

# POUL RUDERS

(b. 1949)

- 1-11 **Psalmodies** (1989) (28:15)  
*for guitar and nine instruments*
- I. Entrance for One (guitar) (2:12)
  - II. Solo for Two (guitar and cello; left hands only) (1:30)
  - III. Six in the Air (guitar and strings) (1:22)
  - IV. A Fanfare for All (tutti) (2:32)
  - V. With Passion for All (tutti) (2:25)
  - VI. A Chorale and a Song (guitar, violins, viola, bass) (3:05)
  - VII. Cadenza for One (guitar) (1:58)
  - VIII. Cadenza for All (tutti) (3:08)
  - IX. A March of Light and Darkness (tutti) (3:04)
  - X. A Prayer with Halo (tutti) (4:18)
  - XI. Exit for One (guitar) (2:34)

## *Speculum Musicae*

### David Starobin, guitar

Stephen Taylor, oboe; Charles Neidich, clarinet/bass clarinet  
Donald MacCourt, bassoon/contrabassoon; William Purvis, horn  
Benjamin Hudson, violin 1; Carol Zeavin, violin 2; Maureen Gallagher, viola  
Eric Bartlett, cello; Michael Willens, double bass; Poul Ruders, metal wind chimes

### Donald Palma, conductor

- 12 **Vox in Rama** (1983) (9:26)  
*for amplified violin, clarinet, piano*
- Capricorn**
- Elizabeth Layton, amplified violin; Anthony Lamb, clarinet  
Catherine Edwards, piano
- 13 **Nightshade** (1986) (9:11)  
*for ten instruments*

## *Capricorn*

Helen Keen, alto flute/piccolo; Christopher O'Neal, oboe  
Anthony Lamb, contrabass clarinet; Gareth Newman, contrabassoon  
Stephen Bell, horn; Roger Williams, trombone; Keith Bartlett, percussion  
Catherine Edwards, piano; Elizabeth Layton, violin; Andrew Durban, double bass

### Oliver Knussen, conductor

Total time: (47:11)

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## Program notes by the composer

### PSALMODIES

*Psalmodies* was written in 1989 and dedicated to David Starobin through a commission from Albert Augustine, Ltd. The word *Psalmodies* has its origin in ancient Greek: *psalmodia*, i.e. "singing to the harp"; and we find the word again in *Psalter*, derived from *Psallein*: "playing the strings with the fingers." The piece, however, has no specific religious contents or aim. The collection of eleven pieces form a concert suite displaying a wide range of emotions from the jubilant to the dismal, the guitar playing the natural leading part "inside" a chorus of woodwinds and strings. The title of each movement mirrors the variety of moods, from the secular feast of *A Fanfare for All* to the sacred introversion of *A Prayer with Halo*. *Psalmodies* opens with a guitar solo and closes down with one: the rejoicing *Entrance for One* and the hushed melancholy *Exit for One*, thus exemplifying the emotional compass, which I, in an essay on my *First Symphony* gave the following subtitle: "Of Joy and Grief; Of Worship and Oblivion."

### VOX IN RAMA

I wrote *Vox in Rama* in 1983 on a commission from the Danish Academy of Fine Arts. The scoring is for amplified violin (in order to lend a metallic, aggressive quality to the sound; a so-called contact-microphone is called for in the score), clarinet and piano. The piece is a violent *scherzo* in the form of a tone-poem, on the screaming despair and grief of these few lines from the Bible:

*"In Rama was there a voice heard,  
lamentation and weeping and great mourning,*

*Rachel weeping for her children,  
and would not be comforted,  
because they are not."*

**Matthew 2:18**

## NIGHTSHADE

In 1986, the London-based chamber group Capricorn commissioned a piece from me to be premiered the following year. I settled on a combination of instruments capable of encompassing an extreme range of pitch: alto-flute doubling piccolo; oboe; contrabass clarinet; contrabassoon; french horn; trombone; percussion (lots of gongs, tam-tams, bass-drum); piano; violin; and double bass. This orchestration exemplifies one of the clear goals of the composer, namely to write a study in sonorous black and white, so to speak, a compositional etude in dark and light timbres. The word "nightshade" in itself evokes associations with pale moonlight, tombstones, crypts, and the elusive shadows inside a huge forest in the dead of night. And there is, of course, "deadly nightshade". . .

**Poul Ruders** (born 1949 in Ringsted, Denmark) completed his composition studies at the Academy of Music in Odense, Denmark, where his teacher was Ib Norholm. He had extensive exposure to music of the Church, first as a member of the Copenhagen Boys' Choir, and later as an organist known for his improvisational talents. This experience may account for the fact that Medieval and Renaissance church music often creep, at other times, barge, into his work. Nor has Ruders confined himself to the employment of one "received" music; he has drawn on the vast possibilities open to a composer who sees the entire world of music, past and present, as a source of materials for inspiration, and explicit use. Recent compositions include *Monodrama* for percussion and orchestra (1988); *Polydrama* for cello and orchestra (1990); *First Symphony: Himmelhoch Jauchzend-zum Tode betriibt*" (1990); *Violin Concerto No. 2* (1991); *The Second Nightshade* (1991-92); for chamber orchestra; and *GONG* (1992) for large orchestra.

**David Starobin** is well known for his work on the expansion of the guitar's repertoire and its acceptance into the musical mainstream. To date more than 200 works, including pieces by Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Charles Wuorinen, Milton Babbitt, Tod Machover, Mel Powell, Lukas Foss, and Mario Davidovsky have been composed for him. Starobin maintains a complementary interest in the performance of 19th century music originally composed for the guitar, performing on period instruments and reproductions. Starobin's honors include prizes from Harvard University's Fromm Foundation "in honor of his commitment to the music of our time," and Lincoln Center's 1988 Avery Fisher Career Award. He is the holder of the Manhattan School of Music's "Andres Segovia Chair."

Formed in 1974, **Speculum Musicae** is a democratically propelled instrumental ensemble, dedicated to the performance and recording of twentieth-century repertoire. Based in New York City, the thirteen musicians of **Speculum**

**Musicae** present an annual series of concerts in New York and Philadelphia, and tour regularly in the United States and Europe. Other **Speculum Musicae** discs available on Bridge include **Elliott Carter: *The Vocal Works (1975-1981)***, BCD 9014; and **George Crumb: *Songs, Drones, and Refrains of Death***, BCD 9028.

**Donald Palma**, a native New Yorker, received his formal education at the Juilliard School. Mr. Palma is currently solo bassist of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and principal bass of the American Composers Orchestra. A founding member of **Speculum Musicae**, Palma serves a double function as bassist and conductor, having appeared in both capacities at the Warsaw Autumn Festival, the Geneva Festival, the New York Philharmonic's Horizons Festival, and at the Library of Congress. He is on the faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, the New England Conservatory, and Yale University.

Since 1973, London based **Capricorn** has performed an exceptionally wide range of music, their repertoire extending from the classical era to the present day. **Capricorn** has toured extensively in Europe, and has appeared at the festivals of Aldeburgh, Cheltenham, Holland, Salzburg, and at the BBC Proms. **Capricorn** has recorded more than one hundred works for the BBC and has appeared on television both in Britain and abroad.

**Oliver Knussen** made his conducting debut at the age of 15, leading the London Symphony Orchestra in his own ***First Symphony***. He has guest conducted many of the world's great orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Bayerisches Runfunk Orchestra, BBC Symphony, and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. In 1992 he was appointed principal guest conductor of the Residentie Orchestra, The Hague. Knussen is, however, perhaps best known for his own widely performed compositions. Among the most frequently heard are his operatic collaborations with Maurice Sendak – ***Where the Wild Things Are*** and ***Higglety Pigglety Pop!***

## Psalmodies

Producer: Michael Calvert  
Engineer: Paul Zinman  
Editing: Michael Calvert and Eric Delente; GLC Productions  
Recorded June 1, 1992 Studio A, RCA/BMG, New York City

## Nightshade and Vox in Rama

Producer: Andy Sandstrom  
Engineer: Janos Flosser  
Recorded November 22, 1987 Danmarks Radio, Studio 1, Radiohuset, Copenhagen

Mastering: Paul Zinman, Michael Calvert and David Starobin  
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Managing Director: Becky Starobin

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