

THE GROUP FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**THIS RECORDING IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
ROBERT MILLER (1930-1981)**

Robert Miller was a great friend and a dedicated member of the Group for Contemporary Music. The recording session for ARABIA FELIX was his last performance; ANGEL AND STONE was written for him.

The GROUP FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC is dedicated to the control by composers over performances of their works. It was founded by Joel Krosnick, Harvey Sollberger, and Charles Wuorinen in 1962. Since 1963, Sollberger and Wuorinen have been Artistic Directors of the Group, and, since 1971, Nicolas Roussakis has been Executive Director. The Group was the first ensemble devoted to new music to find a home in a major American university. At the time it was formed, professional concert life rarely offered conditions favorable to the careful preparation of difficult new pieces.

Circumstances have changed somewhat over the years, including the Group's move from Columbia University to residence at the Manhattan School of Music, as well as its continually increasing activity in the conventional concert arena. There has also been a substantial improvement of performance standards for contemporary music; the insistent efforts of the Group to see that adequate rehearsal time, adequately paid for, is always available, as well as its efforts to train an ever-increasing population of young players and singers to serve the music of their own time, have contributed much to this improvement.

CHARLES WUORINEN

ARABIA FELIX (1979)

Harvey Sollberger, flutist; Donald MacCourt, bassoonist; David Starobin, guitarist; Benjamin Hudson, violinist; Raymond DesRoches, vibraphonist; Robert Miller, pianist; Charles Wuorinen, conductor

CHARLES WUORINEN (b. 1938, New York) won the Pulitzer Prize in 1970 for *Time's Encomium*. He is Chairman of the Board of the American Composers Orchestra, and has appeared as conductor or pianist with numerous orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Chicago Symphony, and the Cleveland Orchestra; his works are widely performed, and are recorded on CRI SD 149, 230, 231, 239, 306, 410, 441, and 459. He writes:

"I wrote ARABIA FELIX in 1975 for a group called the Composers Ensemble, which was then active. Its members were all composers, and most of them had been students of mine. The instrumentation, of course, suited the ensemble's resources.

"At eleven minutes, ARABIA FELIX can afford to express itself in a single movement, and does so as an elaboration of a skeletal two-voice polyphonic undergirding. Since the instruments divide naturally into the sustaining (violin, flute, bassoon) and the ringing (guitar, piano, vibraphone), I treated each of the two trios as a single musical strand. Their lines are ornamented, however, and therefore we hear a more complex surface than the

basic two-voice underlay might suggest. There is also expansion and contraction of register going on throughout, first an opening out from high to low, then a closing in, likewise from high to low, and thereafter this way and that — until near the end when the piece turns into a series of transposed reiterations followed by a unison tune to conclude."

HARVEY SOLLBERGER

ANGEL AND STONE (1981)

Harvey Sollberger, flutist; Aleck Karis, pianist

HARVEY SOLLBERGER (b. 1938, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) is an outstanding player of contemporary music on the flute, director of the Manhattan School's Contemporary Ensemble and teaches at Columbia University. Among his badges of recognition are a Bearn's Prize, an award from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, two Guggenheim Fellowships, commissions from the Fromm Foundation and others and several grants in support of his activities as flutist. His compositions may be heard on CRI SD 204, 319, and 352, and he has appeared as conductor or flutist on no fewer than 15 CRI recordings. He writes:

"ANGEL AND STONE is a composite work formed out of the merger and juxtaposition of two other pieces for flute and piano written in 1981, *Six Quartets* and *Short (but Vivid) Fantasy*. *Six Quartets* is a twelve-tone work shaped throughout by trichordal partitioning procedures projected by means of dynamics, register, and timbre. *Short Fantasy*, by contrast, is a compositional 'improvisation,' much disposed to grand and passionate gestures. It was written to work both as an independent continuous piece and as music to be interpolated between the movements of the *Six Quartets*. The resultant ANGEL AND STONE — continuous and in one movement — adds up to something more than its parts, differing (to my ears) from its parent pieces in the ways it moves and articulates time. The overall form, in the many directions it takes, might be termed polyvalent. The title is taken from the poem of the same name by Howard Nemerov, part of which is quoted during the course of the work. ANGEL AND STONE was commissioned by Bowling Green State University; it is dedicated to flutist Judith Bentley, who premiered it with pianist Marilyn Shrude."

NICOLAS ROUSSAKIS

VOYAGE (1980)

The Manhattan Chorus; Daniel Paget, conductor

NICOLAS ROUSSAKIS (b. 1934, Athens, Greece) spent his early years in Estonia, Italy and Switzerland. He came to the United States at the age of fifteen and studied at Columbia University. In 1961 he was awarded a Fulbright Grant for study in Germany, where he worked with Philipp Jarnach in Hamburg and at the International Courses for Modern Music at Darmstadt. In 1969 he was given an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. He subsequently obtained a doctorate from Columbia University, where he taught for nine years. He is presently (1982) a member of the music faculty at Rutgers University.

From 1975 to 1981, Roussakis was President of the American Composers Alliance, a national service organization for composers supported by Broadcast Music, Inc.; he then became Chairman of its Board of Governors. In 1976, he was one of the co-founders (together with Francis Thorne, Dennis Russell Davies and Paul Dunkel) of the American Composers Orchestra and continued as the orchestra's vice-president and Executive Director as well as a member of its Board of Directors. His music may be heard on CRI SD 255 and 471. He writes:

"VOYAGE, for eight-part, *a cappella* mixed chorus, was begun in August, 1979, in New York City and completed in February, 1980, in Manalapan, Florida. It is based upon Charles Baudelaire's poem "L'Invitation au Voyage" from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. The five movements are entitled *Ordre, Beauté, Luxe, Calme, Volupté*, words taken from Baudelaire's thrice recurring refrain. In the poem, the protagonist invites a young woman for a voyage to an exotic, far-away place where "there is nothing else but grace and measure, richness, quietness, and pleasure." The music, however, is not a setting of the verses, but an attempt to reach beyond language. The poem proposes the voyage, the music is the voyage itself (in that sense, the voyage is purely imaginary and the music becomes the agent for the spiritualization of desire). The text of the composition consists of vowels and syllables, which were suggested by Baudelaire's *Tout y parlerait, A l'âme en secret, Sa douce langue natale* (Nothing but should address The soul's loneliness, Speaking her sweet and secret native tongue — translated by Richard Wilbur). The music is sensuous, lyrical, joyous, sweet and voluptuous.

"VOYAGE was composed for the Kirkpatrick Choir at Rutgers, which gave its first performance under David Drinkwater on April 25, 1980."

ALECK KARIS holds composition and piano degrees from the Manhattan School of Music and Juilliard. His teachers include Artur Balsam, Beveridge Webster and William Daghlian. He has performed throughout the United States, Europe and Latin America, and has recorded for CRI, New World and Nonesuch records. DANIEL PAGET has been Director of Choruses at the Manhattan School of Music since 1973, and has taken the MANHATTAN CHORUS to Carnegie Hall and led it in many premiere performances. He founded and leads the Paget Chorale and the Apollo Chamber Orchestra, and is Choral Director and Associate Professor of Music at John Jay College of the City University of New York. The Manhattan Chorus may be heard on CRI SD 354.

(original liner notes from CRI LP jacket)

BAUDELAIRE
LES FLEURS DU MAL
THE FLOWERS OF EVIL

L'INVITATION AU VOYAGE

Mon enfant, ma soeur,
Songe à la douceur
D'aller là-bas vivre ensemble!
Aimer à loisir,
Aimer et mourir
Au pays qui te ressemble!
Les soleils mouillés
De ces ciels brouillés
Pour mon esprit ont les charmes
Si mystérieux
De tes traîtres yeux,
Brillant à Travers leurs larmes.

Là , tout nest qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

Des meubles luisants,
Polls par les ans,
Décoreraient notre chambre;
Les plus rares fleurs
Mêlant teurs odeurs
Aux vagues senteurs de l'ambre,
Les riches plafonds,
Les miroirs profonds,
La splendeur orientale,
Tout y parlerait
A l'âme en secret
Sa douce langue natale.

Là , tout nest qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

Vois sur ces canaux
Dormir ces vaisseaux
Dont l'humeur est vagabonde;
C'est pour assouvir
Ton moindre désir
Qu'ils viennent du bout du monde.
— Les soleils couchants
Revêtent les champs,
Les canaux, la ville entière,
D'hyacinthe et d'or;
Le monde s'endort
Dans une chaude lumière.

Là , tout nest qu'ordre et beauté,
Luxe, calme et volupté.

INVITATION TO THE VOYAGE

My child, my sister, dream
Flow sweet all things would seem
Were we in that kind land to live together,
And there love slow and long,
There love and die among
Those scenes that image you, that sumptuous weather.
Drowned suns that glimmer there
Through cloud-dishevelled air
Move me with such a mystery as appears
Within those other skies
Of your treacherous eyes
When I behold them shining through their tears.

There, there is nothing else but grace and measure,
Richness, quietness, and pleasure.

Furniture that wears
The lustre of the years
Softly would glow within our glowing chamber,
Flowers of rarest bloom
Proffering their perfume
Mixed with the vague fragrances of amber;
Gold ceilings would there be,
Mirrors deep as the sea,
The walls all in an Eastern splendor hung —
Nothing but should address
The soul's loneliness,
Speaking her sweet and secret native tongue.

There, there is nothing else but grace and measure,
Richness, quietness, and pleasure.

See, sheltered from the swells
There in the still canals
Those drowsy ships that dream of sailing forth;
It is to satisfy
Your least desire, they ply
Hither through all the waters of the earth.
The sun at close of day
Clothes the fields of hay,
Then the canals, at last the town entire
In hyacinth and gold:
Slowly the land is rolled
Sleepward under a sea of gentle fire.

There, there is nothing else but grace and measure,
Richness, quietness, and pleasure.

-- Richard Wilbur

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1956, by Richard Wilbur.

HOWARD NEMEROV

ANGEL AND STONE (Excerpt from the poem)

In the world are millions and millions of men, and each man,
With a few exceptions, believes himself to be at the center,
A small number of his more or less necessary planets careering
Around him in an orderly manner, some morning stars singing
together,
More distant galaxies shining like dust in any stray sunbeam
Of his attention. Since this is true not of one man or of two,
But of ever so many, it is hard to imagine what life must be like.

"Angel and Stone", from *THE COLLECTED POEMS OF HOWARD NEMEROV*. The University
of Chicago Press, 1977. Reprinted by permission of the author.