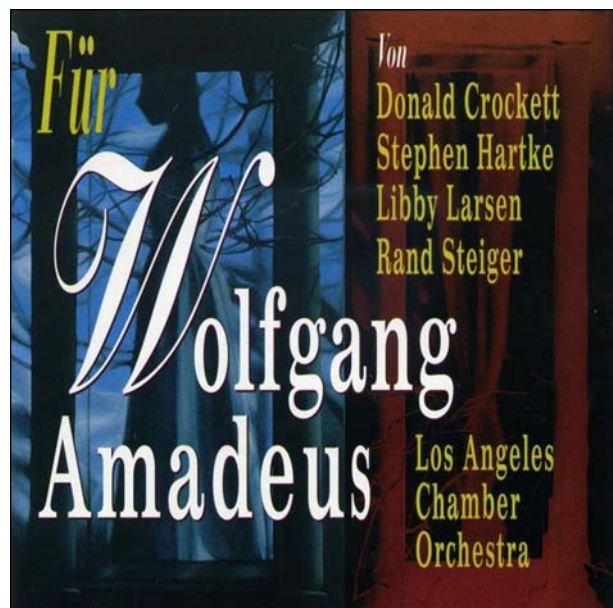


NWCR669

Für Wolfgang Amadeus

Tributes To Mozart



- Donald Crockett
- Celestial Mechanics* (1990) (17:00)
1. I – Liberamente (8:55)
 2. II – Allegro energico (8:03)
for oboe and string quartet
- Stephen Hartke
3. *Wir küssen ihnen tausendmal die Hände* (1991) . (9:45)
for clarinet, horn, fortepiano, violin, viola, and cello
- Rand Steiger
4. *Woven Serenade* (1991) (12:38)
for clarinet and string quartet
- Libby Larsen
5. *Schoenberg, Schenker and Schillinger* (1991)..... (11:30)
for flute, oboe, violin, viola, cello, and EMAX II sampler; Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Donald Crockett, conductor
- Total playing time: 51:20
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Notes

Of the many differences between the nature of musical life in Mozart's time and that in our own, one in particular probably stands out for today's composer more than any other—indeed, it makes us a little envious—and that is the fact that in the eighteenth century nearly all music performed then was *new music*. And so, when the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra planned its 1991 festival in observance of the 200th anniversary of Mozart's death, a decision was made to carry on the eighteenth century's commitment to contemporary music by commissioning four Americans to compose new chamber works as homages to Mozart. There was only one informal proviso: that each composer consider taking as a point of departure the instrumentation of a Mozart chamber work.

It was from hearing the Chamber Orchestra's principal oboist, Allan Vogel, rehearse Mozart's Oboe Quartet, K. 370 that Donald Crockett began to conceive his quintet for oboe and strings, *Celestial Mechanics*. Although, as the composer readily admits, you will not hear much of Mozart in a direct way, the spirit of the Oboe Quartet pervades the work. In particular, the very beginning of the slow movement of Mozart's quartet gave rise not only to the long sustained A of the oboe's first entrance in Crockett's quintet, but also suggested the contour of the lyrical melody that closes both of its movements. Completed in September 1990, *Celestial Mechanics* is dedicated to Allan Vogel.

My own offering is a musical letter to Mozart taking its title from the closing salutation that most often appears in his own letters to his father: *Wir küssen ihnen tausendmal die Hände* ("We kiss your hands a thousand times"). Mozart's "Kegelstett" Trio, K. 498, for clarinet, viola, and fortepiano, had been my original starting point, but as the work began to take shape in its rather epistolary stream-of-consciousness

fashion, I felt the need for more instruments. The ultimate result is essentially a trio for clarinet, horn, and fortepiano—arguably Mozart's three favorite solo instruments—with the accompaniment of muted string trio.

The five movements of Rand Steiger's *Woven Serenade* for clarinet quintet are modeled after the formal structure of Mozart's *Gran Partita*, K. 361. Rather than presenting these movements one after the other, as in Mozart's work, they are interwoven and overlapped, sometimes creating very complex moments out of fairly simple music. Thus what could have been five movements played in about twenty minutes is compressed into a single kaleidoscopic movement some ten minutes long.

Libby Larsen's work honors not only Mozart, but three other figures who have profoundly influenced American Music in the twentieth-century, Schoenberg, Schenker, and Schillinger. Most provocatively, it is the presence of a computer driven keyboard sampler in the ensemble that represents Mozart's influence, for, as Larsen points out, Mozart was constantly taking advantage of the possibilities afforded by the latest musical technology of his era, in particular the fortepiano and clarinet, as well as such oddities as the glass harmonica and keyboard glockenspiel. The linking together of the three quite disparate musical thinkers, Schoenberg, Schenker, and Schillinger, deals with a separate issue that has fascinated Larsen in recent years, that being the gradual shift in musical emphasis in both popular and art music from pitch-dominated music (as reflected in the theories of Schoenberg and Schenker) to rhythm-dominated (Schillinger's preoccupation, and subsequently profoundly influential on composers such as Gershwin and Ellington). The final result is a celebration of

musical diversity, both that encountered in Mozart's musical world-view and in twentieth-century American music.

—Stephen Hartke

Donald Crockett (b 1951) has been composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra since 1991, and is also professor of composition at the University of Southern California. Commissions and performances of his music have come from artists and ensembles such as the Kronos Quartet, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the tenor Jonathan Mack, pianist Delores Stevens, and many others. *Celestial Mechanics* for oboe and string quartet, recorded here, was a winner of a 1991 Kennedy Center Friedheim award. Crockett has also received grants and prizes from BMI, the National Endowment for the Arts, Meet the Composer, and the Aaron Copland Fund, among others. Also active as a conductor of new music, he has presented many national and regional premieres with the Contemporary Music Ensemble of the University of Southern California, and as a guest conductor with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the Green Umbrella series of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Stephen Hartke (b 1952) served as composer-in-residence with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra from 1988 to 1992, and currently is associate professor of composition at the University of Southern California. His music both orchestral and chamber, is widely performed, with major performances by the New York Philharmonic, the Moscow State Philharmonic, the Canadian National Arts Centre Orchestra, the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and the symphony orchestras of Albany, Baltimore, Detroit, Houston, Kansas City, New Jersey, Phoenix, and St. Louis. In addition to a recent award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for "lifetime achievement," Hartke has received awards and grants from the Aaron Copland Fund, the American Academy in Rome, the ASCAP Foundation, the AT&T American Encore Program, BMI, the Koussevitzky Music Foundation, the Kennedy Center Friedheim awards, the Louisville Orchestra, Meet the Composer, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Libby Larson (b 1950) is widely recognized as one of America's "most active and sought after" composers. Her works include orchestral, opera, choral, chamber, and solo repertoire and are performed throughout the world. With more than sixty commissioned works and six operas to her credit,

Larsen's work has been described as "replete with energy, rhythmic drive, astonishing effects and imagery." Her work in the mixing of acoustic and electronic sound has gained favor among listeners whose sensibilities are influenced by both popular musical technology and classical music tradition. Her recent *Marimba Concerto: After Hampton* was the result of what is the largest consortium commission to date involving twelve American orchestras. For many years composer-in residence with the Minnesota Orchestra, and co-founder of the Minnesota Composers Forum, Larsen is well-known as a vigorous, articulate advocate for the music and musicians of our time.

Rand Steiger (b 1957) has composed for theater, dance, film, video, and the concert hall. His compositions have been performed at festivals in Aspen, Berlin, Darmstadt, Amsterdam, and Ojai, and by the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra, Speculum Musicae, the San Francisco Contemporary Players, the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble, and the New York New Music Ensemble, among others. He has received the Rome Prize, a National Endowment for the Arts Composers Fellowship, and commissions from the Fromm Foundation, the Aequalis Trio, and Zeitgeist. He also is active as a conductor and percussionist with the California E.A.R. Unit, a contemporary music ensemble that he helped to found in 1981. He is currently chair of the Music Department at the University of California at San Diego.

The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, founded in 1968, has been acclaimed as one of the finest ensembles of its kind in the world. Noted for its virtuosity, stylishness, and perfect ensemble, the orchestra's adventurous programming includes works from many periods and traditions ranging from the eighteenth century to the present day. Music directors of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra have included Sir Neville Marriner (1969-1978), Gerard Schwarz (1978-1986), Iona Brown (1987-1992) and now, artistic adviser Christof Perick.

Each season the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra plays host to some of the world's most distinguished instrumentalists, vocalists, and guest conductors. The concerts are broadcast in an extremely successful syndicated Public Radio International series across the United States. The Orchestra has more than 25 recordings to its credit on labels such as Angel-EMI, Argo, Delos, and Nonesuch.

Production Notes

Produced by Donald Crockett, Stephen Hartke, Libby Larson, and Rand Steiger.

Recording Engineer: Fred Vogler; Editing: Fred Voger, Donald Crockett. Recorded at the Housse of the Book, Brandeis-Bardin Institute, Simi Valley, California on September 29–30 1993.

Celestial Mechanics and *Wir Küssen Ihnen Tausendmal* die Hände published by MMB Music, Inc. *Woven Serenade* published by Leisure Planet Music. *Schoenberg*, *Schenker*, and *Schillinger* published by ECS Publishing.

Dedicated to the memory of cellist Nils Oliver, a member of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra 1979-1992.

This recording is made possible by grants from The National Endowment for the Arts, the Aaron Copland Fund for Music, Inc., the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, Pacific Enterprises, and First Cut, a support group of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.