Soundspells roductions





LYRIC SYMPHONY

The Japan Philharmonic conducted by Akeo Watanabe

LYRIC SYMPHONY is a symphonic poem..."inspired by memories of a lost friend and colleague whose own work was deeply committed to tonality." Apparently the feeling behind this dedication was so strong that Kupferman suspended the tools of atonality for the composition of the symphony. Although the work is played without interruption, the core of its structure consists of three movements, all of which are in fast (or moderately fast) tempo. Each movement however, is preceded by an extended slow section in the nature of an introductory choral, a transitional fantasy or an expressive episode. The ending, also in slow tempo, recalls the theme of the introduction.

VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA

VARIATIONS FOR ORCHESTRA might have been called "Five Pieces for Orchestra," for its form, although clearly based on the variation principle, consists of five extended sections, each a complete entity in itself. Systematic atonality governs the harmonic and melodic materials, but an occasional touch of free chromaticism is used to highlight certain phrases. The theme and its four variations are still further contrasted by a dramatic juxtaposition of tempo: Moderato intenso; Agitato; Andante; Allegro; Moderato-Andante.

OSTINATO BURLESCO

OSTINATO BURLESCO is an exuberant orchestral tour de force written (in its original form as a piano piece) during the composer's eighteenth year for "the sheer fun of it!" The form is direct and relentless: a simple two-note ostinato figure which builds through repetition, and the piling up of orchestral sonorities, drives the syncopated dance-like theme ("alla Burlesco") into a wild orchestral frenzy. A very slow, exotic middle section provides a rich lyrical contrast which enables the violent ostinato materials to regain their power and return for a final explosive thrust.

CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND JAZZ BAND David Wells, Cellist, and the Hartt Jazz Ensemble conducted by Donald Mattran

CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND JAZZ BAND (1962) was originally part of the composer's "Cycle of Infinities" (1961-69), a series of instrumental, vocal and stage works based on the same 12-tone row. The pitch materials of the row are: G, F, A flat, C flat, B flat, D, F sharp, E, C, E flat, A, C sharp. The piece was first performed at the Carnegie Recital Hall, New York, in 1963, by Laszlo Varga for whom the concerto was especially composed. Five years later David Wells performed the work at the Festival of Contemporary Music of Hartt College, Hartford, Connecticut.

The integration of a jazz vocabulary (into the atonal gamut of our contemporary musical rhetoric) has been an important factor in Kupferman's work for some time. His first experiment in this direction was his SONATA ON JAZZ ELEMENTS (1958) for piano solo. This was followed by a series of chamber and orchestral works based on jazz influences. Most notable among these are his JAZZ INFINITIES THREE, for sax, bass and drums; JAZZ STRING QUARTET and JAZZ SYMPHONY (recorded on Soundspells CD104).

Kupferman's cello concerto is scored for amplified cello, bass, three saxophones (who double on piccolo, flute, alto flute, piccolo clarinet, clarinet and bass clarinet). The work which is in three movements, requires no improvisation.

ZODIAC, the first movement, suggests the essential features of traditional concerto structure, including a cadenza near the end. For the most part the saxophone passages are executed in clustered 'block' formation thus providing a driving harmonic and rhythmic counterfoil for the ornate solo line of the cello. Clearly these textures reflect an unique compendium of sax gestures drawn from the Big Band Swing Era of the early 40's.

BLUES STREAM, the slow movement, breaks up the tight sax formation of the first movement and sets off a complex virtuoso design of individual woodwind passages. The role of the cello alternates between that of solist and that of ensemble member. The principle theme, heard at the opening and at the end of the movement, is treated in free variation form

WILD, WILD ROSES is a short, fast, driving finale. The movement opens with a contrapuntal game between the saxophones. When the cello enters the saxes return to their earlier 'block' style, moving in jagged syncopated rhythm. The registration of the cello is directed gradually towards its uppermost regions thus achieving a new dynamic intensity.

Notes by Paul Kapp

MEYER KUPFERMAN

MEYER KUPFERMAN was born in Manhattan in 1926. He received his education at the High School of Music and Art and at Queens College. He is entirely self-taught in music composition. He has been Professor of Chamber Music and Composition at Sarah Lawrence College since 1951, where he also served as chairman of the music department for five terms. Mr. Kupferman has been awarded grants and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, the Aaron Copland Fund and the Jewish Music Commission. He is a virtuoso clarinetist who has premiered over sixty solo and chamber works composed especially for him. Kupferman is an unusually prolific composer and has an impressive output of work in all forms: 7 operas, 12 symphonies, 9 ballets, 7 string quartets, 10 concertos and hundreds of chamber works. His strong interest in jazz has been abundantly shown by such "classical-jazz" compositions as CONCERTO FOR CELLO AND JAZZ BAND, SONATA ON JAZZ ELEMENTS, TUNNELS OF LOVE, ADJUSTABLE TEARS, JAZZ INFINITIES THREE, JAZZ STRING QUARTET, and MOONFLOWERS BABY, a solo clarinet jazz work which

has received international acclaim as a result of Charles Neidrich's spectacular performances throughout the Soviet Union, Europe, Japan, and the USA. He has received commissions from the Saidenberg Little Symphony, from the Hudson Valley Philharmonic for his JAZZ SYMPHONY in 1988 and SYMPHONY NO. 10, FDR in 1982, the Chappaqua Symphony for WINGS OF THE HIGHEST TOWER, and the Louisville Orchestra, which commissioned and recorded his FOURTH SYMPHONY in 1956. The American Composers Orchestra premiered his CHALLENGER in 1984 and the Pro Arte Orchestra of Boston recorded his CLARINET CONCERTO for CRI.

A forty year retrospective of his keyboard music was performed during a nine concert tour by pianist Christopher Vassiliades. Some of his experimental works in tape-gestalt form includes such pieces as CELESTIAL CITY. ANGEL FOOTPRINTS, SUPER-FLUTE and ILLUSIONS. Among his film scores are such pictures as BLACK LIKE ME, HALLELUJA THE HILLS, BLAST OF SILENCE and the Truman Capote film TRILOGY, which includes the famous, A CHRISTMAS MEMORY.

The music of Meyer Kupferman is deeply rooted in atonality. His early experiments with 12-tone cromaticism in the late 40's and early 50's however, already bore the imprint of a stylistic mix, a crossing of tonal vs. atonal harmonies and athematic vs. thematic melodic elements. The year 1961 marks the start of his thirty year CYCLE OF INFINITIES, a series of over forty major orchestral, chamber, solo and full production operatic works, all based on the same 12-tone row. His many experiments with "classical-jazz" compositions also grew out of this same Infinities tone-row (like JAZZ STRING QUARTET, TUNNELS OF LOVE, MOONFLOWERS BABY and JAZZ SYMPHONY).

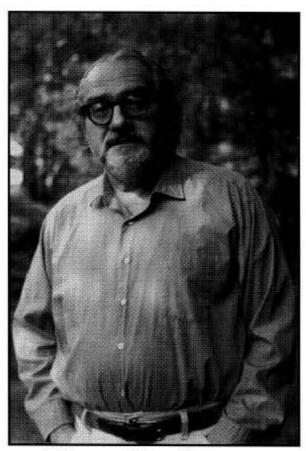
Kupferman's FANTASY SONATA, for violin and piano, commissioned by the Library of Congress, was a first in his "gestalt" works that dominated his stylistic forms in the 70's. The quicksilver, rapidly changing designs that characterized his gestalt pieces, were clearly an outgrowth of his early

experiments which combined tonal and atonal resources. These freedoms are still very much in evidence in Kupferman's rich musical imagination.

In the summer of 1990 the Lithuanian National Symphony recorded his JAZZ SYMPHONY and CHALLENGER (Soundspells Productions CD 104). Mr. Kupferman made the heroic trip to Lithuania for that purpose during the time of the Russian blockade. In the 1991-92 season he celebrated his 65th year with the premiere of his seventh opera, THE PROSCENIUM and several piano retrospectives with pianists Morton Estrin, Kazuko Hayami, Svetlana Gorokhovich and Christopher Vassiliades. Kupferman's book, Atonal Jazz, a two volume, in-depth study of new chromatic techniques in contemporary jazz was released in 1992 by Dorn Publications. His CONCERTO FOR GUITAR AND ORCHESTRA was commissioned by the Orquesta de Baja California and premiered in Mexico in 1994 with Roberto Limon as guitar soloist and Eduardo Garcia Barrios, conductor.

Most recent commissions are his new CHACONNE SONATA for flute and piano, written for Laurel Ann Mauer, PIPE DREAM SONATA for solo guitar commissioned by Robert Phillips, ICE CREAM CONCERTO and FLAVORS OF THE STARS both for the virtuoso ATRIL⁵ Contemporary Ensemble of Mexico, HOT HORS D'OUEVRES for the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and HEXAGON SKIES for guitar and orchestra commissioned by the Orquesta de Baja California and guitarist Roberto Limon.

More recent Kupferman projects soon to be recorded are FLIGHT OF ORESTES for six saxophones, BANNERS for orchestra, AMONG THE WINDY PLACES for bassoon, violin and viola and GOING HOME for guitar quartet.



Meyer Kupferman





This reissue CD was made possible under a grant from the Aaron Copland Fund.

The works on this CD are reissues from selected Serenus recordings. Slight imperfections in the sound are as a result of the condition of the original masters from which the transfers were made. Cover Art by Martin Canin

Remastering by Pomery Audio Reissue edition produced by John Yannelli © 1995 Soundspells Productions Rhinebeck, NY 12572 Soundspells roductions

The Orchestral Music of Meyer Kupferman Vol. I

Japan Philharmonic,

Akeo Watanabe, conductor

- 1. Lyric Symphony (22:36)
- 2. Variations for Orchestra (12:28)
- 3. Ostinato Burlesco (8:25)

Concerto for cello and Jazz Band

David Wells, cello and the Hartt Jazz Ensemble conducted by Donald Mattran

- 4. Zodiac (9:58)
- 5. Blues Stream (9:18)
- 6. Wild Wild Roses (6:09)

Soundspells Productions extends special thanks to the New York Public Library Music Division for its care and concern for the original tapes of these Kupferman works.

