

Concerto for Piano and Woodwind Quintet, Op. 53 (12:35)

- 1 1. Allegro (4:09)
- 2 2. Andante (4:33)
- 3 3. Allegro molto (3:52)

Four Tone-Pictures (4:36)

(piano solo)

- 4 1. Prelude (:53)
- 5 2. Angles and Curves (1:02)
- 6 3. Wishful Thinking (1:39)
- 7 4. Grotesque (1:01)

Duos for Three Woodwinds, Op. 35 (18:46)

Duo for Flute and Oboe

- 8 1. Moderato--Allegro (2:38)
- 9 2. Andante con moto (2:46)
- 10 3. Vivace (2:18)

Duo for Oboe and Clarinet

- 11 1. Moderato (1:25)
- 12 2. Andante affettuoso (1:09)
- 13 3. Tema con Variazioni (3:46)

Duo for Flute and Clarinet

- 14 1. Lento (2:36)
- 15 2. Intermezzo (1:02)
- 16 3. Finale (:54)

The New and Old (13:37)

(piano solo)

- 17 1. The Augmented Triad (:34)
- 18 2. The Major Second (:42)
- 19 3. The Tritone (:38)
- 20 4. The Twelve Tones (:37)
- 21 5. Shifted Rhythm (:54)
- 22 6. Twelve Upside Down (1:08)
- 23 7. Seven Times Seven (2:07)
- 24 8. Chromatics (:48)
- 25 9. Dissonant Counterpoint (1:13)
- 26 10. Tone Clusters (2:16)
- 27 11. Polytonality (1:35)
- 28 12. Fourths and Fifths (1:03)

Three Canons for Woodwinds, Op. 9 (9:34)

(flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon)

- 29 1. Moderato (2:10)
- 30 2. Allegretto grazioso (3:39)
- 31 3. Allegro (3:45)

32 Petite Etude (1:16)

(piano solo)

33 Wind Quintet, Op. 51 (7:08)

Gilbert Kalish, piano

New York Woodwind Quintet

Samuel Baron, flute Ronald Roseman, oboe Charles Neidich, clarinet

Donald MacCourt, bassoon William Purvis, horn

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Total Time: 68:22

Music of Wallingford Riegger

There was a time, early in the creation of art music in this country, when American composers rejected European aesthetic values and set out to chart their own course. This iconoclasm was nowhere more clearly expressed than in the figure of William Billings (1746-1800), the one-eyed, limping and boorish original, our first professional composer, who was happy to tell anyone who would listen that his own church music was "twenty times as powerful as the old [European] tunes." Condemned by the Church as too passionate and distracting to devotion, and by a new generation of better educated and genteel persons as inferior to the learned music of Europe, the rough-edged and distinctly American music of Billings was quickly eclipsed by the work of others. In the nineteenth century, while European composers were writing increasingly more daring music, American composers stopped creating art that reflected the peculiar climate of their own country and turned toward the emulation of older European models. By the early part of the nineteenth century, America had fully atoned for her lack of sophistication; she put on her 'Sunday best' by importing European musical styles the way she imported European clothes. A long line of composers from Francis Hopkinson to Daniel Gregory Mason and Horatio Parker abandoned their plowshares, primitivism, and the directness of indigenous American experience for the tight shoes and starched collars of a European gentility alien to the American consciousness. It was the composers of Wallingford Riegger's

generation--among them Charles Ives, Henry Cowell, and Carl Ruggles--who would have the confidence in themselves to strike out on their own.

Born in Albany, Georgia, in 1885, Riegger completed his musical education abroad, beginning composition studies with Max Bruch at the Academy of Music in Berlin in 1907, and supporting himself as a conductor and cellist in Europe and the United States during the next decade. Beginning in 1918 Riegger took a succession of academic posts (Drake University, the Institute of Musical Arts in New York, and the Ithaca Conservatory), before settling permanently in New York in 1928. Riegger's earliest works were tonal and romantic, but he increasingly felt that the older compositional techniques could not successfully convey his musical ideas or personal sensibilities, and spent the period between 1923 and 1926 evaluating his aesthetic position rather than composing. When he emerged from this period, he began what was to be a lifetime exploration of alternative means of musical organization. Upon arriving in New York in 1928, Riegger's enthusiasm for experimentation was stimulated and supported by other composers, including Henry Cowell, Charles Ives, and Edgard Varèse, with whom he collaborated in the organization of concerts of "radical" music. In the 1920s Riegger arranged hundreds of choral works under at least nine pseudonyms. In the

1930s he devoted the lion's share of his energy to dance music, composing for some of the leading pioneers of the era, including Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, and Hanya Holm. Atonal as well as tonal works make up a catalog consisting of almost ninety works composed under Riegger's own name.

Concerto for Piano and Woodwind Quintet, Op. 53, was composed in 1953 with the assistance of a Serge Koussevitsky Music Foundation grant. It was first performed at the Library of Congress in 1954 by Rosalyn Tureck and the New York Woodwind Quintet. The first movement of the Concerto is an exemplar of the non-doctrinaire manner in which Riegger fuses materials, styles and systems. Most of the music for the first movement ("Allegro") springs from the opening subject, a jazzy twelve-tone tune. Several characteristics of this melody are expertly developed through the course of the piece, among them two rhythmic figures--one syncopated, the other swinging. Riegger handles his contrapuntal material tastefully: The texture throughout is crystalline, the orchestration bright, and the rhythmic language lively and propulsive. The movement is cast in the shape of a sonata form, with a development section that isolates and thumpily explores the tritone while introducing a motive that will return to dominate the last movement. The second

movement, with its tango-like rhythms, is a dramatic and nervous "Andante". The structure of this movement resembles that of the first-- a large A-B-A' form in which the B section is exploratory and developmental. If the first two movements are tonally peripatetic, the third movement settles down to a home base in which "G" modal minor and a homophonic texture hold sway. The playful nature of this movement and the consanguinity of its disparate materials again reflect Riegger's ability to knit a variety of materials into a coherent whole. This recorded performance includes minor emendations to the published score, which the composer gave to pianist Gilbert Kalish in a 1959 rehearsal of the work.

Four Tone-Pictures for solo piano was published in 1939. The first and third of the four pieces are slow and dreamy, while the second and fourth are strongly pulsed and energetic. "Prelude" begins with a twelve-tone melody which is followed by chromatic scales, quartal harmonies and a touch of polytonality. With its whimsical changes of texture and material, "Prelude" has a quasi-improvisational feel to it. "Angles and Curves" is a vigorous scherzo with sharp accents and rhythmic unisons. The central episode introduces a short wistful melody against a two-note ostinato. "Wishful Thinking" is a meditative *Lento* in which a two measure ostin-

ato underlies a spontaneous and bluesy tune. The concluding piece, "Grotesque," is a diabolical etude. Pentatonic scales acted upon rudely by tone clusters contribute to the piece's comically irreverent character.

Riegger was one of the earliest American composers to write music using the "method of composition with twelve tones," as Schoenberg referred to the atonal organizational technique that he first employed in 1923. Eight years later, Riegger composed *Dichotomy*, for chamber orchestra, making liberal use of the technique. In 1943, he published *Duos for Three Woodwinds*, Op. 35. The *Duos* are the work of a traditionalist--an artist whose roots and training were informed by tonal musical models. Although clothed in the garb of the twelve-tone language, melody is of primary importance in the *Duos*.

The New and Old, published in 1947, is a set of twelve short piano pieces, generally centering around a single constructive device, character, or texture. Some of the pieces are serial ("The Twelve Tones," "Shifted Rhythm," "Twelve Upside Down."), some contain clusters ("The Major Second," "Tone Clusters"), another centers around melodic fourths with chromatic figuration ("Seven Times Seven"), and others are polytonal.

The simple textured set is full of playful musical characters, each with a distinctive profile.

Three Canons for Woodwinds, Op. 9 is one of Riegger's first atonal compositions. Composed in 1930 and premiered the following March at a concert of the Pan-American Association of Composers in New York, the work is dedicated to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Although *Three Canons* dispenses with the unifying and familiar properties of tonal harmony, Riegger creates structural coherence through the age-old technique of imitative counterpoint. Here, canonic techniques anchor the work with a kind of inexorable logic, while the composer's imagination and playfulness abound within the confines of the imitative framework. The first movement, "*Moderato*," begins with a bassoon obbligato in a flowing 6/8 time, before the canonic melody finally makes its appearance in the flute and is imitated by the oboe and clarinet. The canonic material consists of a succession of melodies which embrace a wide range of lyrical, dance-like and humorous gestures. In the second movement, "*Allegretto grazioso*," the texture thins to two parts. The melodies, containing frequent dotted rhythms, angular leaps, and varied rhythms, tend to be quirky and plastic. After the rhythmic variety and melodic suppleness of the second movement, the third, "*Allegro*," bursts forth

with direct and uncomplicated energy. There are two distinct canons here, between the inner voices (oboe and clarinet), and the outer voices (piccolo and bassoon). As in the first two movements, the two entities become more and more interactive, sharing material in a unified texture that reminds one of the satisfying interconnection of a jig-saw puzzle, or of the smooth action of a clockwork mechanism.

Petite Etude, Op. 62 is the latest piece of Riegger's represented on this recording, with a publication date of 1957. The basic fabric of C major is continually rent by dissonances and short contrasting sections of more melodic material. Riegger holds the short, unpretentious work together by using one of his favorite threads--angular ascending and descending scalar patterns.

Like the concerto that begins this recording, the *Wind Quintet*, Op. 51 was composed in 1952 by a sure-handed composer nearing seventy. Several "Rieggerisms" are present: The reliance on imitative procedures, the quick alternation of disparate textures and materials, a quirky, often amusing rhythmic language, and the juxtaposition of previously separate themes in a synthesizing recapitulation. On one level *Wind Quintet* can be heard as a journey toward thematic wholeness. As the work unfolds,

a bright assemblage of gestures gives way to a long-lined eighteen-note melody that dominates the recapitulation. This melody has been hinted at in the opening measures and throughout the course of the piece. This quintet is the work of a confident artist who had mastered his craft. Just as Riegger apparently felt no contradiction in maintaining a career that juggled composition in many styles--popular music for chorus, tonal works for dance, atonal and twelve-tone "serious" music--*Wind Quintet* happily juxtaposes a variety of musical elements into a cooperative and cohesive whole.

-Perry Goldstein

Composer Perry Goldstein is a member of the faculty at the State University of New York at Stony Brook.

For over 40 seasons the **New York Woodwind Quintet** has been a leader in the field of chamber music for winds. The New York Woodwind Quintet has made invaluable contributions in the expansion of repertoire for woodwind quintet, with dozens of compositions premiered by the ensemble. These works include Samuel Barber's "Summer Music" and quintets by Gunther Schuller, Ezra Laderman, William Bergsma, Alec Wilder, William Sydeman and Wallingford Riegger. The members of the Quintet--Samuel Baron, flute; Ronald Roseman, oboe; Charles Neidich, clarinet; Donald MacCourt, bassoon; William Purvis, horn--are all well-known artists who are frequently heard as soloists as well as in chamber and orchestral settings. Since the 1989-90 season, the Quintet has been ensemble-in-residence at the Juilliard School in New York City.

Gilbert Kalish is internationally acclaimed for his sensitive interpretations of solo and chamber literature spanning the 18th century to the present. A founding member of the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble and pianist for the Boston Symphony Chamber Players since 1969, Mr. Kalish has also appeared as soloist with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in concerti ranging from Mozart to Berio. He is a frequent guest artist with many distinguished ensembles, and his thirty year partnership with the great mezzo-soprano Jan DeGaetani was universally

recognized as one of the most remarkable artistic collaborations in the contemporary music world. Since 1985, Mr. Kalish has been Chairman of the Faculty at the Tanglewood Music Center, and is Professor of Piano at the State University of New York at Stony Brook. In 1995, Gilbert Kalish was awarded the Paul Fromm Award for distinguished service to the music of our time.

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