

# ACA RECORDING AWARD

## JOAN TOWER

### **HEXACHORDS (1972)**

**Patricia Spencer, flute**

### **BREAKFAST RHYTHMS I & II for Clarinet and Five Instruments (1974-75)**

**DaCapo Chamber Players (Allen Blustine, clarinet; Patricia Spencer, flute; Joel Lester, violin; Helen Harbison, cello; Joan Tower, piano; Gordon Gottlieb, percussion), Daniel Shulman, conductor**

JOAN TOWER (b. New York, 1938) combines composing, performing, and teaching to create a multidimensional musical life. She is an Assistant Professor at Bard College, pianist for the DaCapo Chamber Players, and recently finished a doctorate in composition at Columbia University. Her last work, *Black Topaz* (for piano and six instruments) — a second National Endowment commission, written for Charles Wuorinen and the Group for Contemporary Music — was premiered at the Manhattan School of Music with Robert Miller as soloist. She is working now on a new piece for the DaCapo Players under a Bicentennial Commission from the Contemporary Music Society. She writes:

"HEXACHORDS for flute was written in 1972 and dedicated to a long-time colleague and friend, Patricia Spencer. The title refers to the basic harmony of the piece which is based on a six-note unordered chromatic collection of pitches. The use of different vibrato speeds as applied to individual notes (or groups of notes) combined with different rhythmic-dynamic articulations placed in different registers creates a counterpoint of tunes that hopefully keeps the listener's attention moving through all the registers. The piece is divided into five sections which are most easily differentiated by a sense of either going somewhere or staying somewhere.

"BREAKFAST RHYTHMS I & II for Clarinet and Five Instruments (1974-75) was commissioned by the National Endowment for the Arts and dedicated to the excellent clarinetist Allen Blustine. In I, a six-note chromatic group is either isolated, completed, or combined with another hexachord to define the different contents or harmonies of the different sections. The central pitch is B which begins and ends the movement. In II, G-sharp acts as the central note placed registrally at the center of the home chord D#, F#, G#, A#, C# which is arrived at at the closing of the first ensemble section. The different energies unfolding throughout both movements are generated by these contents which interact in various ways to produce different at-home and away-from-home identities which cooperate with rhythmic, registral, and dynamic articulations in such a way that there is a sense of local as well as large-scale balancing of gestures — an idea very much influenced by Beethoven's use of textural and rhythmic contrast."

## **ELIAS TANENBAUM**

### **RITUALS AND REACTIONS**

**Chorus and Instrumental Ensemble of the  
Manhattan School of Music with Elizabeth Reel, soprano;  
Daniel Paget, conductor**

ELIAS TANENBAUM (b. Brooklyn, 1924) studied trumpet at an early age and played with various jazz groups. After serving in World War II he entered the Juilliard School of Music. Upon graduation as a trumpet major, his interest turned to composition and he studied privately with Dante Fiorillo, Bohuslav Martinů, Otto Luening and Wallingford Riegger.

Tanenbaum is a MacDowell Fellow and winner of a composers' grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has composed in all mediums and has been recorded by Desto and the Musical Heritage Society as well as CRI (CRI 149). He began working with electronic sounds in 1967, using the studio at the R.A. Moog factory in Trumansburg, New York. He is Director of the Electronic Music Studio and a member of the composition faculty at the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. He writes:

"RITUALS AND REACTIONS is a theater piece scored for chorus on stage, chorus in the audience, soprano soloist, five brass, three percussion, and electronic tape. A mime or dancers may be used to react freely to the sounds as well as lighting to enhance the feeling of theater.

"The 'rituals' sections of the score are generally fully composed and the 'reactions' are free responses of the musicians to the tape and to each other.

"The piece opens when the conductor comes on stage and the audience applauds (a ritual). The audience-chorus continues the applause which evolves into a clapping rhythm. The clapping rhythm is picked up by the stage-chorus. The audience-chorus and the stage-chorus exchange clapping until the shouting of '*Hey!*' at which point the instruments and tape enter. The soloist appears about one-third through the piece from the back of the Hall wearing a mask and a robe, singing as she slowly walks down the aisle approaching the stage like a high priestess. She is the '*Empress of Ice Cream*' — it means nothing. Most of the words sung are from books of the occult — they are chosen for their sound. Toward the end of the piece a member of the audience-chorus shouts, '*It's on sale!*', and bedlam breaks out. Shopping is another ritual.

"At the end, the stage-chorus slowly walks off the stage chanting; the brass players walk through the hall playing a chant; the soloist sings a recitative, while some members of the stage-chorus and the audience-chorus recite across the hall the words to the poem *East of Atami* by Jack Shoemaker. The poem is a ritual of Japanese prostitutes going home after a night's work. The words to this poem may be used in any order.

"RITUALS AND REACTIONS was composed with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. It was premiered January 17, 1975 at the Manhattan School of Music, conducted by Daniel Paget, with the People/Dorothy Vislocky Dance Theater."

ALLEN BLUSTINE and PATRICIA SPENCER are among the leading wind players in the field of contemporary music. Spencer is well known for her convincing performances of difficult contemporary flute works. She appears as soloist in the CRI recording of Sollberger's *RIDING THE WIND I* (CRI SD 352). She has performed with the Group for Contemporary Music, Contemporary Chamber Ensemble,

League-ISCM, the Performer's Committee for 20th Century Music and the Contemporary Trio. A graduate of the Oberlin Conservatory of Music under Robert Willoughby, she has also studied with John Wummer and Marcel Moyse. Blustine is a member of Festival Winds, is principal clarinet with the Musica Aeterna Orchestra, appears with the New York Chamber Soloists and is often a guest with the New York Philharmonic. He is a member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and has recorded extensively for CRI, Nonesuch and Columbia Records. He has been on the staff of the Composers Conference and Chamber Music Center at Johnson College, Johnson, Vermont since 1965.

The DA CAPO CHAMBER PLAYERS, a group which has received wide recognition for its superb performances of contemporary music, was the recipient of the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation's chamber music award in 1973. With this award plus a matching commission from the N.Y. State Council on the Arts, they were able to commission works from Milton Babbitt (*Arie de Capo*) and Harvy Sollberger (*RIDING THE WIND I*). Many other composers, five of them recipients of commissions from the National Endowment for the Arts, have honored the group by writing pieces for it. The ensemble presents a concert series in Carnegie Recital Hall each year under the sponsorship of the Carnegie Hall Corporation and appears regularly at colleges and universities across the country.

DANIEL SHULMAN, conductor and pianist, has long been active in the founding and direction of innovative musical projects, among them The Light Fantastic Players and Predilections, Inc. He has also served as music director at the Lenox Arts Center, and as guest artist with the Group for Contemporary Music, Speculum Musicae, the Composers' Forum, and the Society for Contemporary Music from Japan, among others. He has been a member of the faculties of the City College of New York and C.W. Post College.

DANIEL PAGET, a leading young choral conductor, has been Director of Choral Activities at the Manhattan School of Music since 1973, having formerly served in the same capacity at Columbia University. In addition to conducting and teaching, Mr. Paget is a first-rate ragtime pianist. The members of the Manhattan School of Music ensemble on this recording are Douglas Crescimano, Justin DiCoccio, Ivan Miller, Harvey Pacht, James L. Preiss, Steven Sako, and Arthur Triggs. ELIZABETH REEL is a recent graduate of the Manhattan School, where she studied with Daniel Ferro.

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*(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)*