



MILTON BABBITT

PIANO WORKS

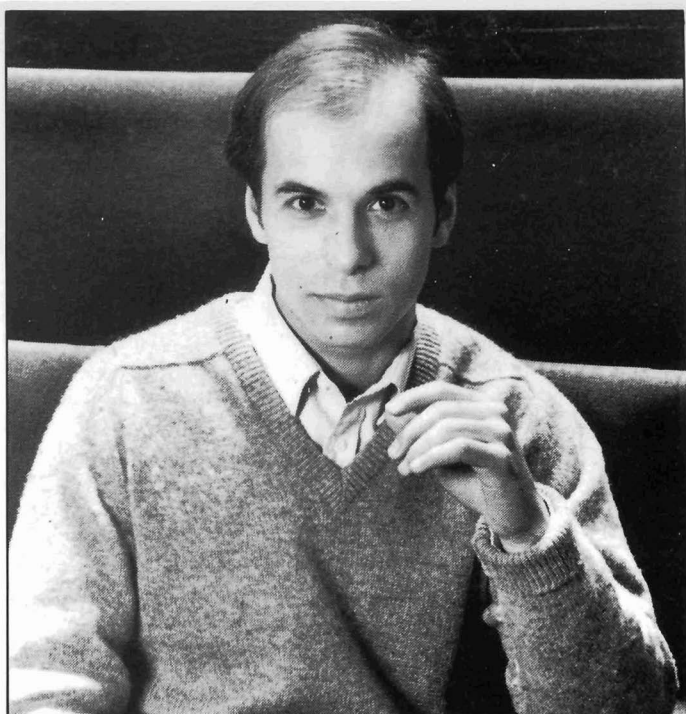
Side A

Three Compositions (1947-48)
Duet (1956)
Semi-Simple Variations (1956)
Partitions (1957)
Post-Partitions (1966)
Tableaux (1973)

Side B

Reflections (1974) for piano and synthesized tape
Canonical Form (1983)
Lagniappe (1985)

ROBERT TAUB, Steinway piano



ROBERT TAUB

Photo Barry Marsden

DIE KLAVIERMUSIK HAT IM SCHAFFEN MILTON BABBITTS EINE zentrale Bedeutung. Die *Three Compositions* for Piano aus 1947-48 sind seine erste Arbeit für dieses Instrument und Babbitts erste perfekte Anwendung von Schönbergs Zwölftontechnik. Nachdem der Komponist etwa zehn Jahre lang für andere Instrumente geschrieben hat, wandte er sich 1956 wieder der Komposition für Klavier zu. Er schuf für seine Tochter *Duet*, ein kurzes, reizvolles, zweiteiliges Musikstück, sowie *Semi-Simple Variations*, eine Folge von fünf 6-taktigen Variationen eines Themas, das sechs Tonstufen umfaßt. *Partitions* (1957) kündigt eine zweite Stilperiode an. Es zeigt reichlich viele Kontraste in Tonstärke und Tonregister und erreicht eine neue Höhe pianistischer Virtuosität.

Post-Partitions, das Babbitt zum 70. Geburtstag von Roger Sessions geschrieben hat, spiegelt eine weitere Dekade von intellektueller Subtilität wider. Innerhalb der acht eng verknüpften Abschnitte gibt es Momente von explosiver Kraft wie auch solche von großer Zartheit. In *Tableaux* (1973) ist kompositorische Virtuosität mit der kompromißlosen Forderung an den Pianisten gekoppelt, eine schwierige und sich rasch entwickelnde Kontrapunkt über den Bereich der gesamten Klaviatur zu vollführen. *Reflections* (1974) ist bis jetzt Babbitts einzige Arbeit für Klavier und elektronisches Tonband mit Synthesizer, der die einzelnen Band- und Klavierteile miteinander fein verwebt.

Canonical Form (1983) für „Robert Taub komponiert und ihm gewidmet“ als Auftrag der Fromm Foundation und der ISCM ist Babbitts längstes Klavierwerk. *Canonical Form* und *Lagniappe* (1985) sind Folge einer gesonderten Recherche, die eine dritte Stilperiode mit mehr Kontrapunkt und transparenterer Struktur bildet. *Lagniappe* ist ein Geschenk Milton Babbitts für diese Aufnahme und wird erstmals auf dieser Platte ausgeführt. Es ist eine Synthese von kompositorischen Prozessen, die sich innerhalb seines Klavierwerkes entwickelt haben und gewissermaßen neue Modelle von sich miteinander verbindenden musikalischen Elementen darstellen.

MILTON BABBITT, 1916 geboren, bezeichnet sich als „Maximalist“. Er besuchte die Public-schools in Jackson, Mississippi, sowie die Universitäten in New York und Princeton. Als Privatschüler studierte er Komposition bei Roger Sessions. 1982 erhielt er die „Pulitzer Special Citation for Music“ in Anerkennung seines Lebenswerkes als hervorragender und befruchtend wirkender amerikanischer Komponist, der lange als Pionier der Zwölftontechnik und der elektronischen Musik gegolten hat.

Seine Musik (Klavier, Gesang, Kammermusik und symphonische Musik) wird überall aufgeführt. Milton Babbitt wurde 1938 an die Princeton Universität berufen und unterrichtet auch an der Juilliard Schule. Er gilt als einer der einflußreichsten Lehrer Amerikas ebenso wie als einer der großen lebenden Komponisten des Landes. Die vorliegende Platte wird zu Ehren seines 70. Geburtstages herausgebracht.

ROBERT TAUB hat sich seinen Platz unter den Ersten der neuen Generation von internationalen Interpreten erobert. Seine Auftritte in den Vereinigten Staaten, in Europa, Lateinamerika und im Fernen Osten haben bei Kritik und Publikum wahre Beifallstürme hervorgerufen. Sein Repertoire umfaßt Musik aus dem Barock bis zur Gegenwart. Er ist auch Träger von einigen der begehrtesten internationalen Preise, einschließlich des Peabody-Mason Award of Boston (1981).

Diese Platte ist Robert Taubs zweite Aufnahme für Harmonia Mundi. Seine erste (HMC 5133) beinhaltet Schumanns *Davidsbündler-Tänze* und zwei Transkriptionen von Liszt, Schumann-Liszt *Frühlingsnacht* und Verdi-Liszt *Rigoletto-Paraphrase*.

DIE MUSIK MILTON BABBITTS MUß VON INNEN HERAUS GESPIELT werden. Die blendende, ganz imaginative Klavierkunst - enorme Farbkontraste, das Nebeneinander von dynamischen Extremen, ungemein komplizierte Rhythmen und neue Pedaltechniken - dient immer einem höchst musikalischen Ziel. Sie sollte (wie in allen großen Werken) so vollkommen beherrscht werden, daß die Musik frei im Raum entschweben kann.

THE PIANO MUSIC OF MILTON BABBITT PLAYS A CENTRAL ROLE throughout his creative oeuvre. The *Three Compositions* for Piano dating from 1947-48 are Babbitt's first works for this medium and are the composer's first mature applications of Schoenbergian twelve-tone principles. Babbitt returned to piano composition in 1956 after a decade of writing for other instruments, to create *Duet*, a short charming two-part invention written for his daughter, and *Semi-Simple Variations*, a set of five 6-measure variations on a theme which highlights six pitches.

Partitions (1957) heralds a second style period. 'It is very ambitious in dynamic and registral contrasts, and reaches new heights of pianistic virtuosity. *Post-Partitions*, written for the 70th birthday of Roger Sessions, reflects another decade of sophistication. Throughout its eight closely-linked sections are moments of explosive energy as well as moments of great delicacy. In *Tableaux* (1973), compositional virtuosity is matched by uncompromising demands on the pianist to project intricate and rapidly unfolding contrapuntal lines over the entire range of the keyboard. *Reflections* (1974) is Babbitt's only work thus far for piano and synthesized electronic tape, delicately interweaving the ornately detailed tape and piano parts.

Canonical Form (1983) was 'composed for and dedicated to Robert Taub' on a commission from the Fromm Foundation and the ISCM, and is Babbitt's longest piano work. *Canonical Form* and *Lagniappe* (1985) are both suites of separated sections, forming a third style period of more contrapuntal lines and more transparent textures. *Lagniappe* is Milton Babbitt's gift to this recording. Written for this occasion, the piece receives its first performance on this disc. It is a synthesis of the compositional processes which have evolved throughout his piano works, revealing yet new modes of unifying musical elements.

MARTIN BRODY, ROBINA YOUNG & ROBERT TAUB

MILTON BABBITT (born 1916) self-professed 'maximalist' attended the public schools of Jackson, Mississippi, and New York and Princeton Universities. He studied composition privately with Roger Sessions. In 1982, he received a Pulitzer Special Citation for Music in recognition of 'his life work as a distinguished and seminal American composer', having long been acknowledged as a pioneer in 12-tone composition and electronic music.

His music - piano, vocal, chamber, symphonic - is performed world-wide. Milton Babbitt joined the faculty of Princeton University in 1938, and teaches also at the Juilliard School. He is considered to be one of America's most influential teachers as well as one of her great living composers.

The present recording is issued to honour his 70th birthday.

ROBERT TAUB has earned his place as a leader in the new generation of international virtuosi. His performances throughout the United States, Europe, Latin America, and the Far East have evoked superlatives of acclaim from critics and audiences; his repertoire embraces music from the Baroque to the present day. He is also the winner of some of the most coveted international prizes, including the Peabody-Mason Award of Boston (1981).

This is Robert Taub's second recording for Harmonia Mundi. His first (HMC 5133) features Schumann's *Davidsbündler-Tänze* and two Liszt transcriptions - Schumann-Liszt *Frühlingsnacht* and Verdi-Liszt *Rigoletto* Paraphrase.

THE MUSIC OF MILTON BABBITT MUST BE PLAYED FROM THE heart. The dazzling, highly imaginative pianism - enormous registral leaps, juxtaposition of dynamic extremes, highly complicated rhythms, innovative pedal techniques - always serves an intensely musical end, which (as in all great works) should be so completely mastered that the music is free to soar in performance.

ROBERT TAUB

harmonia mundi s.a., 04870 Saint-Michel de Provence © 1986
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Recorded: Church of the Holy Trinity, New York, April 8, 9 & 10, 1985
in the presence of the composer
Recording Engineer: David B. Hancock
Producer: Robina Young
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Arie da Capo was commissioned by the Walter W. Naumburg Foundation for the Da Capo Chamber Players, who first performed it in New York on April 25, 1974, three months after its completion, and whose name suggested the title of the work, and—thereby—many of the composition's most apparent features: the series of five successive "arias," one for each of the members of the ensemble, into which the one-movement composition may be heard to be divided, and the internal "da capo" design characteristics of the arias, which become increasingly and cumulatively, if not quite recapitulative, retrospective, both in the individual instruments' mutations and in their collective reorientations.

Within its own aria, the central instrument dominates less quantitatively than relationally, in that its music is the immediate source of, and is complemented and counterpointed by, the music of the "accompanying" instruments. But although the five "arias" are clearly distinguished in these and even more obvious respects (for instance, the clarinetist plays the bass clarinet throughout the second and fourth arias, the only *Pierrot lunaire* doubling employed in this "Pierrot" ensemble), they are compounded into a whole by manifest and multiple interdependencies, which are probably less apparent by the arias being construed as transformations of one another than as interpreted models of similar, interval-preserving, registrally uninterpreted pitch-class and metrically-durally uninterpreted time-point aggregate arrays. These harmonically, contrapuntally, and temporally "middleground" arrays, constituting all 58 partitions into no more than six parts of the twelve pitch-classes, are deployed to incorporate nested "da capo" patterns.

More directly, but perhaps no more obviously, the arias interpenetrate through dimensional reinterpretations: thus, and only for example, temporally proximate pitches and pitch collections in one aria emerge as articulatively associated pitches in another, and yet as instrumentally associated in still another, and so on, to induce one of the time-dependent, evolving bases of directed, successive subsumption unto eventual closure.

That there are yet other referents of the title can be inferred from the use of the singular "capo" rather than the, in many senses applicable, plural.

MILTON BABBITT

Donald Martino (b. Plainfield, N.J.) began his early musical career as a clarinetist. He studied composition with Ernst Bacon, Milton Babbitt, Roger Sessions, and Luigi Dallapiccola, and he holds music degrees from Syracuse and Princeton universities. He has taught at Princeton and Yale, has been a visiting lecturer at Harvard, and taught composition at the Berkshire Music Center, where, in 1973, he occupied the post of Koussevitzky Composer-in-Residence. Since 1969, Martino has been chairman of the Composition Department at the New England Conservatory. He has received numerous distinguished commissions and awards, including the Brandeis University Creative Arts Awards Citation in Music, BMI-SCA Awards, and an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. In May 1974, Martino received the Pulitzer Prize for Music for *Notturmo*, a work heard on Nonesuch (H-71300), performed by Speculum Musicae.

Milton Babbitt (b. Philadelphia), whose early musical activities included performance as a clarinetist, studied composition with Roger Sessions. He holds degrees from New York University and Princeton and has been awarded honorary degrees by Middlebury College, Swarthmore College, New York University, and the New England Conservatory. Active as composer and teacher, and a prolific writer on musical subjects, Babbitt is a founder and member of the Committee of Direction, Electronic Music Center of Columbia-Princeton Universities, and a member of the Editorial Board of *Perspectives of New Music*. He has taught at Salzburg, Tanglewood,

Side Two (14:34)

MILTON BABBITT

(b. 1916)

Arie da Capo (1973-74)

(In One Movement)

for Flute, Clarinet & Bass Clarinet,
Violin, Cello & Piano

THE GROUP FOR CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Sophie Sollberger, *flute*—Anand Devendra, *clarinet & bass clarinet*—
Benjamin Hudson, *violin*—André Emelianoff, *cello*—Aleck Karis, *piano*
HARVEY SOLLBERGER, conductor

publ. C.F. Peters Corporation (BMI)

recorded May 1979, New York

recorded with the assistance of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc.;
the Mary Duke Biddle Foundation; the Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University;
Broadcast Music, Inc.; the Renée and Theodore Weiler Foundation;
and individual patrons of new music

engineering & musical supervision/Marc J. Aubort, Joanna Nickrenz (Elite Recordings, Inc.)

piano/Baldwin (SD-10)

mastering/Robert C. Ludwig (Masterdisk Corp.)

a Dolby-system recording

Darmstadt, and the New England Conservatory. Babbitt began teaching at Princeton in 1938, and since 1966 he has been William Shubael Conant Professor of Music, Princeton University; he also teaches composition at the Juilliard School. Babbitt has received a long list of distinguished awards, honors, and commissions and is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Two other instrumental works by Milton Babbitt are heard on Nonesuch: *String Quartet No. 2*, performed by the Composers Quartet (H-71280); and *All Set, for Jazz Ensemble*, performed by the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble, conducted by Arthur Weisberg (H-71303).

Founded in 1962 by Charles Wuorinen, Harvey Sollberger, and Joel Krosnick, the Group for Contemporary Music was the first of the active contemporary-music ensembles to be directed by composers who also played and conducted. With Wuorinen and Sollberger as co-directors (joined in 1971 by Nicolas Roussakis as executive director), the Group has enlisted the participation of many of New York's leading contemporary musicians. Its first nine seasons of concerts were presented at Columbia University's McMillin Theatre, in cooperation with the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center; in 1971, the Group for Contemporary Music became affiliated with the Manhattan School of Music. Since its inception, the Group has performed throughout the United States and in Europe and has presented hundreds of new

works, many of them in world premieres. The Group for Contemporary Music has recorded for Acoustic Research, CRI, Epic, Turnabout, and Nonesuch.

Harvey Sollberger (b. 1938, Cedar Rapids, Iowa) studied flute with Betty Bang Mather and Samuel Baron, composition with Otto Luening and Jack Beeson, and conducting with James Dixon; he holds degrees from the University of Iowa and Columbia University. Renowned as one of this country's leading flutists and an authority on contemporary flute techniques (see *Twentieth-Century Flute Music*, Nonesuch HB-73028, in which Mr. Sollberger is the featured soloist), his work as composer and performer has received recognition in the form of numerous commissions and awards. He is co-director of the Group for Contemporary Music and he teaches at the Manhattan School of Music and Columbia University. Sollberger has recorded—as composer, conductor, or flutist—for Acoustic Research, CRI, Desto, New World Records, Turnabout, and Nonesuch.

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Maude E. Brogan (1927-1978), Director of the Martha Baird Rockefeller Fund for Music, Inc., 1972-1978, whose generous aid to the Group for Contemporary Music in its preparation of *Triple Concerto* during the fall of 1978 made the premiere performance possible; and to the memory of Josef Marx (1913-1978), whose guiding spirit gave inspiration and support to the Group during its early years.

MILTON BABBITT

PARAPHRASES

Parnassus; Anthony Korf, conductor

MILTON BABBITT (b. 1916, Philadelphia) was educated in the public schools of Jackson, Mississippi, and at New York and Princeton Universities. His primary teacher of musical composition was Roger Sessions, with whom he studied privately for three years.

He is William Shubael Conant Professor of Music at Princeton University, where he has taught since 1938, including three years as a member of the Mathematics faculty. He also is on the Composition Faculty of the Juilliard School, and has been a Visiting Professor at the Rubin Academy in Jerusalem. Babbitt has taught, conducted seminars and lectured internationally. He is a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

His honors include: two New York Music Critics Circle Citations (1949, 1964); National Institute of Arts and Letters Award (1959); Brandeis University Gold Medal (1970); National Music Award (1976); Pulitzer Prize Special Citation (1982). He has received honorary degrees from Middlebury College, New York University, Swarthmore College, New England Conservatory, and University of Glasgow.

The most recent recordings of his music are of his early *Three Compositions for Piano* (by Robert Taub on CRI) and *Composition for Viola and Piano* (by John Graham and Robert Black on CRI), and his recent *Solo Requiem* (by Bethany Beardslee on Nonesuch). He writes:

"PARAPHRASES, for ten instrumentalists, was completed in December 1979, and first performed by Parnassus, under Anthony Korf's direction, the following March.

"Of the work's multiple manifestations of the paraphrastic, in the senses of the glossed restatement, the reinterpretation, the clarification, the amplification, surely the most immediately evident is that which maintains between the first two large sections of this one-movement composition and the third, final section whose explicit foreground is paraphrased by the woodwinds in the first section and by the brasses in the second, thereby inducing a mutual paraphrasing between those two sections which is yet further enhanced by the brasses 'doubling' (yet otherwise autonomous) role in the first section being assumed analogously by the woodwinds in the second.

"Further, within and among the sections, there are successive, simultaneous, immediate, and proximate instances of paraphrasing, within and between instrumental lines and collections, individual and compounded musical dimensions, and the spatially and temporally delineated 'phrases'."

Parnassus performers and their instruments on PARAPHRASES are: Keith Underwood, flute; Nora Post, oboe and English horn; Robert Yamins, clarinet; Dennis Smylie, bass clarinet; Steven Dibner, bassoon; David Wakefield, horn; Raymond Mase, trumpet; Ronald Borrer, trombone; David Braynard, tuba; Edmund Niemann, piano.

Parnassus performers and their instruments on A FAREWELL are: Keith Underwood, flute; Sheryl Henze, flute and piccolo; Rie Schmidt, flute and alto flute; Patricia Spencer, flute, alto flute and bass flute; Nora Post, oboe; Gerard Reuter, oboe; William Blount, Eb and Bb clarinet; Laura Ardan, Bb and A clarinet; James Guzzardo, bass clarinet; Dennis Smylie, A clarinet and contra-bass clarinet; Steven Dibner, bassoon; Philip Götting, bassoon; David Wakefield, horn; Scott Temple, horn; Raymond Mase, trumpet and flugelhorn; Chris Gekker, trumpet and flugelhorn; Ronald Borrer, trombone and euphonium; Jonathan Taylor, euphonium and trombone; Lawrence Benz, bass trombone; David Braynard, tuba; James Preiss, percussion.

Since its inception in 1975, PARNASSUS has earned a distinguished reputation as one of America's foremost virtuoso champions of contemporary chamber music. They have appeared as guest artists on many important new music series, and have toured extensively throughout the Northeast. Active in the commissioning of works by both celebrated and emerging composers, they are recorded on CRI SD 480 and New World Records.

This recording was made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington, DC, a Federal agency, and with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts. Additional funding was provided by the Alice M. Ditson Fund of Columbia University, the Princeton University Committee on Research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the Jerome Foundation, the Ernst von Siemens Foundation, Time-Life Inc., Mr. David Braynard, Mr. and Mrs. Jose M. Ferrer III, and Mr. Andrew Schneider.

PARAPHRASES — C.F. Peters (BMI): 13'

STRATA — Ione Press (BMI): 6' 19"

FAREWELL — ACA (BMI): 17' 52"

All recorded by David Hancock, May 1982, New York City

Production Assistants: Donald Palma, George Rothman.

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FOR CRI —

Producer: Carter Harman

Product Manager: Michael Bennett

LC#: 83-743195

This recording employed hand-made ribbon microphones in pairs, spaced six feet apart, in the best available acoustical environment. Their output was fed to a 30 IPS Studer A-80 tape recorder, slightly modified for constant velocity record-playback characteristics, using half-inch tape with two channels, each channel almost ¼-inch wide. In this way the need for conventional (and troublesome) noise reduction devices was eliminated and the resulting reproduction challenges the digital storage method so far as clarity and cleanliness of sound are concerned. Lacquer masters were cut from the original tapes, employing an Ortofon transducer system with motional feedback. To minimize groove echo, the lacquer masters were processed within twelve hours using the latest European equipment and techniques. Strict quality control pressings were made of the purest available vinyl.

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