestra, and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra. She has toured Japan as a soloist with the Tokyo Oratorio Society and has been a featured artist with the Prism Opera Company, Opera Aperta, Ocean State Lyric Opera, and the Opera Company of Boston.

As a member and acting director of Sequentia's women's ensemble Vox Feminae, Dellal has made numerous recordings of the music of Hildegard von Bingen, including solo work on the Grammy-nominated *Canticles of Ecstasy*.

She is a founding member of Favella Lyrica, an ensemble that performs music for two voices from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as well as a member of the eight-voice Cambridge Bach Ensemble. Dellal has premiered works by contemporary composers Martin Boykan, Edward Cohen, Alan Fletcher, and Shulamit Ran. She has recorded for Arabesque Records, Artona, BMG, CRI (CD 887), Dorian, Meridian, and Koch International Classics.

Ian Greitzer serves as principal clarinetist of the Rhode Island Philharmonic and Boston Classical orchestras and the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, and has performed with the Boston Symphony and Boston Pops orchestras, the Boston Ballet, the Boston Lyric Opera, the Pittsburgh Symphony, and the Harvard Chamber Orchestra. He teaches at Boston University and Boston Conservatory, and has recorded for Philips, Koch International, South German Radio, CRI (CD 812), and Northeastern Records.

Violinist **Cyrus Stevens** is a member of Parnassus and of the League/ISCM chamber players in New York, and for fifteen years has been on the performing staff of the Composers' Conference and Chamber Music Center now housed at Wellesley College. He is a member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and is a former member of both the Scholarship String Quartet of NEC and the Graduate String Quartet of the Hartt School, where he has taught. Stevens joined the core ensemble of Dinosaur Annex in 1995. He has appeared often as soloist in the Berg Violin Concerto with the New York City Ballet's production of *In Memory of...* and on several CRI recordings, including Boykan's *City of Gold & Other Works* (CD 841). Stevens is a graduate of the Hartt School of Music and of New England Conservatory.

Production Notes

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