

Joshua Variations (1992) (12:26)

(solo guitar)

Michael Starobin

(b. 1956)

- 1** I Morning Bottle (Theme) (1:37)
- 2** II Under the Table (Variation 1) (1:11)
- 3** III They're My Toys (Variation 2) (1:36)
- 4** IV Under the Waterfall: Bathtime (Variation 3) (1:04)
- 5** V Nap Time (Sarabande, Variation 4) (1:51)
- 6** VI Dancing with Mom & Dad (Variation 5) (1:21)
- 7** VII "...it's called snow" (Passacaglia, Variation 6) (3:46)

David Starobin, guitar

Mundus Canis (1998) (9:43)

("A Dog's World")

Five Humoresques for Guitar and Percussion

George Crumb

(b. 1929)

- 8** 1 Tammy, Elegantly, somewhat freely (2:45)
- 9** 2 Fritz, *Furioso* (1:12)
- 10** 3 Heidel, *Languido, un poco misterioso* (2:37)
- 11** 4 Emma-Jean, Coquettish, *poco animato, grazioso* (1:31)
- 12** 5 Yoda, *Prestissimo possibile* (1:38)

David Starobin, guitar; George Crumb, percussion

13 Forlane (1998) (3:03)

(solo guitar)

David Liptak

(b. 1949)

14 Arabesque (1999) (2:42)

(solo guitar)

Melinda Wagner

(b. 1957)

15 Trochaic Trot (2000) (1:50)

(solo guitar)

Richard Wernick

(b. 1934)

Fantasy-Suite (1994) (15:22)

(solo guitar)

Gunther Schuller

(b. 1925)

- 16** 1 Sarabande (4:37)
- 17** 2 Fantasia Parodistica (3:25)
- 18** 3 Forlana (4:09)
- 19** 4 Toccata (3:11)

20 Shameless Sarabande (1997) (3:54)

(solo guitar)

Paul Lansky

(b. 1944)

David Starobin, guitar

21 Luimen (1997) (10:11)

*(trumpet, trombone, harp, mandolin,
guitar and vibraphone)*

Elliott Carter

(b. 1908)

Speculum Musicae

Raymond Mase, trumpet; Michael Powell, trombone

June Han, harp; William Anderson, mandolin

David Starobin, guitar; Pablo Rieppi, vibraphone

William Purvis, conductor

Notes for New Music with Guitar, Volume Six

This recording brings together pieces I have worked on during the past dozen years. As in the previous volumes of this series, the compositions include a wide range of approaches to writing for the guitar.

My brother, Michael Starobin, has written a number of compositions at my request. Mike is a wonderful and poetic musician. A man of the theater, he is more often composing and orchestrating for Broadway and Hollywood than he is for the concert hall, but his works for guitar: *Chase* (1987) for guitar and tape, *Four Stevens* (1996) for medium voice and guitar, and *Joshua Variations* (1992), are dramatic and highly expressive additions to the late 20th century guitar repertoire.

Joshua Variations is based on a short theme that Mike's wife, Hannah would sing to Joshua, their newborn son.



Following a brief introduction, the theme is stated, then expanded and developed. The twelve-minute long composition that follows consists of six "variations"- each a set piece carrying its own title. The theme and six variations follow the newborn child through a typical day, from morning bottle (Theme) through playtime, bath time, nap time, a dance with mom and dad, and finally, a dreamily blues tinged passacaglia, titled, "...it's called snow."

Touring with George Crumb, performing *Mundus Canis* (*A Dog's World*),

for guitar and percussion, has been a source of great delight during the last six or seven years. We first played the work in Cannes, France, in January of 1998, and have crossed the USA and the Atlantic a number of times, performing these humoresques for audiences that can't help but smile at George's "Yoda" cries and mock scolding "Bad Dog" at the end of each performance.

Here is George Crumb's own program note for *Mundus Canis*:

"While contemplating the composition of a little dance piece for solo guitar for David Starobin (to be one of a series he was commissioning from several composers), I hit on the idea of creating a musical homage to the several dogs in my life. It occurred to me that the feline species had been disproportionately memorialized in music and I wanted to help redress the balance.

And so, the "piece for solo guitar" metamorphosed into a little suite of five canine humoresques, each being a portrait and character study of one of the Crumb family dogs. I have always known that dogs, like their biped masters, have various and distinct personalities. The addition of a percussionist, who supplies a specific instrumental color for each piece, helped me to delineate each canine character.

"Tammy," a brown, short-haired full-size dachshund and the first dog in our family, exhibited qualities ranging from nobility to capriciousness. Her piece is inscribed "elegantly, somewhat freely" and the percussion component is a pair of maracas. The music ends in a scampering rush of movement which represents her more playful side.

"Fritzi's" piece, marked *furioso* in the score, expresses a pronounced impetuosity and irrepressibility of spirit. The percussionist plays a frame drum and the guitar writing is virtuosic in style and contains stingingly percussive pizzicato effects and knuckle-rapping. Fritzi was a brown male dachshund of a lovable disposition despite his stubbornness and high-spirited antics.

The dog "Heidel" (acquired on a visit to Heidelberg, Germany) was our first

long-haired specimen of the breed, a rich brown in color, who exhibited a philosophical disposition and confounding depths of personality. Her sloth-like movements and hoard of secret lore are represented in the score by the indication *languido, un poco misterioso*. The guitar style is quite coloristic with "bottle-neck" playing and much pitch bending. The percussionist plays two tam tams, the smaller of which is lowered into (or raised out of) a tub of water to produce the "water-gong" glissando effect.

"Emma-Jean" was a jet-black miniature female dachshund of a definitely coquettish nature. There are abrupt changes of tempo and mood and the finely etched rhythmic gestures convey a sense of prissyness and archness. The guitar line is punctuated by claves and occasional soft strokes on a suspended cymbal.

The final character in our quintet of dogs is "Yoda", who was rescued from a New York City pound by my daughter Ann. He is a fluffy-white animal of mixed parentage (in which the bichon frise strain predominates) and mercurial temperament. The tempo marking for Yoda's piece is *prestissimo possibile* and scurrying, scampering guitar passages are complemented by raspy guiro sounds and mounted castanets. Yoda's naughty, yet endearing, pranks necessitate an occasional scolding from master or mistress. But in an instant, all forgiven, Yoda plops in one's lap!"

David Liptak's hypnotic *Forlane* (1998) is a mesmerizing take on the old dance form, once popular in both Italy and France. One source claims that the forlane was popular with Venetian gondoliers, who would dance the forlane in pairs, using arm movements that suggested rowing. Liptak's *Forlane* makes use of a repetitive rocking rhythm, and striking silences.

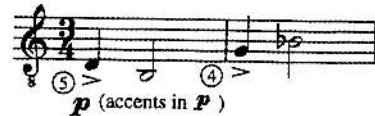
Melinda Wagner's *Arabesque* (1999) was composed for a performance at a concert honoring George Crumb's 70th birthday at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. *Arabesque* is a continuously unfolding melodic arch that begins slowly, steadily reaches its climax at the top of the instrument's range, then rapidly unravels, in the composer's words, "like a clock running down". The coda

recalls the opening, with this brief, but surprisingly dramatic work, ending lyrically and intimately.

Richard Wernick's hyper little *Trochaic Trot* (2000) may be the shortest piece on this recording, but it packs a lot of information into its short stay. The title of the piece, referring to a stressed syllable followed by an unstressed one, is audible in work's first two bars:

with a gentle lilt; (in 1)

$\text{♩} = \text{c. } 56 - 60$



p (accents in *p*)

Throughout the piece, Wernick eschews literal repetition, and though there is a feeling of recapitulation at the end of this piece, the composer is always having fun by avoiding the expected. *Trochaic Trot* turned out to be a warmup piece for Wernick, who, in 2001, went on to compose a terrific chamber concerto for guitar and eleven instruments, *The Name of the Game*.

Gunther Schuller is one of the greatest living figures in American music and a personal hero. Gunther's work as a publisher and record producer has been a model of selfless devotion to the music of America. His writings on music and musicians have informed generations of readers, and his knowledge and analysis of jazz has elevated the level of jazz discourse and awareness. None of this even touches on his principal activities—those of composer and performer.

Gunther writes about *Fantasy-Suite*:

"*Fantasy-Suite* for Solo Guitar, composed for David Starobin in 1994, and commissioned by Albert Augustine Ltd., consists of four movements, each based on older, baroque or pre-classical forms: a stately Sarabande (*Lento*), a Fantasia Parodistica (Pixyish), which might have been designated Quodlibet in earlier times, a French Forlana (a dance form much beloved by Ravel), and finally a lively Toccata (*Allegro vivace*). Thus the titles are already generically indicative of the musical content and character of each movement.

I can state without hesitation that this composition - specifically writing for guitar - was the most challenging creative effort I have ever faced as a composer - by far. This was not because of any dearth of ideas for the intended work, but rather that many, many of the ideas I had were quite unrealizable on the guitar. This has primarily to do with the fact that A) I am a strongly harmonic composer (whatever else I may also be), B) I write in a full, richly 'chromatic' language - I prefer that term to 'atonal' - and C) the human hand (particularly the left hand) is limited in size, reach and stretch. Time and time again when I wanted a musical line to rise, without abandoning any underlying harmonizations, I more often than not ran out of fingers, so to speak.

I struggled valiantly with these (and some other) problems endemic to guitar writing, and hope that I have achieved something relevant, perhaps even somewhat original. I know the *Fantasy-Suite* is difficult, technically and conceptually; but then I didn't see the point in writing, especially for someone as gifted and enterprising as David Starobin, some light-fingered bagatelle. Nor did I think it right to let the guitar force me to change my style, my language, my concepts of composition. There is, of course, no questioning the guitar's many remarkable virtues, including its transcendent beauty of sound. Thus I saw the writing of this work, above and beyond my momentary struggles, as both a wonderful opportunity and a supreme challenge."

In 1996 I asked Paul Lansky to write a short dance piece for guitar. He

responded with a six movement suite lasting nearly a half-hour. *Semi-Suite* contains six movements, of which *Shameless Sarabande* is the fourth. The piece is in ABA form, with the middle section played slightly faster than the outer sections. The music, as in much of Paul Lansky's work, is notable for its clear melodies, its harmonic simplicity and its sweet-natured temperament.

In 1997, shortly after Elliott Carter sent me the manuscript of his little guitar solo, *Shard*, he sent the finished score of a new sextet called *Luimen*, composed for the Dutch Nieuw Ensemble. *Luimen*, for the pluckish combination of Trumpet, Trombone, Harp, Mandolin, Guitar and Vibraphone, incorporated, literally, the entirety of *Shard*, within its body.

Malcolm MacDonald provides the following note for *Luimen*:

Carter composed *Luimen* during the summer of 1997, completing it in July. It was premiered in Amsterdam on 31 March 1998 by the Nieuw Ensemble conducted by Ed Spanjaard. Carter left it to the players themselves to choose the title. *Luimen* (pronounced, approximately, 'laow-men'), an archaic Dutch word meaning 'whimsical moods', seems highly appropriate to the music's eventful succession of colours and characters.

The unorthodox ensemble gives *Luimen* a sonority, a personal sound-world, quite unlike any other Carter piece - magical, dreamlike, tremulous. If the guitar is the core instrument, and *Shard* is the source of the material, then the harp and the mandolin may be seen as reflections and siblings of the guitar, mirroring its figures and sonorities back to it, always subtly changed. And the piece as a whole transforms and extends the harmonies and rhythms of the guitar piece into new kinds of movement and into the intricacies of ensemble playing.

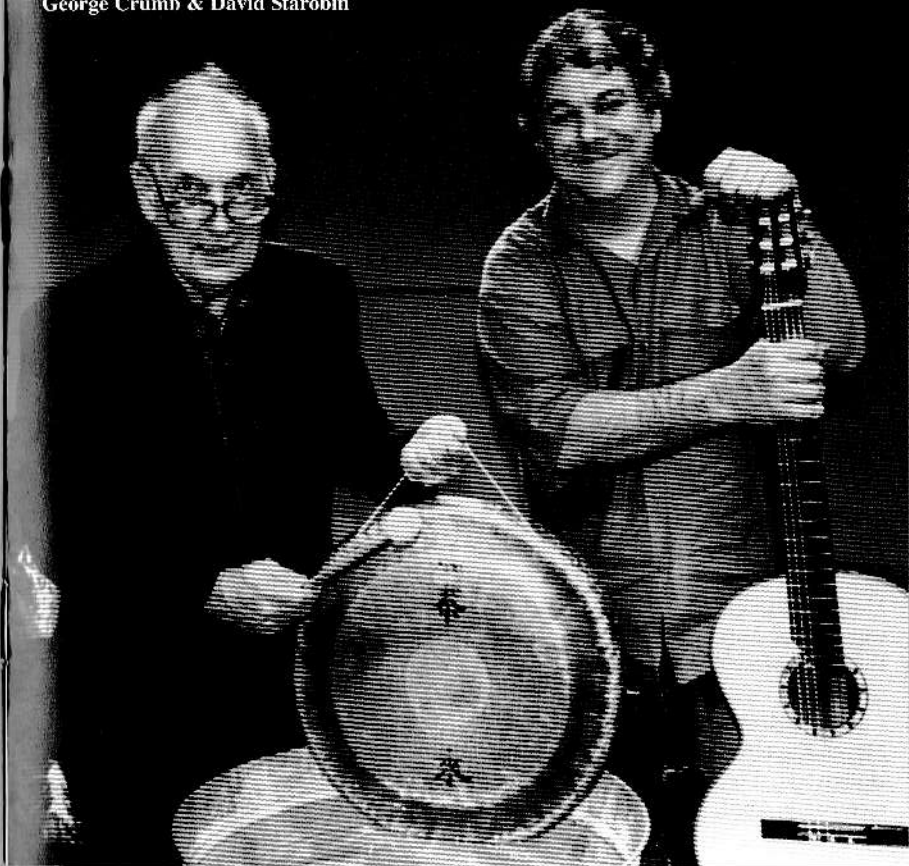
Luimen falls into four pretty clearly-defined spans. The first is in a sense introductory, but it is also a remarkable invention in its own right. Here Carter fully exploits the colouristic potential of the plucked instruments in a wide range of tremulous, shimmering,

tintinnabulating textures abruptly interrupted by changes in figuration and brief solos in which each individual instrument introduces itself and makes its presence and character felt. Eventually the most substantial solo so far, a bravura cadenza-like passage for the harp, links to the second span. This new section is slow-moving, almost chorale-like, with deliberate motion in brass and harp and plangent chords in the vibraphone - all this as background to quicker, mercurial phrases in mandolin and guitar.

The third section of the work takes on the character of a kind of chamber concerto, with the guitar as soloist. What the guitarist plays is *Shard* complete, with an accompaniment from the ensemble that begins very discreetly but becomes more assertive - sforzando tutti chords and little vibraphone riffs - as the solo part proceeds. The brass come to the fore as the fourth and final span begins, with a lightly swinging melodic invention against the modern-jazz cool of vibraphone and mandolin, which works up to an effervescent coda featuring the whole ensemble.

~ David Starobin, New Rochelle, NY
January, 2004

George Crumb & David Starobin



David Starobin was born in New York City, in 1951. He began his guitar studies at age 7, with the Puerto Rican guitarist Manuel Gayol, later working with Aaron Shearer at the Peabody Conservatory of Music. While a student at Peabody, Starobin worked closely with pianist Leon Fleisher, and was a frequent participant in the Marlboro Music Festival. Among David Starobin's many honors are a Harvard University Fromm Grant, for "his commitment to the music of our time" (1984); a Lincoln Center Avery Fisher Grant (1988); and Peabody Conservatory's "Distinguished Alumni Award" (1999).

David Starobin is the chairman of the guitar department at the Manhattan School of Music, where he holds the school's "Andres Segovia Chair". A leading advocate of contemporary music, more than 300 works have been composed for and dedicated to Starobin. Among the list of composers who have written for him are Milton Babbitt, Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Poul Ruders, Mel Powell, Barbara Kolb, Richard Wernick, Gunther Schuller, Per Nørgard, Lukas Foss, Mario Davidovsky, and Starobin's brother, Michael Starobin.

In 1981, David Starobin founded Bridge Records, Inc.. Starobin's work for Bridge as guitarist, producer and executive producer has earned Five "Indie" awards, eleven "Grammy" nominations, and dozens of "Best of Year" awards from the international press. David Starobin's guitar recordings on Bridge include: Poul Ruders: Guitar Concertos and Solos (BRIDGE 9136); Sor & Giuliani (BRIDGE 9107); Mario Davidovsky: Flashbacks (BRIDGE 9097); Newdance: 18 Dances for Guitar (1996-97) (BRIDGE 9084); George Crumb: Quest (BRIDGE 9069); The Great Regondi, Volumes 1 and 2 (BRIDGE 9039, 9055); New Music with Guitar, Volume 5 (BRIDGE 9042); Mauro Giuliani: Solo Guitar Music (BRIDGE 9029); New Music with Guitar, Volume 4 (BRIDGE 9022); New Music with Guitar, Volumes 1-3 (BRIDGE 9009); and A Song From the East: Russian and Hungarian Music (BRIDGE 9004).

Michael Starobin studied composition with Henry Brant, Vivian Fine and Meyer Kupferman. In addition to composing, he also orchestrates for Broadway and Hollywood. For more information, see www.starobin.com. *Joshua Variations* was recorded in April, 2003 at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

George Crumb has been the recipient of the Pulitzer Prize in 1968, a Grammy Award in 2001, and numerous honors and distinctions. His music is being documented in Bridge's "Complete Crumb Edition" which currently numbers seven volumes. For information, visit www.GeorgeCrumb.net and www.BridgeRecords.com. *Mundus Canis* was recorded in October 1998 at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York, NY.

David Liptak is Professor of Composition at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. His music has been performed by orchestras and ensembles throughout the USA, and can be heard on labels including Albany, and an upcoming CD for Bridge. For further information see www.dliptak.com. *Forlane* was recorded in July, 2001 at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Melinda Wagner was the recipient of the 1999 Pulitzer Prize for her *Concerto for Flute, Strings and Percussion* (BRIDGE 9098). Ms. Wagner received graduate degrees from the University of Chicago and the University of Pennsylvania, where among others, she studied with Richard Wernick and George Crumb. For more information, visit www.presser.com. *Arabesque* was recorded in July, 2001 at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Richard Wernick won the 1977 Pulitzer Prize in music, is the only two-time first prize Friedheim Award recipient, and has been honored by the Ford Foundation, Guggenheim Foundation, National Institute of Arts and Letters, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Wernick's music can be heard on BRIDGE 9003, 9082, 9084 and 9131. For more information, visit www.presser.com. *Trochaic Trot* was recorded in July 2001 at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Gunther Schuller studied flute, horn, and theory, advancing rapidly enough as a hornist to join the Cincinnati Symphony as principal horn at age 17 and the orchestra of the Metropolitan Opera at age 19. "Scholar, composer, conductor, teacher, author, music publisher, indefatigable advocate - Gunther Schuller isn't merely a musician, he's a monopoly." This

description by Alan Rich, summarizes the multi-faceted career of this Pulitzer Prize-winning practitioner of the 28-hour day. For more information, visit www.schirmer.com. *Fantasy-Suite* was recorded in December, 1998, at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Paul Lansky is one of the most prominent and accessible of modern American composers who write primarily for the medium of computer-generated sound. His music has been heard in classical concert halls, paid homage to by pop stars (Radiohead!), and is the partial subject of the film, *My Cinema for the Ears* (BRIDGE DVD 9117). For further information, please visit www.bridgerecords.com or www.silvertone.princeton.edu. *Shameless Sarabande* was recorded in July, 2001 at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Elliott Carter is internationally recognized as one of the leading American voices of the classical music tradition. December 11, 2003 marked Carter's 95th birthday; and the birthday season brings salutes from performing organizations around the world. Elliott Carter's guitar music has been recorded by David Starobin on BRIDGE 9009, 9014, 9044, and 9084. For further information, visit www.bridgerecords.com and www.boosey.co.uk. *Luimen* was recorded in September, 2000, at KAS Studios, Astoria, NY.

Speculum Musicae recently celebrated its 30th anniversary season as one of America's leading ensembles devoted to the music of our time. Based in New York City, Speculum Musicae is in residence at Columbia University, where the group performs and teaches a series of master classes.

William Purvis, conductor and horn virtuoso, is highly regarded for his work both in the United States and abroad. Mr. Purvis's solo performances and recordings range from period instrument performances of early music through the latest compositions of the vanguard composers of our time. Currently on the faculties of Juilliard, Yale, and The State University of New York at Stony Brook, Mr. Purvis has taught master classes throughout the USA, Europe and Asia.

Producer: David Starobin
Executive Producer: Becky Starobin
Engineers: David Merrill, Adam Abeshouse (Crumb)
Editor: Silas Brown
Mastering Engineer: Adam Abeshouse
Design: Alexis Napoliello and Kelly Ferriter
Mr. Starobin's guitars: Gary Southwell, Nottingham, England
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Shameless Sarabande (from *Semi-Suite*) is published by Editions New Rochelle (www.bridgerecords.com)

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