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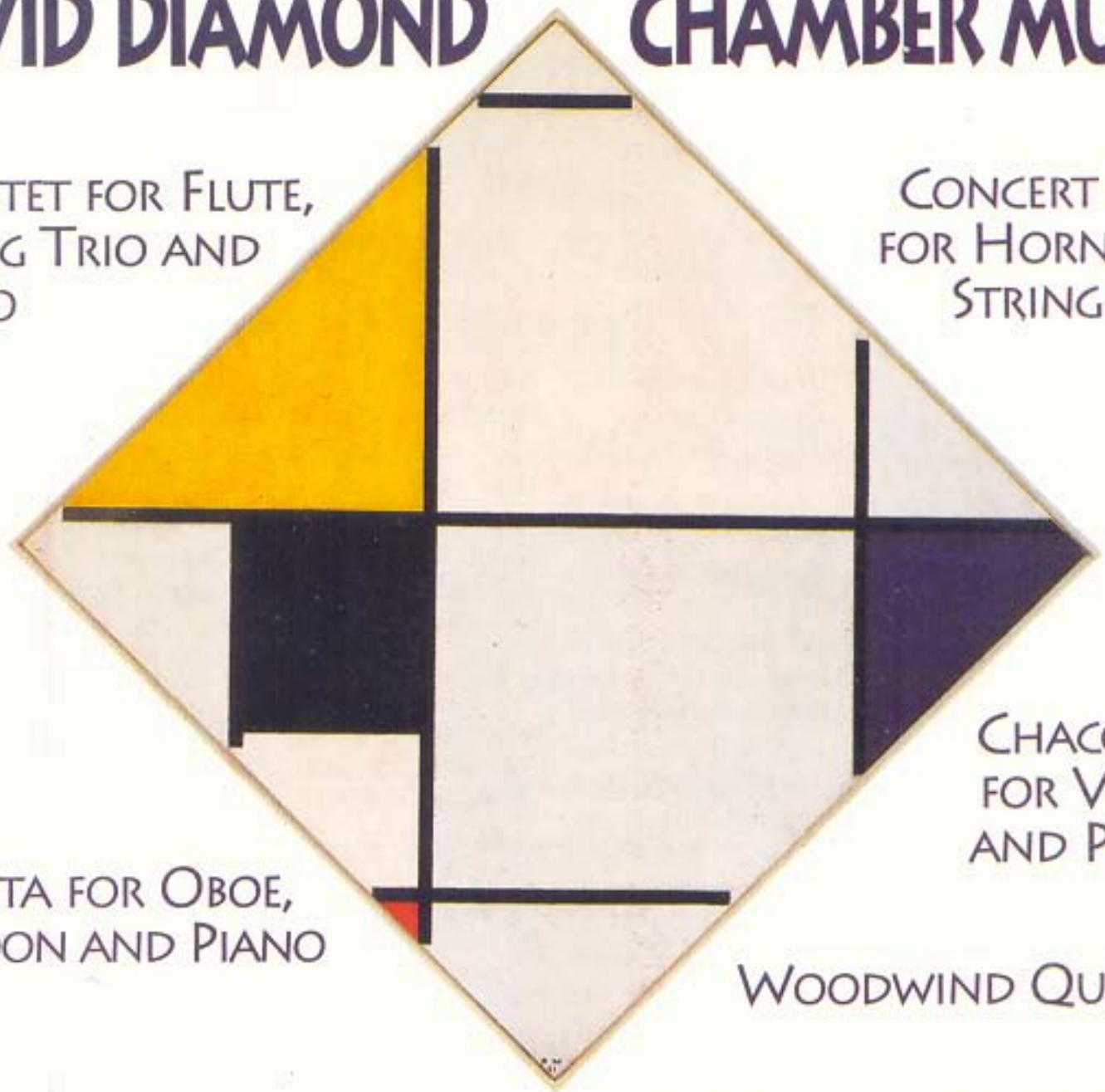
WORLD PREMIERE RECORDING

DAVID DIAMOND CHAMBER MUSIC

Quintet for Flute, String Trio and Piano

Concert Piece for Horn and String Trio



Chaconne for Violin and Piano

Partita for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano

Woodwind Quintet

THE CHICAGO CHAMBER MUSICIANS

CHAMBER MUSIC BY DAVID DIAMOND (b. 1915)

1-3 Quintet in B minor for Flute, String Trio and Piano (1937) (12:46)

1. I. Allegro deciso e molto ritmico (3:51)
2. II. Romanza: Lento, molto cantabile (5:25)
3. III. Finale: Allegro veloce (3:26)

4 Concert Piece for Horn and String Trio (1978)* (8:48)

5-7 Partita for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano (1935) (8:32)

5. I. Allegro vivo (2:31)
6. II. Adagio espressivo (3:20)
7. III. Allegro molto (2:26)

8 Chaconne for Violin and Piano (1948)* (13:11)

9-11 Woodwind Quintet (1958)* (17:37)

9. I. Andante grazioso (4:33)
10. II. Theme and Variations with Scherzino Interlude: Adagio (8:05)
11. III. Allegro fugato (4:51)

The Chicago Chamber Musicians *World Premiere Recording **TT: (61:25)**

This recording is made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

❖ About David Diamond ❖

by Richard Freed

David Diamond, born July 9, 1915, in Rochester, New York, began violin lessons there at the age of seven. At twelve he went to the Cleveland Institute of Music to study theory and violin, then returned to Rochester for further study at the Eastman School of Music which included work in composition with Bernard Rogers. A scholarship from the New Music School and Dalcroze Institute brought him to New York in 1934, and there he also studied privately with Roger Sessions. His first works, introduced in New York and Philadelphia concerts of the Greenwich Sinfonietta, the League of Composers and the Composers' Forum, attracted interest and encouragement from Aaron Copland and the critics Olin Downes and Paul Rosenfeld. By 1936, still studying with Sessions but with a commissioned work for Martha Graham already produced, Diamond began work on a ballet to a scenario by E.E. Cummings. His patron Cary Ross sent him to Paris to complete the Cummings ballet (*TOM*, based on the Harriet Beecher Stowe characters), and there he met such figures as Gide, Roussel, Ravel (whom he had met in Cleveland eight years earlier), Despiau, Munch and Tansman. On his return to New York in 1937, he conducted the *Psalm* for orchestra which he had composed in Paris the previous summer, and also his First Violin Concerto. He then received the H.H. Flagler Scholarship for study with Nadia Boulanger at Fontainebleau. Commissions and awards came to him in a steady stream from that time on — among them a Prix de Rome and three Guggenheim Fellowships — and his music was introduced in both Europe and America by such conductors as Koussevitzky, Bernstein, Scherchen, Mitropoulos, Ormandy and Szell.

Following a fourteen-year period in Italy (with brief visits home for performances of his works), Diamond returned to the United States in 1965, to be greeted by observances of his fiftieth birthday by the Philadelphia Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic (which he conducted) and other organizations. The following year he was appointed chairman of the composition department of the Manhattan School of Music and elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Letters. He has received the Academy's Gold Medal for Lifetime Achievement and the Edward MacDowell Medal, and since 1973 he has taught at the Juilliard School. He now lives in the family home in Rochester.

By the time Diamond reached eighty his catalogue of works included eleven symphonies, eleven string quartets, three violin concertos and more than a hundred songs, as well as choral and chamber music, ballets, music for the theater and films, and an opera, *The Noblest Game*. Probably his most widely circulated work is his *Rounds* for string orchestra, commissioned by Dimitri Mitropoulos in 1944 and given the New York Music Critics Circle Award for that year. Among his other frequently performed compositions are his symphonic suite *Romeo and Juliet* and his incidental music for *The Tempest*. The close association with E.E. Cummings, which began with *TOM*, is reflected in several songs, a number of choral works and the orchestral piece *The Enormous Room*. Most of Diamond's major works for orchestra are available in recorded form now on the Delos label, in performances conducted by Gerard Schwarz.

Note © Richard Freed, revised from version first published on Vox/Turnabout TVS 34508, courtesy of the Vox Music Group

❖ About the Program ❖

by Andrea Lamoreaux

David Diamond is one of many American musicians who went to Paris, and to Nadia Boulanger's composition classes, in the years between the world wars; other established and aspiring figures who made the same artistic pilgrimage were Aaron Copland and Virgil Thomson. The mid-1930s were an important time for Diamond, his ballet *Formal Dance* was premiered by Martha Graham's company in New York in 1935, and New York also heard his *Psalm for Orchestra* and Violin Concerto No. 1 during these years. Among the many musicians he met during his time in Paris was Francis Poulenc, and the Quintet he wrote there in 1937 for flute, string trio, and piano has a certain Poulenc-ian flavor as the high-spirited energy of the outer movements is contrasted with a very lyrical middle movement.

"The Quintet for flute, violin, viola, cello, and piano," Mr. Diamond relates, "was commissioned by the League of Composers for the Barrère-Britt Concertino and received its premiere March 8th, 1938, from that ensemble, at New York City's Fifth Avenue Gallery. It won the Society for the Publication of American Music Award." The Concertino, a group of solo performers who also enjoyed playing chamber music, was headed by the French-born flutist Georges Barrère.

The Quintet is officially in the key of B minor. The tempo marking of its first movement, "Allegro deciso e molto ritmico," describes it well: vigorous, highly rhythmic themes are set out by the flutist and the string players, with piano contributions sometimes percussive and sometimes sustained. No one instrument is featured, though the flute has occasional short solos. The second movement is a Romance, "Lento, molto cantabile," in which the strings are followed by the flute in introducing a songlike melody. The piano enters from a high, ethereal sphere to echo the theme. The instruments then expand on the theme together, with brief solos for piano and for violin, before returning to the "echo" effect of the movement's opening. The finale, "Allegro veloce," moves through rapid, propulsive triple meters with a dancing, folk-like theme that provides brief solo opportunities for the flute, the violin, and the piano.

Mr. Diamond tells us that the Concert Piece for horn, violin, viola, and cello "was composed in 1978 on commission from the students and friends of Dr. Arthur D. Hasler of Hawaii. I have no record of a premiere there, but I have heard it was performed in Los Angeles, and about ten years ago by members of the New York Philharmonic."

The sonority, mood, and atmosphere of the Concert Piece are in complete contrast to the neoclassical, tonally-centered Quintet in B Minor. The horn work emphasizes the sinuous, contrapuntal intertwining of lengthy melodic lines whose contours are non-tonal, involving many second and seventh intervals, and half-tones, whose interactions produce some dissonant encounters. The difference in tone quality between the horn and the strings is sometimes emphasized, with the horn set off against its companions in passages akin to short fanfares, but is more often minimized, the horn being allowed to blend its lines and colors with those of the gentler

strings. Through several tempo shifts the mood of the work remains fairly constant: lyrical, slightly melancholy, occasionally intensifying with passionate outbursts. Brief unison passages and episodes of vertical triadic harmony punctuate the music's basically contrapuntal unfolding. The lively conclusion offers the horn a chance to stand out, as the strings wind down together.

"My Partita for oboe, bassoon, and piano," writes the composer, "was composed in 1935 and received its first performance at a League of Composers concert on March 29th, 1936. It was among the first of my chamber-music works heard in New York, and was highly praised by Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions in the pages of *Modern Music*. In three tightly-organized movements, it can be considered in sonatina form."

Diamond, like other 20th-century composers, Stravinsky and Schoenberg among them, is fond of retaining traditional forms established during the Baroque and Classical eras, while crafting the content for these structures — the themes, harmonies, and rhythms — out of wholly contemporary material. "Partita" is a term that Baroque composers sometimes used as a synonym for Dance Suite. This Partita is not based on dance rhythms, but does recall Baroque music by its emphasis on contrapuntal writing. Like the Quintet in B Minor, it recalls Poulenc: in its Gallic, neo-Classical atmosphere, in its scoring for an instrumental grouping that Poulenc used in a 1920s Trio, and in its nature as a "little sonata" (sonatina).

Rapid passage-work for all three players at the start of the opening "Allegro vivo" movement leads to a more lyrical woodwind duet with keyboard commentary; lively piping by both oboe and bassoon brings the movement to an end. The bassoon opens the "Adagio espressivo" central movement with a lyrical theme on which the oboe elaborates; the piano adds commentary to a passage that is slow and contemplative in feeling. The bassoon ends the movement on a mournful note, a mood immediately dispelled by the perpetual-motion jollity of the "Allegro molto" finale, which is characterized by repeated-note patterns in quick succession, and canonic imitations between the two woodwind players.

The Chaconne for violin and piano, like the Partita, takes its name from Baroque music; a Chaconne, for Bach and Handel, was a continuous set of variations on a basic melodic-harmonic pattern. Diamond writes that his Chaconne "was composed in 1948 on commission from the violinist Jean Westbrook. She performed the work for the first time on her debut Town Hall (New York City) program, with Eugene Helmer the pianist, on October 20th, 1949. The entire work is structured around the wide leaped ostinato of the opening, and the variations on the long-lined melody heard immediately after."

The opening theme, for violin, involves large-spaced intervals: sevenths, octaves, and ninths. Even more important in the onflowing variations that constitute the work is the violin's ensuing lyrical theme, supported with piano chords. Henceforth, violin and piano lines are interwoven in imitative counterpoint. There are very few pauses in the Chaconne, few interruptions in its forward progression, though there are numerous tempo changes, with the pace and intensity of the melodic and rhythmic lines speeding up and slowing down in frequent succession. Both

instruments explore their full ranges; the violin varies its basically sustained texture with episodes of pizzicato and tremolo, with double stops and octaves. The string player also has a brief cadenza-like solo before the work's rapid, upbeat conclusion.

The year the Chaconne was written, 1948, was also the year Diamond first met Arnold Schoenberg, who developed serialism, the method of composing with 12 tones. Impatient with rigid "schools" of composition, or with trends of any sort, Diamond has consistently forged his own style, always speaking in his own voice. A practicing musician who worked as a free-lance violinist between commissions for new works, he values individuality, independence, and professional craftsmanship more than abstract theories. The serial approach to composition, with themes generated by a strictly-ordered "row" of 12 tones, can be viewed as a mindless method of musical organization — a kind of non-electronic computer — or it can be considered as a starting point, with a mind and a heart to carry it forward into the creation of real music. Schoenberg used it that way, and so did composers who followed him in the new technique, whether or not they used it consistently.

Diamond's Wind Quintet of 1958 is one of his responses to the experience of Schoenberg and the Schoenberg school; it is a work that starts with serial procedure but transcends formula. "The Quintet for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and horn," he writes, "was commissioned by the Fromm Music Foundation. It received its premiere from the Boston Symphony Ensemble at Tanglewood on July 14th, 1958. It is in three movements: the first a sonata-allegro; the second a theme-and-variations with a Scherzino interlude; the third a rondo with fugal elements. The entire work is organized around themes and motives derived from a 12-note row heard at the opening of the first movement, and various transformations of that row."

The opening movement has a 13-measure "Andante grazioso" introduction that sets out the tone row in a series of melodic fragments. In the movement's main "Allegro" section, these fragments are extended into more recognizable motives, as the instruments begin to play together; the horn occasionally stands apart from its companions.

The chromatic melody of the variations movement is presented by the flute, oboe, and clarinet, with horn and bassoon entering as if from a distance. These distinctions between the higher-and lower-voiced instruments characterize the movement, except for the Scherzino (Little Scherzo) interlude, wherein fast-paced duos and trios among various players are contrasted with unison passages.

The Woodwind Quintet's finale is labeled "Allegro fugato." Just as this piece, with its freely-interpreted 12-tone row is not completely serial, so the fugato is not a completely worked-out fugue; it's different from the way Bach would have laid out a fugue for organ in that it is not so strictly formulated. "Music in the fugal manner" would describe it. This finale, like the Quintet's opening, finds the instruments exchanging thematic fragments that later coalesce into lively melodic exchanges, each instrument imitating each other's patterns as the propulsive movement works its way toward a witty conclusion.

The Chicago Chamber Musicians

Photo by Marc Hauser

❖ *About The Chicago Chamber Musicians* ❖

The Chicago Chamber Musicians (CCM) was founded in 1986 by a group of prominent musicians and chamber music devotees for the purpose of building an internationally-recognized Chicago institution dedicated to the study and performance of chamber music. Ten years later, this extraordinarily talented group of musicians continues to win critical and popular accolades for the quality and diversity of its musical activities. In the words of the *Chicago Tribune*'s John von Rhein, "Even in a city well supplied with superior chamber ensembles, the Chicago Chamber Musicians are something special. The group . . . combines a dedication to the highest ideals of chamber music performance with a real flair for putting together zestful, compelling programs. They make us glad to be sharing their music with them."

CCM presents its acclaimed annual subscription series at Northwestern University's Pick-Staiger Concert Hall in Evanston and at the DePaul University Concert Hall in Chicago. Through its Touring Program, CCM performs at the Ravinia Festival (summer home of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and international musical centers including Paris, Salzburg, and Tokyo. As part of its service to the Chicago community, CCM presents free "First Monday" noontime concerts each month at the Chicago Cultural Center. CCM also conducts a model arts education program in Chicago public schools, a Fellowship Program for young professional musicians, and a community outreach program called "Music Allegro" that brings chamber music to non-traditional venues. In all, The Chicago Chamber Musicians perform for over 50,000 people in the Chicago area each year.

Participating on this recording are CCM members Larry Combs, clarinet; Joseph Genualdi, violin; Bruce Grainger, bassoon; Michael Henoch, oboe; Deborah Sobol, piano; Rami Solomonow, viola; and Gail Williams, horn, and guest artists Loren Brown, cello and Mary Stolper, flute.

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