

STUYVESANT QUARTET

ALFRED GALLODORO

Clarinet

JOHANNES BRAHMS (1833-1897)

CLARINET QUINTET IN B-MINOR, OP. 115 (1891) (32:41)

- 1 Allegro (8:58)
- 2 Adagio (11:20)
- 3 Andantino: Presto non assai, ma con sentimento (4:15)
- 4 Con moto (8:08)

Sylvan Shulman, violin 1 • Bernard Robbins, violin 2

Ralph Hersh, viola • Alan Shulman, cello

Alfred Gallodoro, clarinet

Recorded December 4 & 5, 1947
Majestic Theatre, New York City

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART (1756-1791)

STRING QUARTET IN D-MAJOR, K. 499 (1786) (24:25)

- 5 Allegretto (6:20)
- 6 Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio (3:04)
- 7 Adagio (8:44)
- 8 Molto allegro (6:17)

Recorded December 11, 1951

Village Lutheran Church, Bronxville, New York

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART

STRING QUARTET IN D-MAJOR, K. 575 (1789) (22:40)

- 9 Allegretto (7:16)
- 10 Andante (4:43)
- 11 Menuetto: Allegretto—Trio (5:15)
- 12 Allegretto (5:26)

Recorded November 24, 1951

Village Lutheran Church, Bronxville, New York

In December 1890, at the age of 56, Johannes Brahms announced to his publisher Fritz Simrock that he was retiring from composition. Simrock had published the so-called Double Concerto, Op.102, two years before. That proved to be Brahms's final orchestral work. More recently, Brahms had published the three unaccompanied choral Motets, Op. 110. His String Quintet No.2 in G had received its premiere in Vienna in November 1890; Simrock would publish it the following year as Op.111. With that Quintet, Brahms appeared to have bid adieu to his beloved chamber music as well.

That changed the following summer, when he renewed his acquaintance with Richard Mühlfeld, principal clarinetist of the renowned Meiningen court orchestra. Inspired by Mühlfeld's rich clarinet tone, expressive playing, and superb musicianship, Brahms took pen to composition paper and resumed writing. Before his inspiration flagged, he had completed a Trio for clarinet, cello, and piano, Op.114 (1891); the Quintet that opens this disc (also 1891), and two Sonatas for clarinet and piano, Op.120 (1894, published 1895).

These four works proved to be Brahms's swan song in chamber music, containing his last movements in sonata form; his last intermezzo, scherzo, and variations. Collectively, they represent one of the most bountiful late harvests in any composer's output. Music historians refer to them as Brahms's Indian summer, citing the gentle nostalgia shared among them. The clarinet pieces also demonstrate superb craftsmanship and a tight, disciplined structure. Mostly, they are beautiful and moving music.



The most obvious precedent for Brahms's Quintet is Mozart's immortal Quintet in A, K.581, written for Anton Stadler. Indeed, many historians have noted that Mühlfeld inspired Brahms in much the same way that Stadler inspired Mozart and Heinrich Baermann fired Carl Maria von Weber's imagination. Still, all three composers retained a distinctive, individual style and Brahms left his own intensely personal stamp on his Clarinet Quintet.

The primary difference between his Quintet and Mozart's is the manner in which he combines the woodwind instrument with the strings. Mozart treats the clarinet in a concertante fashion, calling on it regularly for some measure of soloistic display even though it is technically part of the ensemble. Brahms integrates the clarinet more fully into the texture. His use of the instrument's color is extremely subtle.

The Quintet is cyclic. Musical material appearing in the first movement returns in subsequent movements. Sometimes this takes place via direct quotation; more often, it occurs after having undergone some transformation that leaves the original idea altered but recognizable. Brahms's metamorphosis is both understated and organic. Undulating sixteenth notes in parallel thirds and sixths open the work, serving as germinal material for virtually the entire composition. By structuring the Quintet in this way, Brahms makes all four movements essentially into an extended set of variations, with an emphasis on the Finale, the only formal set of variations in the piece (and there merged with aspects of rondo form).

Tonal ambiguity between B-minor and its relative major, D-Major, courses through the Quintet. The opening measures clearly imply D-Major, but the music soon resolves to B-minor. This tonal uncertainty is inherent to the question-

ing nature of the music, a thoughtful demeanor that serves as another hallmark. Like so many other compositions from Brahms's final years, this is not so much music of gesture and drama. Its focus is on nuances of instrumental color and motivic development. The composer's biographer Karl Geiringer, who considered the Quintet one of Brahms's most beautiful pieces of chamber music, saw it as retrospective.

Pictures of the past, pleasures and sorrows, longing and hope, pass before the elderly master, who expresses them once again in delicately restrained and melancholy tones.

The character of the clarinet is, of course, integral to the entire work. Listening to the interaction among the five players is an engrossing experience. Listeners to whom Op. 115 is an old friend reap a different reward, that of the ever-present freshness and magic that attend great music.

Mozart's best-known contribution to the string quartet is the set of six quartets dedicated to Haydn, collectively known as the 'Haydn' quartets. Composed between 1782 and 1785 and published in 1785, they remain a cornerstone of the literature. Apart from those six, Mozart's most frequently performed quartets are the last three: K.575 in D, K.589 in B-flat, and K.590 in F, called the 'Prussian' quartets.

Sometimes overlooked in the shadow of those nine monumental achievements is the lone Quartet in D, K.499. It bears a dedication to Mozart's friend Franz Anton Hoffmeister (1754-1812) and has become known as the "Hoffmeister" quartet. Shortly after founding his Viennese publishing house, Hoffmeister asked Mozart for three piano quartets. Mozart initially accommodated

the request with the famous G-minor quartet, K.478. Hoffmeister complained that the G-minor work was too difficult for the public; he was certain that it would not sell. Mozart then composed the E-flat Piano Quartet, K.493: a less stormy work, but still exceptionally difficult, particularly for the piano. Hoffmeister declined to publish it. It is possible that the string quartet in D-Major was an alternative to a third piano quartet for Hoffmeister. This quartet made the publisher happy.

K.499 is a joyous and polished work that rewards careful listening. The main theme, a lilting broken D-major chord declaimed in unison, recurs frequently throughout the opening *Allegretto*. Mozart integrates and adapts it into all new melodic material, sometimes inverting it, elsewhere using it as a transitional device. Some of the unexpected modulations foreshadow Schubert, but the chiseled perfection of the structure is unmistakably Mozart.

The highly ornate Minuet occurs second, an unusual but not unprecedented placement. Perhaps Mozart wished to separate his more dramatic *Allegretto* from the complex, emotionally weighty slow movement. But this is no throwaway dance: a strong, graceful minuet with hints of both German dance and Austrian *Ländler*, and dotted with canonic bits. Running triplets in minor mode give the trio an uneasy undercurrent that contrasts with the benign outer movements.

The slow movement, a lengthy *Adagio* in G-major, borrows heavily from Mozart's extensive experience in the opera house. The first violin sings an extended, sometimes elaborate vocal line that is as much aria as chamber music. Each phrase plays out at leisure, polished and intricate as fine silver work. Mozart does not neglect the lower parts, endowing them with considerable

contrapuntal interest. For most of the movement, viola and cello function as a separate pair from the two violins.

The texture is even more elaborate in the finale, a sonata-rondo that clearly draws its jocular spirit from Haydn. The emphasis here is on first violin. Running triplets recall the *minore* section of the second movement, but their function now is to energize, providing forward momentum. Mozart pits his two principal themes against one another in the complex development section, ultimately letting the first theme prevail. It is a grand ride.

The sunny Quartet in D, K.575 is the first of the so-called “Prussian” Quartets. D-major was a favored key for Mozart; bright and playable for both strings and brass, it often invited the attendant pomp and ceremony of the larger orchestra, for example in the showy Piano Concerto No. 26 in D-Major, K.537 (“Coronation”). This quartet shows us a more intimate D-major engendered by the medium, but sharing the good humor and sunny spirits of the tonality.

During spring 1789, Mozart accompanied his patron Prince Karl Lichnowsky on a journey to Berlin. He performed both at Potsdam and Berlin for the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm II, who was an accomplished cellist. Clearly hoping for royal patronage and perhaps a position with the Prussian court, Mozart planned to send to Friedrich Wilhelm a set of six quartets that would favor the cello. He began composing K.575 *en route* back to Vienna from Berlin; it was the first of the set to be completed. Another year elapsed before he added two more (K.589 in B-flat and K.590 in F). Sadly, the remaining three did not come to fruition as Mozart’s fortunes and health continued their precipi-

tous decline. But the D-major Quartet is devoid of any unpleasant foreshadowing.

From the opening measures, it is clear that Mozart wished to write a cloudless, trouble-free work that would ingratiate him to the Prussian court. Triadic themes predominate; phrases are flawlessly balanced; modulations are smooth; transitions effected with elegance and beautifully wrought textures.

To accommodate the king, Mozart faced the challenge of integrating a prominent cello part without compromising the inherent balance of the ensemble. In the opening movement, cello introduces the second theme and figures prominently in the development section. Often playing in its upper range, cello retains a significant role throughout the quartet. In passages where it does not carry the thematic banner, the cello plays more vivid, audible accompaniments.

In the slow movement, cello is the first to engage in imitative dialogue with the violin; in the Trio section of the Minuet, it has almost exclusive domain over the melodic line, ceding it briefly to viola. The Quartet concludes with a whimsical *Allegretto* that unfolds from a single theme *à la* Haydn. The contour of the melody is strikingly similar to the first movement, which lends a subtle cyclic unity to the quartet, as well as a consistent spirit.

— Laurie Shulman, © 2013



By 1945, with the war drawing to a close, Sylvan Shulman looked to reform the Stuyvesant Quartet. He had left the NBC Symphony in 1943 to become concertmaster of the newly-created American Broadcasting

Company Orchestra, which he also conducted. Emanuel Vardi, who had replaced Louis Kievman in 1942 as the Quartet's violist, wanted to pursue a solo career post-war, so Sylvan invited Ralph Hersh, principal viola at ABC, to join the Stuyvesant Quartet. Hersh (1910-1985) had played with the National Symphony under Hans Kindler and briefly with the WQXR String Quartet. Sylvan asked Bernard Robbins to be second violin. Robbins (1913-1999) had left the Stradivarius Quartet and in August, 1943 returned to New York, first joining the NBC Blue network staff, then playing with the NBC Symphony and NBC String Quartet with Daniel Guilet, Carlton Cooley and Benar Heifetz. Robbins had also been assistant concertmaster under Kindler in the National Symphony. Robbins, Hersh and the Shulman brothers had all been members of the Kreiner Quartet. When Alan Shulman was discharged from the Maritime Service in the fall of 1945, the Stuyvesant Quartet's permanent lineup was established. In demand as a composer and arranger, and preferring to play with the Quartet, Alan did not rejoin the NBC Symphony until 1948.

The Quartet resumed concertizing December 9, 1945 in a typically challenging program at Princeton, playing Hindemith Third, Shostakovich First and Porter Third.

The Stuyvesant Quartet's repertoire emphasized twentieth-century works including Bartók, Milhaud, Malipiero, Hindemith, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Bloch, Turina, Kreisler, Weiner, Persichetti, Pavel Bořkovec, Paul Creston, Roger Goeb, Quincy Porter and Alan Shulman. Their programs also included standard fare: Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Schubert, Brahms, Schumann, Dvořák, Smetana, Dohnányi, Wolf, Debussy, Ravel, and lesser-known Dittersdorf and Boccherini.

In July 1946, Benny Goodman, who had played on the 1941 Carnegie Hall concert when the Quartet gave the American premiere of the Shostakovich Piano Quintet, asked them to join him playing a movement of the Mozart Clarinet Quintet on his weekly radio program. Alan suggested instead that Goodman commission him to write a short original work for clarinet and string quartet. Goodman agreed, and Alan composed *Rendezvous with Benny*, which premiered over WEAJ on August 19, 1946.

The Quartet performed at the Library of Congress in Washington December 30, 1946 in a program of Dohnányi, Prokofiev and Dvořák. For the 1947-8 season, their manager, Erminie Kahn, booked short concert tours of the east, midwest and Canada, when their busy radio, and soon television, schedules permitted. They enjoyed playing concerts with colleagues. Pianist Jerome Rappaport joined them for the Fauré c-minor Quartet at Columbia University and the Franck f-minor Quintet in Buffalo. They performed the Schumann Quintet at Manchester College in Wabash, Indiana with pianist Eugenia Honeywell. To mark the 50th anniversary of Brahms's death, they played the Clarinet Quintet with Clark Brody in Columbus and Montréal, and Alfred Gallodoro in Newark. Ada Becker Seidlin joined them for the Piano Quintet at Alfred University, and Nadia Reisenberg at Princeton. The Quartet regularly played at Princeton, where they gave an all-Mozart program with oboist Harry Shulman (no relation) and violist Leon Frengut, and with bassist Phil Sklar played the "Trout" Quintet with Nadia Reisenberg.

Between January and March, 1947, the Shulman brothers re-formed their pre-war swing group, The New Friends of Rhythm, to record two sessions for the independent label International Records at the Majestic (a/k/a Interna-

tional) Theatre at 58th Street and Columbus Circle. They liked the theater and in May, 1947 the Quartet recorded the Villa-Lobos Sixth Quartet there for International. The composer, on one of his annual trips to New York, gave them a photograph inscribed, "A *Quatour admirable Stuyvesant Quartet avec beaucoup d'admiration Villa Lobos.*" Alan Shulman sent a copy of the album set to his friend Eleanor Aller Slatkin, cellist of the Hollywood String Quartet, and the Villa-Lobos Sixth then became the Hollywood's first LP. In November 1947 the Stuyvesant recorded the Bloch Second Quartet and in December, the Brahms Clarinet Quintet with Alfred Gallodoro. The Chicago-born Gallodoro (1913-2008) was equally at home in both the jazz and classical worlds, having played with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra and the NBC Symphony under Toscanini where he met the Shulman brothers. Gallodoro spoke of the 'easy' collaboration with the Quartet. He also had performed Alan's *Rendezvous* (**BRIDGE 9119**). These International 78 rpm sets later appeared as LPs on the Concert Hall label.

Not satisfied with the way Columbia or International had recorded them, in 1950, with horn player and inventor Norman Pickering, the Shulman brothers, Bernard Robbins and Ralph Hersh formed their own label, Philharmonia Records. Self-financed and self-promoted, Philharmonia issued an eclectic series of recordings during the label's short life. Releases included solo albums by Laura Newell, guitarists Ramon Montoya and Rey de la Torre, saxophonist Vincent 'Jimmy' Abato playing concertos by Ibert and Glazounov, conducted by Pickering and Sylvan Shulman, and the New York Woodwind Quintet.

The first Stuyvesant Philharmonia recording begun July 20 & 26, 1950 and completed August 9, 14 & 16 at the Mannes School was the Malipiero *Rispetti e Strambotti*, which the Kreiner Quartet had recorded for

Victor in 1937. In November 1950 at Mannes, they recorded the Hindemith F-minor Quartet, which was released on a 10" Philharmonia LP in early 1951. Ralph Hersh knew the organist of the acoustically vibrant Village Lutheran Church in Bronxville. Pickering and the Quartet bought their own recording equipment, a Magnecord PT-6 tape recorder and a Western Electric 635 microphone (later a Neumann U-47) and moved their recording activities to the church.

Between 1951 and 1953 they recorded the Debussy and Ravel Quartets (in what was to become the standard pairing of these two works in the LP era) (**BRIDGE 9137**), the Mozart D-Major Quartets, K. 499 and K. 575 (on this disc), the Boccherini D-Major Guitar Quintet with Rey de la Torre (**BRIDGE 9188**), and with Laura Newell, the Bax Quintet, the Ibert Trio and the Malipiero *Sonata a Cinque*. Reviews of Philharmonia releases were enthusiastic. The *Herald-Tribune* praised the Debussy/Ravel as "...beautifully executed, with lovely tone and deliciously in tune." Peter Hugh Reed, reviewing the Mozarts in the April, 1952 *The American Record Guide* wrote, "The excellence of the ensemble playing in both these works, the perfection of tone and balance, and the unqualified musical adsorption add up to sterling performances." David Hall wrote in *Long Playing Record Service Review*, "To my ear, this recording offers more of an aural thrill and human listening experience than many a symphonic or choral-orchestra effort." Jazz publications loved the Hindemith. *Metronome* called it "a superb performance," and *Downbeat* called the Stuyvesant Quartet "...one of the most intelligent and inventive groups now recording."

The Quartet "consciously avoided the well-traveled literature," according to recording engineer Norman Pickering. Projects considered, but not recorded,

included the Brahms viola quintets with Leon Frengut, and the 1951 String Quartet of Julián Orbón. Pickering, who was also a violin maker, made the viola that Ralph Hersh played on the recordings of the Mozart Quartets and the violin Sylan Shulman played on the Kreisler recording.

After recording the Kreisler String Quartet, Sylan Shulman and Norman Pickering took the test pressing to play for Fritz Kreisler. When Sylan told Kreisler that he played a violin made by Pickering for the recording, Kreisler replied, "All compliments to Mr. Pickering, but it's the player, not the instrument, Mr. Shulman." On December 6, 1953, the Stuyvesant Quartet recorded the Paganini String Quartet as a companion piece at Carnegie Recital Hall with Bob Blake engineering instead of Pickering. It was to be their last recording session. In all, Philharmonia Records released 11 albums, 6 by the Stuyvesant Quartet. Despite critical acclaim, they barely made expenses and ceased operations in 1954 just before the stereophonic era.

When the Kreisler/Paganini disk was released in April 1954, Irving Kolodin wrote in the *Saturday Review*, "It is in every way a successful combination of affectionate performance, first-class engineering and excellent processing. Those who know other recordings by this group know what to expect in tonal faithfulness; others will find it hardly subject to improvement."

In the 1950s, fees for chamber music concerts were not substantial. The Quartet declined a residency offer at Princeton although they continued to appear on the University Concerts series through 1952. They all had families to support and commercial work was more lucrative. Coordinating their schedules was difficult. The demise of the NBC Symphony in April 1954 marked the end of an era. In a letter dated June 18, 1954, Alan Shulman wrote his friend Milton

Preves, principal violist of the Chicago Symphony, "*Thanks for the Qt. leads. I don't think we'll be doing any playing since concerts are booked so far in advance none of us want to commit ourselves. After agents fees, hotels, meals, transportation, etc, one record date pays more without knocking ones brains out rehearsing.*"

Other opportunities beckoned. Bernard Robbins joined the New York Philharmonic in 1955, played with the CBC String Quartet (1961-1964) and then returned to New York to rejoin the Philharmonic, retiring in 1983. He remained an avid chamber music player. Ralph Hersh remained at ABC until 1964 when he joined the Philadelphia Chamber Symphony. Summers he played at the Blue Hill Maine, at the Casals (1951), at the Aspen (1956-61), and Dartmouth (1962-64) Music Festivals. He played in the Atlanta Symphony (1968-9) and was principal violist of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra (1972-1977) before retiring to Tucson where he remained active until his death in 1985. Alan Shulman was a founder of the Symphony of the Air (1954) and the Violoncello Society (1956), was cellist of the Philharmonia Trio (1962-1969) and the Haydn Quartet (1972-1982), composed and arranged, played in the television and recording studios in New York, and taught. Sylan Shulman conducted the Great Neck Symphony on Long Island between 1954 and 1972, taught at Juilliard and Meadowmount, and also was a busy studio player. Illness curtailed the Shulman brothers' activities, Sylan in 1982, Alan in 1987.

In 1964-5, Nonesuch Records reissued the Hindemith/Malipiero, Debussy/Ravel and Mozart recordings, remastered in electronic stereo, to renewed critical acclaim. In 1966, Sylan Shulman recorded a new LP for Nonesuch, "Quartet Music of the 17th & 18th Centuries," under the name Stuyvesant String Quar-

tet with violinist Rena Robbins (no relation), violist Leon Frengut and cellist Harvey Shapiro.

In 1980, CBS/Odyssey reissued the Kreisler/Paganini recording in mono. Richard Freed wrote in *Stereo Review*, "The Stuyvesant recordings always gave us an image of four musicians not only in total accord with each other, but crazy about the music they chose to play."

What made the Stuyvesant Quartet unique was that they were among the first all-American string quartets of the period, leading the way for the Juilliard, Hollywood, New Music, and Fine Arts Quartets in the post-war decade. Prior to their emergence, many of the established quartets had a senior European-born founder and focused on the core Central European repertoire. The Stuyvesants were both a performing and recording ensemble, taking advantage of their broadcasting experience and bringing it to the recording studio. They were as comfortable and expert in front of the microphone as they were in concert.

In a 1997 interview, recording engineer Norman Pickering told of seeing Alan Shulman again at a Toscanini Association dinner at Lincoln Center in the 1980s. "Those years we worked together," Alan said to Norman, "were the happiest times of my life." For these extraordinary, versatile, driven musicians, the Stuyvesant Quartet was truly a labor of love.

— Jay Shulman, © 1999 & 2013

Producer: Jay Shulman

Transfers and Audio Restoration by Brian C. Peters

Transfers by Brian C. Peters

Audio Restoration by Vanaker Pleniland (Brahms) & Brian C. Peters (Mozart)

Photographs:

Alfred Gallodoro (1947): James J. Kriegsmann

Alfred Gallodoro 90th Birthday celebration (2003): Jay Shulman

Executive Producers: Becky and David Starobin

Sylvan Shulman played a Carlo Bergonzi violin. Bernard Robbins played a Nicholas Gagliano violin. Ralph Hersh played a Mathias Albani viola, and a viola by Norman Pickering for the Mozart recordings on this disc. Alan Shulman played a Joseph Dalaglio cello.

Jay Shulman is a cellist and the son of Alan Shulman.

Laurie Shulman is an author and program annotator and the daughter of Alan Shulman.

For a Stuyvesant discography, visit the Alan Shulman website: www.alanshulman.com

A complete history of the Stuyvesant Quartet is available at www.bridgerecords.com

Alfred Gallodoro website: www.alfgallodoro.com

A note on the recordings: The Stuyvesant Quartet's Mozart recordings were originally released in 1952 as Philharmonia PH-105 which proved superior to the echoic 1965 Nonesuch Records electronic stereo reissue. Nonesuch stated that the original monophonic master tapes were lost. The Brahms Quintet was recorded just prior to the tape era. As the original 78 rpm shellac surfaces were too noisy, the present transfer was made from a 1950s LP release.

Mozart Quartet recordings by special arrangement with Nonesuch Records

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THANKS TO

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Nancy Thacker, Emanuel Vardi

AND THE FRIENDS OF THE STUYVESANT QUARTET:

Robert Alemany & JoAnn Falletta; Ida & Joseph Anglund; Pamela Bostelmann
Kip and Robert Chan-Said; Kasia Clark; Elizabeth Davis; Katherine Freiburger
Aloysia Friedman & Jon Kimura Parker; Maureen Hurd Hause; Kim & Ted Higgins
Jerold & Jinna Lancourt; Leah & Stuart Johnson; Barbara Jones; Doris LaMar
Barbara Stein Mallow; Michael Nieland; Judy & Dave O'Meara
Thomas Pippert; Jodie Randall; Ellen Robbins; Pamela Sklar; Jay Shulman
Laurie Shulman; Phyllis & Robert Shulman; Barbara Sudweeks
Gerald Thiel; Suzanne Valerio, and two anonymous friends

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For Bridge Records:

Barbara Bersito, Brian C. Carter, Douglas Holly, Doron Schächter,
Allegra Starobin, and Robert Starobin

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The Budapest String Quartet

The Library of Congress Master Recording: 1940-1945
Gustave Langenus, clarinet George Szell, piano



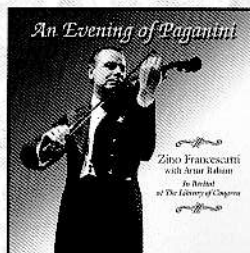
BUDAPEST
STRING QUARTET

Library of Congress
Mozart Recordings (1940-1945)
Gustave Langenus, clarinet
George Szell, piano
BRIDGE 9085A/B



NADIA REISENBERG, PIANO
A Chopin Treasury
BRIDGE 9276A/D

HISTORIC PERFORMANCES

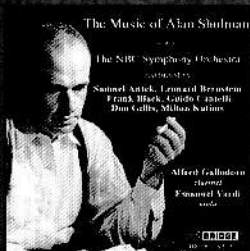
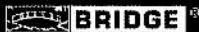


PAGANINI RECITAL
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Artur Balsam, piano
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LOST THEREMIN
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Clara Rockmore, theremin
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ALAN SHULMAN**
Performed by the NBC
Symphony Orchestra
BRIDGE 9119

STUYVESANT QUARTET
Benny Goodman, clarinet
BRIDGE 9137



REY DE LA TORRE
Stuyvesant Quartet
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Steven Richman and Harmonie Ensemble/New York
Steven Richman, conductor
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