

- Lester Trimble
1. *Symphony in Two Movements* (1951) ..... (14:25)
  2. *Five Episodes for Orchestra* (1961-62) ..... (11:06)  
Japan Philharmonic Orchestra; Akeo Wantanabe, conductor
- Louise Talma
3. *La Corona: Holy Sonnets of John Donne* (1954-55) ..... (19:40)  
The Dorian Chorale, Harold Aks, conductor

**Lester Trimble** (b 1923) is a native of Wisconsin whose musical education was gained chiefly in the Midwest, supplemented in 1947 by summer study at the Tanglewood Berkshire Music Center. There followed a year of study in Paris in 1951 with Milhaud and Honegger. However, his chief training in composition has been with Russian-American composer Nikolai Lopatnikoff at the Carnegie Institute of Technology. Mr. Trimble's subsequent career has encompassed teaching on the music faculty at Chatham College in Pittsburgh, music criticism for the *New York Herald Tribune* and *The Nation* magazine, and his present position as professor of music at the University of Maryland. Major awards and citations have included a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Columbia University Alice M. Ditson Grant, and the American Academy of Arts and Letters Citation. Besides the present recording under Academy of Arts and Letters auspices, Mr. Trimble has been represented on discs by his *Four Fragments from the Canterbury Tales* (Columbia) and his Pittsburgh Symphony-commissioned *Closing Piece* (CRI 159). Other major works by Mr. Trimble, besides those recorded here, include an opera, *Boccaccio's Nightingale*, a Concerto for Winds and Strings, *Duo* for Viola and Piano, and two string quartets.

The two Trimble scores recorded here display his musical language in its youthful and in its mature phases. Says Mr. Trimble of the *Symphony in Two Movements*:

"The Symphony was composed in 1951 while I was teaching at Chatham College, and just prior to departure for Paris for studies with Darius Milhaud and Arthur Honegger. The music was revised in 1960, although only in details. Form and melodic structure were not affected in the process.

"The Symphony was conceived originally as an attempt to make the virtues of a three-part structure combine successfully with those of a two-part form. The result was a work which, in a sense, builds a pair of pyramidal structures. At the apex of each is to be found mutually related melodic material, which thus binds together the two movements, despite the fact that each begins with distinctly different thematic material. The opening melody of Movement I is heard again in a coda to Movement II, thereby providing an additional element of relationship between the two movements.

"In sum, the *Symphony in Two Movements* can be described aptly as a work of my youth in its original version, with the addition of some *savoir faire* in its revision. It is more sumptuously orchestrated than many of my later works; but the strong sense of melody which pervades it is a characteristic that has remained throughout all of my subsequent works."

A note in the published score (Duchess Music Corp., New York City) tells us that Mr. Trimble's *Five Episodes for Orchestra* was commissioned by the Florida Symphony Orchestra and its conductor, Henry Mazer, and premiered under his direction in Orlando in February of 1962. Continues the prefatory note: "*Five Episodes for Orchestra* was composed and orchestrated during the months of December 1961 and January 1962. The work marks a turning point in the composer's conception of compositional structure and materials. In Trimble's previous works, continuity and form were conceived as products of a long, developed, thematically structural line. In the *Five Episodes for Orchestra*, however, thematic development is abandoned in favor of a prismatic, motivic examination of the contents of a harmonically organized twelve-tone configuration.

"One might infer from the title that each Episode is a separate, discrete entity. This is not actually the case. Each Episode is conceived as a structure fulfilling a dual function. The Episodes, in themselves dramatically and motivically homogeneous entities, all contribute to the flow of a dramatic line which is the work as a whole. Episode I functions more or less as an Overture. It presents the materials to be used throughout the work. Episode II, based on the same twelve-tone configuration, changes the mood of the work toward introspection. Episode III, composed from materials of the aforesaid twelve-tone row, makes a dynamic thrust toward the heart of the *Five Episodes* which resides in the fourth Episode. This section is characterized partly by the sustained presence of a harmony comprised of all twelve tones of the chromatic scale. It functions both as a 'development' section, and as the climax of the work. The fifth Episode is, technically speaking, an inversion of the second."

**Louise Talma** (b 1906, Arcachon, France) received her general and musical education in New York City at the Institute of Musical Art, New York University (B.M.) and Columbia University (M.A.), and in sixteen summer sessions at the Fontainebleau School of Music in France, studying composition with Nadia Boulanger and piano with Isidor Philipp. During the summers of 1936-39, she was herself a teacher of solfège at Fontainebleau, the only American to have taught there. Miss Talma has been on the faculty of Hunter College of the City of New York since 1928 and has been professor of music there since 1952.

Miss Talma is the recipient of more than a dozen major musical awards, including the Bearns Prize for Composition, a Fulbright Grant, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Koussevitzky Foundation Commission, and the 1960 Marjorie Peabody Waite Award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. Among her works are an opera, *The Alcestiad*, with a libretto written for her by Thornton Wilder (1955-60); *Toccata for Orchestra* (1944, recorded on CRI 145); *La Corona* (1954); String Quartet (1954), Violin Sonata (1962); two piano sonatas, and most recently, a piano concerto commissioned by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra.

Concerning *La Corona*, Miss Talma notes:

"The seven *Corona* sonnets of John Donne were first brought to my attention by Donald Aird, at that time conductor of the Berkeley Chamber Singers. I was immediately drawn to them by reason of the circular form in which the last line of each sonnet is used as the first line of the next one, and the last line of the last sonnet is the first line of the first sonnet. This presented highly interesting possibilities for musical variations. When, therefore, a year later Lloyd Pfautsch offered me a commission to compose an *a cappella* work for the Illinois Wesleyan University Collegiate Choir of which he was the conductor, I decided to use the *Corona* sonnets, and, since I wished to exploit the aforementioned variation possibilities, to base them all on a single series.

"The work was composed in the ten weeks of August 11 to September 27, 1954 and June 14 to July 6, 1955, mostly at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire.

“The Illinois Wesleyan University Collegiate Choir performed three of the sonnets in the spring of 1955. The first complete performance was given by the Dorian Chorale under the direction of Harold Aks in the Colden Auditorium at Queens College, New York, on November 9, 1964, and recorded by the same group for CRI some weeks later.

“The work is dedicated to Donald Aird and Lloyd Pfautsch.”

**Akeo Wantanabe** and the **Japan Philharmonic Orchestra** have been represented on the CRI label by a number of other major first recordings of American repertoire, including Roger Sessions’s First Symphony (CRI 131), Aaron Copland’s *Dance Symphony* (CRI 129), Carl Ruggles’s *Organum* (CRI 127), Henry Cowell’s *Music 1957* (CRI 132), and Charles Wuorinen’s Symphony No. 3 (CRI 149). In addition to his recordings for CRI, Mr. Watanabe has recorded much contemporary Japanese music in his homeland, as well as all the Sibelius symphonies (his mother is a native Finn). The Japan Philharmonic Orchestra has also recorded works by Samuel Barber, William Bergsma, Douglas Moore, Alan Hovhaness, and Julia Perry for CRI under the direction of American conductor William Strickland.

**Harold Aks** and the **Dorian Chorale** have won unstinting praise from the New York critical press for their performances of contemporary music. Composed of sixteen highly trained professional singers, the Dorian Chorale has displayed a special flair for unraveling the knottiest problems of intonation and rhythm posed by the works of composers writing in twelve-tone idiom for *a cappella* voices. Their performance of Louise Talma’s *La Corona* is a striking instance in point. Harold Aks has long been known as one of the most brilliantly gifted choral directors on the New York musical scene. He is presently on the music faculty of Sarah Lawrence College and the Mannes College of Music.

*(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*

John Donne (1572-1531)

### 1. La Corona

*DEIGNE* at my hands this crown of prayer and praise,  
Weav'd in my low devout melancholie,  
Thou which of good, hast, yea art treasury,  
All changing unchang'd Antient of dayes;  
But doe not, with a vile crowne of fraile bayes,  
Reward my muses white sincerity,  
But what thy thorny crowns gain'd, that give mee,  
A crowne of Glory, which doth flower alwayes;  
The ends crowne our workes, but thou crown'st our ends,  
For, at our end begins our endlesse rest;  
The first last end, now zealously possest,  
With a strong sober thirst, my soule attends.  
'Tis time that heart and voice be lifted high,  
*Salvation to all that will is nigh.*

### 2. Annunciation

*Salvation to all that will is nigh;*  
That All, which alwayes is All every where,  
Which cannot sinne, and yet all sinnes must beare,  
Which cannot die, yet cannot chuse but die,  
Loe, faithfull Virgin, yeelds himselfe to lye  
In prison, in thy wombe; and though he there  
Can take no sinne, nor thou give, yet he will weare.  
Taken from thence, flesh, which deaths force may trie.  
Ere by the spheres time was created, thou  
Wast in his minde, who is thy Sonne, and Brother;  
Whom thou conceiv'd; yea thou art now  
Thy Makers maker, and thy Fathers mother;  
Thou hast light in darke; and shutst in little rooms.  
*Immensity cloysterd in thy deare wombe.*

### 3. Nativitie

*Immensity cloysterd in thy deare wombe.*  
Now leaves his welbelov'd imprisonment,  
There he hath made himselfe to his intent  
Weake enough, now into our world to come;  
But Oh, for thee, for him, hath th' Inne no roome?  
Yet lay him in this stall, and from the Orient,  
Starres, and wisemen will travell to prevent  
Th'effect of *Herods* jealous generall doome.  
Seest thou, my Soule, with thy faiths eyes, how he  
Which fils all place, yet none holds him, doth lye?  
Was not his pity towards thee wondrous high,  
That would have need to be pittied by thee?  
Kisse him, and with him into Egypt goe,  
*With his kinde mother, who partakes thy woe.*

#### 4. Temple

*With his kinde mother, who partakes thy woe.*  
Joseph turne backe; see where your child doth sit,  
Blowing, yea blowing out those sparks of wit,  
Which himselfe on the Doctors did bestow;  
The Word but lately could not speake, and loe  
It sodenly speakes wonders, whence comes it,  
That all which was, and all which should be writ,  
A shallow seeming child, should deeply know?  
His Godhead was not soule to his manhood,  
Nor had time mellowed him to this ripnesse,  
But as for one which hath a long taske, 'tis good,  
With the Sunne to beginne his businesse,  
He in his ages morning thus began  
*By miracles exceeding power of man.*

#### 5. Crucifying

*By miracles exceeding power of man,*  
Hee faith in some, envie in some begat,  
For, what weake spirits admire, ambitious, hate;  
In both affections many to him ran,  
But Oh! the worst are most, they will and can,  
Alas, and do, unto the immaculate,  
Whose creature Fate Is, now prescribe a Fate,  
Measuring selfe-lifes infinity to' a span.  
Nay to an inch. Loe, where condemned hee  
Beares his owne crosse, with paine, yet by and by  
When it beares him, he must beare more and die.  
Now thou art lifted up, draw mee to thee,  
And at thy death giving such liberall dole,  
*Moyst, with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule.*

#### 6. Resurrection

*Moyst with one drop of thy blood, my dry soule*  
Shall (though she now be in extreme degree  
Too stony hard, and yet too fleshly,) bee  
Freed by that drop, from being starv'd, hard, or foule,  
And life, by this death abled, shall controule  
Death, whom thy death slue; nor shall to mee  
Feare of first or last death, bring miserie,  
If in thy little booke my name thou enroule,  
Flesh in that long sleep is not putrified,  
But made that there, of which and for which twas;  
Nor can by other meanes be glorified.  
May then sinnes sleep, and deaths soone from me passe,  
*Salute the last, and everlasting day.*

## 7. Ascention

*Salute the last and everlasting day,*

Joy at the uprising of this Sunne, and Sonne,

Yee whose just teares, or tribulation

Have purely washt, or burnt your drossie clay;

Behold the Highest, parting hence away,

Lightens the darke clouds; which hee treads upon,

Nor doth hee by ascending, show alone,

But first hee, and hee first enters the way.

O strong Ramme, which hast batter'd heaven for mee,

Mild Lambe, which with thy blood, hast mark'd the path;

Bright Torch, which shin'st that I the way may see,

Oh, with thy owne blood quench thy owne just wrath,

And if thy holy Spirit, my Muse did raise,

*Deigne at my hands this crown of prayer and praise.*