

CRI SD 281

LOUISE TALMA: Piano Sonata No. 2

ROGER SESSIONS: From My Diary

HENRY COWELL:

Episode

Invention

Six Ings Plus One

DONALD LYBBERT: Sonata Brevis

HERBERT ROGERS, pianist

LOUISE TALMA 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 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 Beams Prize for Composition, a Fulbright Grant, two Guggenheim Fellowships, a Koussevitzky Foundation Commission, the 1960 Marjorie Peabody Waite Award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters and a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. Among the works are an opera *The Alcestiad* on a libretto written for her by Thornton Wilder, *Toccata for Orchestra* (recorded on CRI 145), *La Corona* (CRI 187), a string quartet, a violin sonata, two piano sonatas, *Dialogues for Piano and Orchestra*, commissioned by the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and a work for baritone and orchestra, *The Tolling Bell*, commissioned by the MacDowell Club of Milwaukee for the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra.

She writes:

“My second Piano Sonata was composed to unite tonal and serial elements in one work. In August 1944 I wrote the first nine measures and measures 36-39 of the first movement, and the first seven measures of the second movement. This beginning I had to set aside to do other things. In January 1952 I took it up again. By then I had become interested in serial writing and did not wish to return to an exclusively tonal style. But I liked those twenty measures, which are tonal, and wanted to use them. So I decided to combine them with a serial continuation (measures 31 *ff.*) and see what I could make of that. All the movements employ this procedure in some form or other. Subsequently I used it in other works, notably in my opera, “The Alcestiad”.

“After another interruption of three years, the Sonata was completed August 22, 1955 at the MacDowell Colony in Peterborough, New Hampshire, where most of it was composed. It is dedicated to Thornton Wilder.”

ROGER SESSIONS (b. Massachusetts, 1896) has been called, in an awed tone, the titan of American music. In *FROM MY DIARY*, however, he displays a more intimate side of his creative nature in four brief pieces. The pieces were his favorites among a series he wrote as a task he set himself to write one a day. Each one is dedicated to one of his pupils, more as a gesture than because of any deep, identification. Sessions did admit, however, that he dedicated each work to the pupil he thought would be able to play it.

HENRY COWELL (1897-1965) composed such a large amount of music that treasures are still being discovered — and this despite his prominence that began when he unleashed his tone-clusters on an unprepared world as a very young man. Although he created many large scale works, (he wrote 20 symphonies) he was himself a pianist, and his piano music reveals some of his subtlest and wittiest thoughts.

The first six *INGS* were published in New York by Breitkopf and Haertel in 1922 and reissued by Associated Music Publishers in 1950. They are titled, *FLOATING*, *FRISKING*, *FLEETING*, *SCOOTING*, *WAFING*, and *SEETHING*. According to a well established rumor, the seventh was rejected only because its title, *WHISKING*, might be offensive during the years of Prohibition.

DONALD LYBBERT was born in Iowa in 1923 and attended the University of Iowa, the Juilliard School of Music and Columbia University. His American composition teachers were Elliott Carter, Bernard Wagenaar and Otto Luening; he also studied with Nadia Boulanger in France. He has supplemented his composition by writing (he is co-author of a text, *The Essentials of Counterpoint*) and teaching (he is Professor of Music at Hunter College in New York).

Mr. Lybbert's style is, like Louise Talma's, a fusion of classical and serial elements. He has written a considerable amount of chamber music, two operas, symphonic music and a concerto for piano and orchestra with electronic synthesis, which was composed with the aid of a grant from the Research Foundation of the City University of New York.

SONATA BREVIS was commissioned by the pianist, George Pappa-stavrou, completed in 1962 and premiered at a concert of the Contemporary Music Society in New York. The work is serially oriented. It develops two sharply contrasted musical ideas throughout the pitch and dynamic range of the piano. In a concert review, the *Musical America* critic commented on its “sensitive and unusual sense of sonority — sharply expressive — rarified, subtle and rewarding.”

HERBERT ROGERS hails from Texas, where he had already performed many times and won a number of significant competitions while still in grade school and high school. Just before coming to New York he appeared as soloist with both the Houston and Dallas Symphonies, and as a culmination of his years in Texas the mayor and Chamber of Commerce of his home town, Wichita Falls, proclaimed a "Herbert Rogers Day" celebration.

In New York he studied with Olga Samaroff-Stokowski, Carl Friedberg, Rosalyn Tureck, and most recently with Sascha Gorodnitzki. He was graduated from the Juilliard School of Music in 1956, immediately after which he began tours as soloist with chamber groups and orchestras that took him to 48 states in this country, all the provinces of Canada, and the main capitals of western Europe. Over a period of 10 years he gave more than 600 performances.

His New York debut took place in 1958 in Town Hall, sponsored by the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music. As a result of the success of this concert he was awarded an appearance on the coveted Young Artist Series at New York's Metropolitan Museum the following season.

Mr. Rogers won the "International Piano Recording Competition" in 1952, appeared as soloist with the Juilliard Symphony for two consecutive years as winner of the competition, and was the recipient of a Fulbright fellowship to Germany in 1959, where he also made a United States Information Service tour and recorded for radio broadcasts in Holland. Back in New York and again at Town Hall in 1963, Mr. Rogers gave a recital of all first performances of music written by well-known young composers.

During the period from 1966 to 1968, he served as a member of the faculty at the University of California, Santa Cruz, and since the fall of 1968 he has been assistant professor of music at Hunter College in New York.

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(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)