

NOËL LEE

Five Songs

on Poems by FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

Adele Addison, soprano

Samuel Baron, flute

Rey de la Torre, guitar

(Courtesy of Epic Records)

MARK BUCCI

Summer Aria and Spring Aria

from "Tale for a Deaf Ear"

Vocalise and Tug of War

from "Concerto for a Singing Instrument"

Adele Addison, soprano

James Payne, piano

THE FIVE SONGS on poems by García Lorca are striking examples that demonstrate the compatibility of lyric writing with the twelve-tone system of composition. It would seem, although this point can be debated, that the use of duodecuple regulation imparts to the melodies, a dry, almost ascetic quality that enhances their subtlety and beauty without in any way minimizing their essential poignancy. Of this work, the composer has said that "here was an attempt to recapture the peculiar and very special atmosphere which pervades the poems." That he is successful is evident.

In order to further insure the realization of his aim, the composer has made an apt choice of voices. The combination is not original, but here it has been effectively rediscovered— the soprano (in this case a warm, sensitive lyric), the flute (ready to blend with the human voice and possessed, in this context, with a long and futile cantilena), and the guitar (an instrument always associated with things Spanish. The guitar gives foundation, but more, it adds fire and accent, a caress of the wind and a strum of remorse, the rattle of barrenness and the richness of Death).

That the songs are not in Spanish should be of little consequence. It is enough to note that the author first discovered them in French, is at home in that language and has a host of precedents, too numerous to mention.

The formal organization is simple. Each of the songs is built on its own series of twelve notes. The exception, the last one, uses the four rows of its predecessors. Each performer works independently at the development of a given song's row once he has introduced it, with the result that three variants of the same series are simultaneously unfolding. Since the tempo of "evolution" for each voice is carefully controlled by the composer, together with repetition and "back-tracking," the results are tonal and often impressionistic.

Noël Lee began his musical education in Indiana (he was a composer at six) and continued at Harvard, with Walter Piston and Irving Fine, and at the New England Conservatory. He went to France for study with Nadia Boulanger and has since taken up residence in Paris.

Among his awards and grants have been the Prix Lili Boulanger (1953), a prize from the Louisville Orchestra (1951) and a grant from the National Institute and American Academy of Arts and Letters (1959). The Lorca Songs were awarded first prize in the Arthur Shepherd Composition Contest sponsored by the Ohio State Music Teacher's Association (1961).

Lee has also built a substantial reputation as a pianist, with particular emphasis on chamber and contemporary music. His activity as a performer has led him on tours of four continents and he has contributed some twenty recordings, ranging from Bach to Copland, many of which were made in collaboration with the violinist, Paul Makanowitsky.

IT IS DIFFICULT to describe the essential lyricism that characterizes the music of Mark Bucci. It too has that quality of asceticism associated above with Lee's Lorca Songs, but Bucci's manner of achieving this is entirely different. He is a tonal composer, with the conviction that tonality still offers considerable grist for the composer willing to use his intellect as well as his senses.

Bucci's feeling for melodic rise and fall, his understanding of dramatic climaxes (and that more subtle area: when is a climax not a climax), his breathtaking (there is no other word for it) use of the cadential crescendo capped by a subito pianissimo resolution, and his feeling for the proper presentation of a miracle—that is, the child is not reborn amidst a peal of thunder and a surge of brass and organ; nor is the cow given life to the accompaniment of a chorus of bell ringers—only the fervent happiness of those living who have regained those whom they had loved and lost—it is these positive qualities that give Bucci's music his personal stamp.

To place the two arias, *Dehna be deed*, *Loodi* and *Ridonatelo*, in proper context, it is necessary to outline briefly the story of "Tale for a Deaf Ear." A married couple, Tracy and Laura Gates, who are middle-aged and bitter, begin a quiet Sunday afternoon quarrel. Although this probably happened whenever they were alone, today's is a bit more fierce and, reaching a violent rage, she empties the contents of her highball glass in his face. He moves to strike her, is seized with a heart attack and falls, dead.

As the realization of the enormity of what has happened reaches her, she hysterically summons a doctor, and prays for Tracy's return with the profound promise that she will change and will "always remember love."

A chorus then relates the story of Hypraemius the Mariner whose essential goodness earned him the use of four miracles: one for each season of the year, to be granted to a true penitent.

In flash-back tableau form the previous miracles are related, beginning with the Ridonatelo (Spring miracle), in which a Fifteenth Century Florentine noblewoman pleads for the life of her infant; then a Scottish farm girl (Summer miracle pathetically asks for the return of her lightning-struck cow, and ending with a German soldier's dramatic bargain for the life of his younger brother (Autumn miracle). It is this last aria that contains the poignant line: Tod! Gesteh' nur ein mal diese kleine niederlage. (Death! for once accept a small defeat).

The scene returns to the dead Tracy Gates and his lamenting wife. Having fulfilled the requirements of time and heart, the fourth and final miracle is to be hers. But Tracy's return to the living is not marked by mutual love and understanding. The world has become "civilized;" there are no miracles; everything does have a rational explanation and so they resume their quarrel. At its renewed peak he, highly apoplectic, moves to strike her and dies once more, this time beyond salvation.

The music for this miracle play is a tour de force of economy. Themes are stated, expanded and contracted, worked and reworked; they form the basis of one emotion and supply an undercurrent for another. Bucci is continually conscious of the need for form, with the result that the work is tight and cohesive, developing logically and smoothly from start to finish. It is easy to point out song forms, a hint of a passacaglia and other components of carefully wrought music, but it is the drama of the work that repays careful listening.

THE "CONCERTO for a Singing Instrument" was written in 1959 and the third movement was premiered by Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic on March 26th, 1960 with Anita Darian as kazoo soloist.

The raison d'être for the Concerto is summed up in the composer's introduction to the score:

"So much has been written for the voice that is sometimes awkwardly instrumental in nature, that occasionally one feels turnabout is fair play. In this work then, the solo part is treated like the human voice, stressing (as the title implies) singing tone rather than virtuosity. Because of this, the music is generally simple and constant by intent and design."

Although a kazoo soloist was used for the initial performance, Bucci has also issued instructions for performance with singer and such dissimilar instruments as flute, guitar, harmonica, whistler (i.e., one who whistles), bassoon, recorder and organ.

The Vocalise utilizes the finest aspects of the singer's art: delicate phrasing, the legato line, rich tone and subtle dynamics. The play between voice and accompaniment is generous and satisfying; each is permitted full use of the outlined material and each amply supports the other.

The Tug of War is essentially a formal rondo, but is also a satire on the problems that face the soloist and orchestra in terms of tonality and meter.

Mark Bucci was born and educated in New York City. He attended St. John's University in Brooklyn, was a private student of Tibor Serly (whose principles of *Modus Lascivus* influenced the Vocalise), and attended the Juilliard School of Music, as a student of Frederick Jacobi and Vittorio Giannini. In 1949, he did venture afield to Tanglewood for a seminar with Aaron Copland.

His awards include the Irving Berlin Scholarship to Juilliard (donated by Rodgers and Hammerstein), the Gregor Piatigorsky Award for musical excellence, at Tanglewood (1949), a two-month MacDowell Fellowship in 1952 (renewed in 1954), a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1953 (renewed in 1957), a Samuel Wechsler Commission which resulted in the "Tale for a Deaf Ear," and the 1959 National Institute of Arts and Letters grant in music.

Notes by DON JENNINGS

ADELE ADDISON has an impressive list of credits to her name ranging from her repeated engagements with such renowned organizations as the Boston Symphony, The Cleveland Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic; through an extensive yearly recital circuit that includes all of North America; to her successful opera career with the New York City Center, the Washington Opera Theatre and Boris Goldovsky's New England Opera Theatre.

The reason for her popularity is deceptively simple: Miss Addison, in addition to having a voice of great purity, flexibility and warmth, is one of the country's most exciting and dedicated musicians. Hers is a probing and thorough musical mind, not often associated with a singer—it is this extra quality that is recognized by audiences everywhere.

Students of the resurgent art of classical guitar playing are, to the man, well acquainted with the particularly sensitive artistry that is REY DE LA TORRE's. Cuban-born, Mr. de la Torre has so assimilated the rich traditions of his heritage that his rank as one of the world's outstanding virtuosi of the instrument is indisputable.

SAMUEL BARON, by dint of hard work and inexhaustible energy, has successfully managed to combine three exacting careers, those of soloist, conductor and teacher. He was founder of the richly acclaimed New York Woodwind Quintet, has conducted in numerous public appearances, and serves on the summer faculty of the University of Wisconsin.

JAMES PAYNE has been associated with Miss Addison for several years. A native of Illinois, he came to New York in 1952 for the purpose of studying with the now-deceased Isabelle Vengerova. He has since established a solid reputation as soloist, coach and accompanist.

TALE FOR A DEAF EAR

SUMMER ARIA

THE GIRL:

Dehna be deed, Loody; dehna be deed.
How can Ah tell them our Loody is deed?
Loody, Ah dehdna mean t' hit yeh or call ye ugly names.
Ah oonly wanted yell t' hurry oot o' the rain.
Ah! Where will come the milk now?
Where the cheese?
Summer sky! Summer sky! Why, Loody, why?
She was a fair, sweet cow, sweet cow, and now-

Ah, lightnin' is such a black way t' dee
Oh gi' her back! Gi' her back,
So she will know Ah dehdna mean the names Ah cawed her;
so she'll know we love and need her so. Gi' her back!

Oh God her skin!
What's happenin'?' Ah dehna ken why!
Oh God! God! She's openin' her eyes! Loody, Loody!
Oh, Look at the rainbow, it's shinin' for you.
Come, Loody, darlin', let's follow it home.
Come on, come on, come on.

SPRING ARIA

THE WOMAN:

*Give him back, give back my child
The springtime of a wintry soul,
The first truth of a false life.
Make green again the flower of my spirit!
Give back my little life!*

*Pity! have pity
I repent my sins!
Since he was born,
I have no longer known the
furtive glance while walking,
nor the stranger's smile;
only his light and the gentle
touch of his little hands.
Give back life to my seed.*

*Let him thrive once more in the sun!
Don't punish him for my faithlessness!
Give him back! Have compassion!*

*Oh God! Even in death he seems alive.
He's breathing, I feel it! His heart, I feel it beating
again as in the beginning
He is reborn! Reborn!
Reborn!
O Spring most blest, in you we see eternity;*

Ridonatelo, ridonate il mio bambino;
la Primavera d'un anima invernale
la prima verita d'una vita falsa.
Rinverdite it fiore del' alma mia!
Ridonate la mia creatura!

Pieta! pieta!
Ripento i miei peccati!
Dal' tempo dile nacque,
Io non conobbi più lo sguardo
per la strada, lo straniero
sorridente;
solo la sua Luce ed it tocco
gentile Belle sue manine.
Ridonate in vita al mio seme.

Lasciatelo salire ancora verso il sole!
Non punitelo per la mie infidelta
Ridonatelo! Abbiate pieta!
O Dio! Anche in morte par'
vivo—
Sospira lo sento!
Il suo cuore lo sento batter
ancora come nell' principio!
Vita! Vita! Rinasce!
Rinasce! Rinasce!

O Primavera beata, in to vediamo l'eternita!

(Original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)