

# UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The School of Music and the Office of Lectures and Concerts

present

CD 15,476

## THE CONTEMPORARY GROUP

William O. Smith and Stuart Dempster, *co-directors*

Wednesday, April 16, 1980

Studio Theater, 8:00 P M

**TAPE No 1 - 9809**

PHILIP CARLSEN  
(b. 1951)

### P R O G R A M

Nimbus (1978)

14:22

Members of the Percussion Ensemble  
Michael Clark  
Paul Hansen  
David Williams

LUCIANO BERIO  
(b. 1925)

Sèquenza-I for solo flute (1958)

Laura Rathbun, \* *flute*

6:04

GEORGE CRUMB  
(b. 1929)

Eleven Echoes of Autumn (1965)

Trudi Sussman, *flute*  
Brad Sherman, *clarinet*  
Barbara Rood, *violin*  
Martha Annin, *piano*

18:10

**TAPE 2 - 9810**

### INTERMISSION

VILLA-LOBOS  
(1887-1959)

Assobio a jato (1950)  
(The Jet Whistle)

11:03

*Allegro non troppo*  
*Adagio*  
*Vivo*

Felix Skowronek, *flute*  
Tony Saks, *'cello*

\*winner of the 1980 Contemporary Group  
Performance Competition

PHILIP BRINK  
(b. 1945)

Exegesis 5/14  
Philip Brink, *trombone*

DIANE THOME  
(b. 1942)

The Yew Tree (1979) 8/35

Montserrat Alavedra, *soprano*  
Christine Olason, *violin*  
Maria Lambros, *viola*  
Toby Saks, *'cello*  
Felix Skowronek, *flute*  
William McColl, *clarinet*  
Laila Storch, *oboe*  
Arthur Grossman, *bassoon*  
Pamela Vokolek, *harp*  
Daniel Dunbar, *percussion*  
Terry Spiller, *piano,*  
*celeste*

Michel Singher, *conductor*

#### Program notes--

The title, "Nimbus," was chosen partly for its similarity in sound to the word marimba. Indeed, the marimba is the most important instrument in this piece. It is almost always being played--usually by two players, sometimes by all three at once. The other instruments tend to stay in the background although the vibraphone takes on a more important role as the piece progresses. A basic idea in "Nimbus" is the transformation of rapidly repeated notes into sustained tones, whether played tremolo, bowed, sung, or whistled. In contrast to this are huge staccato chords and fast running passages. At the end of the piece, everything has become sustained and fades away in a soft blur of sound.

Berio's "Sequenza I" was written in 1958 and is the first in a series of works exploring and expanding the possibilities of solo instruments. It is historically important for two innovative techniques: it contains possibly the first use of a flute multi-phonic (c and g above the treble staff), and it further expanded the budding technique of proportional notation, where the musical line is divided not by measures but by equal time increments (in this case seconds) between which the notes are placed. The value of the note is approximate and is determined by its spatial placement between the given time increments and surrounding pitches.

"Eleven Echoes of Autumn," written in the spring of 1965 was one of the first of a series of pieces based on texts of the Spanish poet Federico Garcia Lorca. As in all of Crumb's music since the early to mid 1960's, the piece takes the form of a mosaic of small sections,

each one a jewel of timbral exploration. At several points the Lorca fragment "... y los arcos rotos donde sufre el tiempo." ("and the broken arches where time suffers") is spoken or whispered by the players. In a typical Crumb touch, these broken arches are visually present in the score in the notation of the music underlying the three cadenza sections.

The eleven sections of the work are titled:

1. Fantastico
2. Languidamente, quasi lontano ("hauntingly")
3. Prestissimo
4. Con Bravura
5. Cadenza I (alto flute)
6. Cadenza II (violin)
7. Cadenza III (clarinet)
8. Feroce, violento
9. Serenamente, quasi lontano ("hauntingly")
10. Senza Misura ("gently undulating")
11. Adagio - like a prayer

Villa-Lobos' duo, "The Jet Whistle," for flute and "cello, was written during a visit to New York in 1950 and dedicated to longtime friend, flutist, and musicologist Carleton Sprague Smith and his wife Elizabeth. The work is essentially relaxed and lyric, despite occasional outbursts of energy, and much of the material is reminiscent of Brazilian popular song. Nothing is revealed of the curious title, however, until the very end of the piece, where a typical example of Villa-Lobos' love for novelty provides the answer.

First performed in 1973 on a concert sponsored by the Contemporary Chamber Players at the University of Illinois, "Exegesis" was written earlier that same year, as a sort of recreational exercise during the work on my "Antinomies" for string quartet. As the title implies (according to Webster, exegesis is an "exposition" especially a critical explanation of a portion of Scripture), there is a strong rhetorical element in the work. Contrasts in range, style, texture and mood are presented as much with respect to the stance of the speaker as that of the musical performer. It is, however, interesting, in light of the foregoing explanation, that the title occurred to me after the completion of the piece. Nonetheless it seems to fit.

The piece has also been performed at the 1973 Midwest Composer's Symposium in Ann Arbor, at the 1974 Trombone Workshop in Nashville, and on recitals in Calgary, New York City, and Bellingham. It is published by Brass Music, Ltd.

"The Yew Tree" marks a return to purely instrumental writing after an interim of nearly a decade during which time my creative attention was centered on the electronic medium. The piece was inspired by my desire to provide a musical setting for the poem by Robert Strassburg entitled "Love's Springtime." The title "The Yew Tree" is a reference to a central image of the poem which occurs at the beginning of its

second verse. The poetic line is exploited compositionally to demarcate a primary structural articulation. The work was composed at the invitation of the Orchestra of Our Time in New York City with the support of a National Endowment of the Arts Composer's Grant awarded in 1979.

### Love's Springtime

A mountain echo  
Resounds  
In my heart,  
This April morn  
The white dove of rhythm  
Chants  
An ethereal minstrel song  
With gentle  
Unpretending trills  
Softly sung  
Amid the thorns and butterflies  
The sky-lark cries  
Spreading far and wide  
Love sonnets  
Reveries of joy  
Most sweet  
  
Seated in a Yew-tree  
I receive heaven's light  
Calm and free  
Tenderly spun in early spring  
Your love delays  
With gentle splendor  
My life's excursion  
Makes immortal  
My rapid passage  
My temporal way.

Robert Strassburg