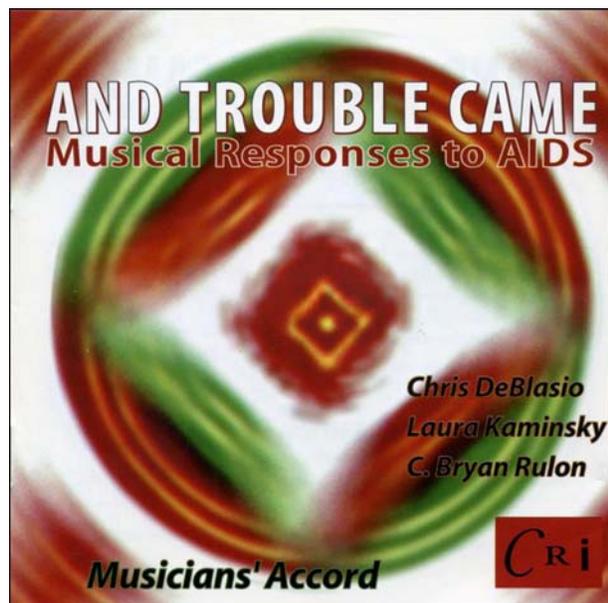


And Trouble Came

Musical Responses to AIDS



Chris DeBlasio

All The Way Through Evening (1990) (12:00)

Five Nocturnes for Baritone and Piano;

Poetry by Perry Brass

1. Disappearance of Light (2:29)
2. Train Station (1:31)
3. An Elegy to Paul Jacobs (3:07)
4. Poussin (1:13)
5. Walt Whitman in 1989 (3:40)

Michael Dash, baritone; Chris DeBlasio, piano

C. Bryan Rulon

6. *SelfRequiem* (1994/95) (30:20)

Computer tape by Curtis Bahn; Musicians' Accord:
Katharine Flanders Mukherji, flute/piccolo; Matt
Sullivan, oboe; Terry Szor, trumpet; Michael
Pugliese, percussion; Margaret Kampmeier,
piano/synthesizer; Ted Mook, cello; Charles
Tomlinson, contrabass; C. Bryan Rulon, conductor

Laura Kaminsky

And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary (1993; version
for recording, 1996) (33:26)

Texts by Kaminsky, Claude McKay, Georgia
Douglas Johnson, and Pablo Neruda

7. I. Trouble Came (1:22)
8. II. Travelling Music/Introductions/Travelling
Music Reprise/Tamakloe's Story (7:44)
9. III. The Days of Time (4:12)
10. IV. Aba Amponsah Speaks (1:59)
11. V. I Am Wearing (1:29)
12. VI. Prayer (1:06)
13. VII. Tamakloe Tells More (1:13)
14. VIII. If We Must Die (3:35)
15. IX. Aspirin (1:27)
16. X. The Dust of Death (4:11)
17. XI. Departure / Prelude (1:33)
18. XII. I Want To Die While You Love Me . (1:45)
19. XIII. Coda: Trouble Came (1:50)

Mark Lamos, narrator; Fidelio: Lois Martin, viola;
Harry Clark, cello; Sanda Schuldmann, piano

Total playing time: 75:58

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Notes

In this recording, Musicians' Accord brings together works by three composers representing a diversity of musical styles and varying responses to the AIDS pandemic. All three works, along with the many others which have been inspired and motivated by AIDS, attest to the human creative impulse to transcend tragedy, to communicate the unknowable, and to find meaning and expression in art, as in life.

The late Chris DeBlasio, whose work appears on this disc, once asked, "What's the use of Art in the face of AIDS?" The composer's own music provides one meaningful response to this question. His moving song cycle, *All the Way Through Evening*, with text by Perry Brass, was written for baritone Michael Dash. Chris died in 1993 and Michael in 1995, but the powerful text, evocative music, and depth of emotion and artistry heard in Michael's performance are a gift to be appreciated for years to come.

C. Bryan Rulon's *SelfRequiem* uniquely merges a minimalist sensibility with the dark sonorities of a computer-generated tape part; the work bravely conveys Bryan's response to and understanding of the process one goes through when forced to confront imminent mortality.

Laura Kaminsky's *And Trouble Came: An African AIDS*

Diary presents a less familiar picture, that of AIDS in Africa, and comes out of the composer's direct experience. A dramatic work for narrator and ensemble which interweaves "diary entries" and music, *And Trouble Came* relates the story, both heartrending and uplifting, of a young man afflicted with AIDS whom Laura met while living in Ghana in 1992/93.

It is our hope that the range of musical expression and the different stories each of these three works tell will reach many listeners eager to be touched.

Chris DeBlasio (1959-1993) was composer of the musical *Instant Lives* (1984), based on the poetry and prose of Howard Moss, and the operetta *A Murder is Foretold* (1984), suggested by an Oscar Wilde story, with a libretto by Sharon Holland. He received commissions from Trinity Church (New York), Union Theological Seminary, the New Orleans Gay Men's Chorus, and various instrumentalists and singers. He provided scores for the off-off-Broadway and off-Broadway plays *Stray Dog Story*, *Night Sweat*, and *Adam and the Experts*, and served as composer-in-residence for the Williamstown Theater Festival's Second Company. He created arrangements for the late Martha Schlamme and served as arranger and conductor at the Cincinnati Playhouse

in the Park, the Chelsea Theater Center, and Mabou Mines. His song cycle *All The Way Through Evening*, is a setting of texts by the New York City-based author and poet Perry Brass. Chris was an early member of ACT-UP/New York and is survived by his lover William Berger.

Perry Brass has published seven books including a book of poems, *Sex-charge*; a novel, *Albert or The Book of Man*; a collection of short stories, *Out There: Stories of Private Desires, Horror, and the Afterlife*; and his forthcoming novel *The Harvest*, all from Bellhug Press. His musical collaborations include work with composers Ricky Ian Gordon, Fred Hersch, Chris Berg, and Craig Carnahan. Perry Brass resides in New York City.

All The Way Through Evening (1990)

Five Nocturnes for Baritone and Piano

My “intentions” with the composer Chris DeBlasio, that we write something to do with AIDS, began almost four years before he died. At that time I knew that he had been diagnosed and was in treatment to fight complications associated with the AIDS virus. He was, virtually, at ground zero of the crisis: active in Act Up, and writing about AIDS and AIDS drugs for various papers and magazines. Artistically, he was depressed. He told me that he did not “want to touch the material.” It was too close to home. I left his apartment very discouraged. Then, about a year later, before my forty-third birthday, he called to tell me that he had set five of my poems.

“I’m calling the cycle *All The Way Through Evening*. You asked me to do something about AIDS and this is it.” He then told me the names of the poems and how they fit together—and I saw that he had taken a sheaf of my work and had recognized a relationship between the words, the age that we are now living in, and his own feelings about a disease that would kill him. I did not question how he got the courage to do this: to confront his own fears of dealing with this thing, “to keep its lowering darkness somewhere just above [his] head,” but I was jubilant. I told him that this was the best birthday present I’d received in years. I hadn’t even heard the piece, but I knew it would be wonderful; I knew that it would be everything that we wanted it to be. And—frankly—I needed it. Chris knew it had been a discouraging year for me. I had just moved out of New York and felt marooned in suburban Connecticut (I was not making the adjustment well), and my left arm was in a cast after seriously breaking it rollerblading—the travails of the middle-aged athlete!

A few weeks later, I went up to Chris’s small apartment on Thompson Street and met Michael Dash, for whom the cycle had been written. I sat down, Chris began playing, and I broke into tears by the time Michael reached the last song, “Walt Whitman in 1989.” I was speechless “What do you think?” Chris asked. I could barely say a word, and Michael said: “We’ve felt the same way about it several times—lots of tears.”

Although Chris had set other poems of mine, we knew from the start that *All The Way Through Evening* was significant. In these songs, he contracted his own expression and gift. As he told me, “I realize it’s now or never. I’m not going to have years ahead of me.” I think this contributed to the sense of immediacy the cycle conveys: the sense of crisis, of undamnable feelings. Michael understood this as well; he said to me that first day: “These songs have to do with my life; with all of our lives.” And he was right. Although the cycle has been sung by some wonderful singers, and each one has found something different in it, each has also experienced a totality of grief, heartbreak, and human attachment, the very emotions at the core of *All The Way Through Evening*. The piece, in short, has been more than the sum of its three special

parts: words, music, and performance. It is held together by feelings and love and understanding.

Chris made these poems that were once so personal to me universal; he made them sing from his own heart things that are difficult for us to express; the struggle to give up consciousness (“The Disappearance of Light”), to be open emotionally to another person in a world that controls and dismisses our attachments (“Train Station”), to identify with another artist who has died of AIDS (“An Elegy to Paul Jacobs”), to become part of a community of men (“Poussin”), and finally to merge oneself with a hidden story of grief and its transcendence (“Walt Whitman in 1989”).

Each of the poems had a special meaning for me, and it was a part of my relationship with Chris that he understood them with no explanations—that we could share the poetry on a level of pure emotion. Later, he asked me why I had written the first poem, “The Disappearance of Light,” because that was something he feared himself. I said that in my early 30s, I often didn’t want to go to sleep. I would stay up and listen to the movement of my own thoughts, to the flow of consciousness itself. He said that he shared the same feelings and that as burdensome as consciousness was, it was painful to have let it go. He knew that soon he would have to, and it gnawed on him that in dying so young—at thirty-four—he would not have that much to leave behind. He felt that *All The Way Through Evening* would probably be the piece for which he would be remembered; that might be performed the most. Because of the cycle, especially “Walt Whitman 1989,” which was chosen for “The AIDS Quilt Songbook,” he began to get the recognition that he deserved. This included several new commissions. But he decided that with his last bit of energy, he had to complete the orchestration of the songs. He did this hardly more than six months before he died, and his dying wish was to hear *All The Way Through Evening* performed with a full orchestra. Both Michael and Chris contacted many orchestras, circulating the music, building up interest whenever possible. Finally, on the day of Chris’s death, Michael appeared in his hospital room to tell him that Michael Morgan, the conductor of the Cosmopolitan Symphony Orchestra, had agreed to conduct the orchestral version on March 4, 1994. Chris, who had been barely conscious, heard the news and smiled. Michael, whose lush baritone voice had inspired Chris to write the cycle, premiered the orchestral version as well. It was at Town Hall, for this premiere, that many of us in the audience realized Michael was sick as well—his weight loss was too apparent. Now both Chris and Michael are gone, and of the three of us in Chris’s apartment that first afternoon, only I remain. But on this CD you can hear again two of the original creators of this song cycle at work, all the way through evening.

—Perry Brass

C. Bryan Rulon was born in a small farming community in Indiana. By good fortune, he took piano lessons with a local teacher who recognized his creative and imaginative gifts and encouraged his interest in composing as well as performing. His parents, though not musicians themselves, were also supportive, often dropping Bryan off at Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra concerts where he developed his love of musical timbre and orchestral texture.

Rulon attended Indiana University School of Music, receiving his B.M. in Composition and a double M.M. with distinction in composition and electronic and computer Music. He also served there as associate instructor and director of the electronic music ensembles.

Upon completing these studies, Bryan moved to New York City with longtime friend, painter Layman Foster, to embark upon the bohemian life of an artist in the cultural capital of

the world. In 1982, Rulon, with oboist Matt Sullivan, co-founded First Avenue (joined soon after by William Kannar, bassist and computer software designer), an electro-acoustic improvisational ensemble working with actors, dancers, clowns, painters, performance artists, stage and lighting designers, as well as internationally prominent and emerging composer/performers.

Rulon has received numerous awards and commissions including music for Bill T. Jones's *Corporate Whimsey*, which won the 1984 National College Dance Festival and was performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. He won the 1988 Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble's Harvey Gaul Prize and was finalist in the 1990 Olympia International Composer Competition. He has also received a 1992 commission grant from the New York State Council on the Arts, a 1994 National Endowment for the Arts Composer Fellowship Grant, a 1995 Fromm Foundation Commission, a 1996 Guggenheim Fellowship, and a 1996 Chamber Music America Commission for the New Millennium Ensemble. The New York New Music Ensemble half-jokingly refers to Bryan as their "court composer," with three commissions for that group, two of which have been recorded.

Rulon has recently completed a Ph.D. in composition from Princeton University and is currently working on a musical theater work with director/dramaturge Orlando Ferrand, based on a Freud case history as part of First Avenue's Freud Fest, to be premiered in 1997.

Curtis Bahn worked with Charles Dodge as the technical director of the Center for Computer Music at Brooklyn College from 1987 to 1993. He received his undergraduate degree in jazz studies and performance at Indiana University, where he studied with David Baker and Stuart Sankey, becoming the fourth string bass player in the history of Indiana University to be awarded a performer's certificate. In 1979 he was the second-place winner in the International Zimmerman/Mingus String Bass Competition hosted by the International Society of Bassists. In 1987 Mr. Bahn received a master of music degree in composition from Brooklyn College, where his teachers were Charles Dodge, Roger Reynolds, and Bunita Marcus. His compositions have been presented at the International Computer Music Conference (ICMC), the conference of the Society for Electro-Acoustic Music in America, the Styrian Autumn Festival in Graz, Austria, and numerous other national and international performances. From 1987 to 1990, Mr. Bahn was an instructor of computer music and composition at New York University. He is currently a doctoral fellow at Princeton University, working with Paul Lansky and Steve Mackey.

SelfRequiem (1994/95)

Commissioned by Musicians' Accord and Positive Music *SelfRequiem* is first and foremost to the memory of my longtime friend Layman Foster, who died of AIDS in May of 1994. His spirit, life, and death inform and confirm all parts of *SelfRequiem* in my own mind. More generally, it is about the inner world of anyone with a terminal illness. Though the piece is not specifically programmatic, it does have specific metaphoric references and, in many respects, illustrates certain emotional states.

After an invocation with the "Preprayer" introduction, the music expresses the vitality and motion of an everyday life. This forward movement is abruptly interrupted upon the entry of Curtis Bahn's beautiful and haunting tape part, metaphoric of that moment when one is suddenly confronted with one's own mortality. At this point the listener enters an inner world.

What follows is a series of emotional states that reflect a definite progression as described in Kubler-Ross's book *On Death and Dying*. Dr. Kubler-Ross was writing in the 1960s

about terminally ill cancer patients. In her extensive work with these patients, she chronicles a surprising consistency in the set of psychological and emotional reactions each patient seems to pass through on the journey to death. I have taken this extraordinary existential sequence as a formal template to describe my understanding of a person dealing with imminent mortality.

My last few months with Layman confirmed all these states and perhaps, most profoundly, the final, serene state of acceptance. It is my sincere hope that others may find a comfort and truth in this work: that even in our inner lives, we are not alone and that others share our triumphs and sorrows.

—C. Bryan Rulon

Laura Kaminsky is co-founder and current director of Musicians' Accord, and is an active participant in the new music community as composer, producer, and advocate. In addition to performances by Musicians' Accord, she has been a featured composer on concert programs and in festivals throughout the United States and abroad, including Europe, Central and South America, and Africa. Recent commissions include *Future Conditional* for solo piano, commissioned by Composers Forum and The Kitchen; *Spirit Lost and Found* for solo guitar, with USIA Cultural Ambassador program support; *Interpolations on Utopia Parkway* for oboe and piano, with support from Boosey & Hawkes/Bufet Crampon-Paris; and *Elegy for the Silenced Voice: In Memoriam Michael Dash* for solo trumpet, which was commissioned by Positive Music. She is currently writing a work commissioned by the Jubal Trio, *Aluta Continua*.

As a producer/presenter, Kaminsky has received numerous awards for her innovative programming, including three from ASCAP/Chamber Music America and one from the Office of the Manhattan Borough President. As associate director for the humanities at the 92nd Street Y (1984–88), as artistic director of Town Hall (1988–1992), and as director of music and theater programs at The New School (1993–96), Laura has continuously sought new ways to challenge performers, stimulate creative dialogue, and bring artists and audiences together. The scope of her broad-ranging program efforts are evident in their very titles: the decade-long, multi-disciplinary "Century of Change," the "Ladyfingers Project," the "Not Just Jazz Festival," "Novels Into Film," "From Roosevelt to Nixon: The Emergence of the Imperial Presidency," "Spiritual Hunger in America," "Oboe Blow-Out," and "The Hendrix Project," to name but a few. 1992/93 brought her to Ghana where she taught at the National Academy of Music, produced concerts and a conference on "African Music: Traditions and Innovations," conducted field research, and composed *And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary*.

And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary

(1993; version for recording, 1996) Commissioned by Fidelio *And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary* is the unlikely product of a commission, a journey, and a dream. From Winneba, Ghana, where I lived, I wrote on 25 April 1993: "A year in Ghana and a commission to write a piece about AIDS. How unlikely that these should occur simultaneously. I arrived in September with some preliminary thoughts about the texts and music, but it was only after a remarkable meeting with two dedicated American nuns and two young African men suffering with AIDS that I was able to imagine the piece." I had already selected texts for the piece (three poems and three Biblical excerpts [which I had liberally altered]) and had begun composing the music, but somehow it was not coming together as a unified whole; I was struggling with writer's block. Travelling throughout Ghana, I visited the nuns, staying in their convent in the rural village of Berekum. Knowing I was writing a piece dealing with AIDS, they

arranged a meeting with two of their patients. The men told their life stories; I read my texts. We took snapshots, cried, and shook hands; I departed. The night following this profoundly moving encounter, I had a dream which led me to create the structure of the piece and which allowed me to continue composing it.

In the dream, narrator **Mark Lamos**, whom I had not yet met, was recounting to a rapt audience the story of this meeting of the nuns, the men, and myself. I awoke with a start, realizing that I needed to write a series of "diary entries" which would be interwoven with the texts I had already selected, and that the linkage would create a dramatic throughline for the work. Writing text was a new challenge for me and proved as demanding as composing music. I especially wish to thank Amy Rubin, first, for urging me to write prose, and then for her masterful editing of these diary entries, for both the 1993 and 1996 versions of the piece.

Additional thanks go to the members of Fidelio (Lois, Harry, and Sanda) for commissioning the work, and to Mark Lamos for help bringing the story to life. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the many others in Ghana who provided me the inspiration and encouragement necessary to the creation of *And Trouble Came*: Sisters Margaret Moran and Dr. Marie Ego for welcoming me into their world in Berekum and for introducing me to two special men, Jonathan Anane and Dauda Kramo, who shared their personal stories of AIDS in Africa with honesty and dignity; and, finally, Kelly Blanchard, Cyrus Darpoh, Margaret Adjowa Ferguson, Mary Pat Johnson, Daniel Kiflejesus, Theodora Entsua Mensah, Amy Rubin, and Felix Tamakloe for creating a special community with me in Ghana. I am tremendously grateful to all those mentioned above, and I dedicate this work to them and to all people suffering with or fighting against AIDS throughout the world.

—Laura Kaminsky

Musicians' Accord: A New Music Project, currently under the artistic leadership of composer/producer Laura Kaminsky, was founded in 1980. The mission of Musicians' Accord is to promote new music through concerts, recordings, workshops, master classes, commissioning of new works, and broadcasts. The ensemble presents innovative concerts of contemporary music from a broad aesthetic spectrum, as well as classic and unknown twentieth-century works. It has performed throughout the New York metropolitan area and abroad, and has premiered and/or commissioned close to 100 works to date. Composers as diverse as Samuel Barber, Luciano Berio, Linda Bouchard, John Cage, Aaron Copland, John Corigliano, Henry Cowell, Mario Davidovsky, David Del Tredici, Miriam Gideon, Mario Lavista, Tania León, Jing Jing Luo, J.H.K. Nketia, Harry Partch, Astor Piazzolla, Steve Reich, Amy Rubin, Fredric Rzewski, Bright Sheng, Sheila Silver, Igor Stravinsky, Joan Tower, Edgard Varèse, Anton Webern, and Stefan Wolpe, to list but a sampling, have all been presented on Musicians' Accord concerts.

In residence at the City College of New York since 1984, where ensemble members work with distinguished professor, composer David Del Tredici and his students, Musicians' Accord has also served as guest artists at the Juilliard School, Manhattan School of Music, New York University, Columbia University, The New School, and Fairleigh Dickinson University, among others.

The ensemble's first recording, *Chamber Music for Voice (and a Little Jazz)*, was released on the Mode label in 1991

(mode 23). With the release last November of *Berio: The Great Works for Voice* (mode 48) Musicians' Accord inaugurates a multi-disc recording project with Mode of Berio's music, which will include *The Complete Sequenzas* and *More Great Works for Voice*. Other recording projects include a two-disc project *Transience: The Music of Joel Feigin*, for North/South Records; *The Music of Robert Savage* (also two discs); and an upcoming *Henry Cowell Centennial* disc in cooperation with Essential Music and the Colorado String Quartet for the Mode label, with project support from the Aaron Copland Fund for Music Recording Program.

Fidelio formed during the 1986/87 season when Lois Martin suggested programming the Brahms "Trio in A minor, Op. 114," with viola substituting for clarinet (Brahms's own edition), on the Clark-Schuldmann Duo's Chamber Music PLUS series in Hartford. The success they felt by audience and artists alike inspired the threesome to undertake a major campaign to adapt existing works for their unique instrumentation, and, more importantly, to begin commissioning new works. To their great delight, composers with widely varying styles responded to their mission, and, to date, over fifty works have been written specifically for the ensemble, including Kaminsky's *And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary*. Since 1993, Fidelio has been presented under the auspices of Musicians' Accord as part of MA's regular New York season.

The purpose of this recording is to bring these musical works to larger audiences and to heighten awareness of and sensitivity to the various issues surrounding the AIDS pandemic. This recording is not a fundraiser but is itself the result of extensive fundraising. Royalties will go to the composers, and the remaining proceeds support the work of the non-profit label CRI.

However, Musicians' Accord and CRI encourage you to get involved in the fight against AIDS and are pleased to provide the following list of AIDS charities and support organizations.

The AIDS crisis is not over! Get in touch! Get involved!

Classical Action, Performing Arts Against AIDS, 165 West 46th Street, Suite 1309, New York, NY 10036, phone (212) 997-7717. (Fundraising organization that mobilizes the talent of the classical music world.)

LIFEbeat, the Music Industry Fights AIDS, 810 7th Avenue, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10019, phone (212) 245-3240. (National fundraising organization.)

Estate Project for Artists with AIDS, 330 West 42nd Street, Suite 1701, New York, NY 10036, phone (212) 947-6340. (Encourages artists of all disciplines with HIV/AIDS to continue their creative output as long as possible and to make the necessary legal provision that will protect their art for future generations. Programs in New York, Los Angeles, and Miami.)

Gay Men's Health Crisis (GMHC), 1299 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, phone (212) 807-6655. (Provides services and advocacy for people with AIDS and educational programs to prevent infection.)

AIDS Project Los Angeles, 1313 North Vine, Los Angeles, CA 90028, phone (213) 993-1600. (Provides support, legal advice, case management, and advocacy for people with HIV and AIDS.)

Holy Family Hospital, c/o Sisters Margaret Moran and Marie Ego, P.O. Box 21, Berekum B/A, Ghana, West Africa. (With minimal resources and total dedication, the Sisters at Holy Family Hospital serve individuals afflicted with AIDS and their families, providing health care, education, and counseling.)

Production Notes

Executive Producer: Laura Kaminsky, Musicians' Accord

Mastered by Robert Woolf, engineer, Sony Music Studios, NYC

All the Way Through the Evening was recorded at Town Hall, New York City on December 22, 1990. David Smith, engineer; Laura Kaminsky, editor, Robert Woolf, digital engineer.

SelfRequiem was recorded at Richardson Auditorium at Princeton University, on April 5, 1995. Laura Kaminsky, producer; Peter Velikonja, assistant producer; Jim Moses, engineer; C. Bryan Rulon, digital engineer.

And Trouble Came: An African AIDS Diary was recorded at Lenfell Hall, The Mansion, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Madison, NJ, on March 9, 1996. Laura Kaminsky, producer; Amy Rubin, associated producer & editor; David Avidor, engineer and digital editor.

Publishers: DeBlasio: DeBlasio Estate (BMI); Rulon: composer (BMI); Kaminsky: composer (BMI).