

**Stefan
WOLPE**

String Quartet

Trio in Two Parts

**Second Piece for
Violin Alone**

**Piece for Oboe,
Cello, Percussion
and Piano**

**The Group for
Contemporary
Music**

Stefan
WOLPE
(1902-1972)

String Quartet (1968-69) 18:06

① ♩ = 92 8:10

② ♩ = 144 9:55

Curtis Macomber, Violin • Theodore Arm, Violin
Toby Appel, Viola • Fred Sherry, Cello

③ Second Piece for Violin Alone (1966) 2:58

Curtis Macomber, Violin

Trio in Two Parts for Flute, Cello and Piano (1964) 16:42

④ ♩ = ca. 132 11:08

⑤ ♩ = ca. 80 5:34

Harvey Sollberger, Flute • Fred Sherry, Cello • Charles Wuorinen, Piano

Piece for Oboe, Cello, Percussion and Piano (1954) 24:04

⑥ Early Morning Music 4:16

⑦ Calm 7:47

⑧ Intense and Spirited 6:28

⑨ Taut; To Oneself 5:33

Stephen Taylor, Oboe • Fred Sherry, Cello • Daniel Kennedy, Percussion
Aleck Karis, Piano • Harvey Sollberger, Conductor

Yamaha CF3 Concert Grand piano provided by Yamaha Corporation of America

Piano technician: François Nezwazky

Percussion (tracks 6-9): tom-toms, small drums, biscuit tins, tambourine, snare drum, kitchen grater, little bell,
suspended cymbal, tam-tams, wood blocks, glass jars, rattles, aluminum pot and glass jar rattles,
glockenspiel and vibraphone.

Publishers: Tracks 1-2: EMI Music Publishing Ltd., London. Parts on hire from ChesterNovello.com.
Tracks 3 and 6-9: McGinnis and Marx, New York • Tracks 4 and 5: Peermusic Classical, New York and Hamburg
(All works registered with ASCAP)

Stefan Wolpe (1902-1972)

String Quartet • Trio • Second Piece for Violin Alone • Piece for Oboe, Cello, Percussion, and Piano

Robert Mann, the first violinist of the Juilliard Quartet, and Claus Adam, the cellist from 1955 to 1974, were students of Wolpe. Mann commissioned Wolpe to write a piece for the Quartet, and in 1950 Wolpe composed a set of twelve short studies. He began a string quartet proper, but the pencil sketch breaks off after four pages and the string quartet remained on his conscience for nearly twenty years. In 1968-69 an experimental drug treatment gave Wolpe a few months of remission from the symptoms of Parkinsonism and he composed the *Quartet* with the inscription, "To the magnificent Juilliard Quartet, a belated dedication". The Juilliard Quartet gave the première in Alice Tully Hall in October 1969.

The surface of Wolpe's late music is deceptive. Herbert Brün observed that if you listen from the outside, it all sounds the same, but inside "everything is exploding. You are full of stuff". Wolpe limited himself to a relatively simple palette of sounds. Other than pizzicato, harmonics, and a few glissandos he does not employ extended string techniques. The virtuosity of the music lies in the quick-silver cut and thrust of the diverse images. As he said to Eric Salzman, "If one observes what is happening in the world of forms, then the garbage can is as lucid an illustration as the ashtray, as everything around, if you have that widely open form sense which has established conscious experiences". In Wolpe's kaleidoscopic, through-the-looking-glass world there is no plot:

Opposites become complementary and allow the infinite and instant conversion of line into lines, into sounds, into varying quantities of action, from much to nothing, from nothing to little, from little to scarcely anything, from scarcely anything to a conjuring plenty of abandon ... The piece feeds its own totality and brings everything into its focus. (Thinking Twice)

The *Quartet* and the *Trio* have Wolpe's trademark two-part form. In the *Quartet* the first part is moderate in tempo and the pitch circulation is slower, a predominantly gathering action, the shapes well-formed and the mode of thought introspective, directed, and stable. The second part is fast with a prevailing scattering action. The mode of thought is more disruptive, and the circulation of the twelve tones more rapid and disorderly. Where the material of the first part is made of segments of the chromatic scale, the second part derives its material from the octatonic scale, recalling the music of the Palestine period. The viola Fs that begin the first part and bring both parts to a close provide a point of reference for a continuous play between tonal and atonal references. The chaotic tendency intensifies until the music nearly runs off its rails. After a long pause comes the coda, which recalls the beginning of the movement. From out of the blue emerges a dance figure, a cadential move, and the viola's long-held F, as though that tonal centre has been there all along.

In his last years Wolpe was fascinated by classical modes of thought that he had at one time rejected. In this late work Wolpe reconciles the disjunct nature of moment form with the cohering tendencies of developing variation. He no longer prepared compositions with extensive charts. His colleague Raoul Pleskow said that Wolpe gave him the pages of the *Quartet* as he completed them so that he could darken the notes, because Wolpe's handwriting was now so faint. Wolpe composed without referring to what he had just written. The beguiling flow of the *Quartet* lies on the threshold between composition and improvisation.

Wolpe began his *Trio* in *Two Parts* for flute, cello and piano in 1963 while on a Guggenheim Fellowship in Italy. He completed the first part in Rome and the second part after returning to New York in 1964. It was written at the invitation of Harvey Sollberger and Charles Wuorinen for the Group for Contemporary

Music, and they gave the première with the cellist Joel Krosnick in November 1964 in the McMillin (now the Miller) Theater at Columbia University.

During the 1960s Wolpe reduced the complexity of his music in order to clarify and intensify essential processes. While composing the first movement he wrote to a friend:

"I am working on the Trio for Wuorinen and write an amazing (that is I am amazed) piece of simple events in a less simple, syntactical environment ... I have a horror of exaggerations and long-drawn-out grandeur (at this moment). I wonder about the un-weight of leaves, and letters, and facial expressions."

The first part of the *Trio* is the faster one. The basic material consists of various four-note shapes, each with its own harmonic coloration. The piano has the first shape, the flute and cello have the second, and the third appears after eighteen seconds with a low pizzicato in the cello. Wolpe sets these shapes in motion as if they are elements in a fantastic Calder mobile. The shapes shift and change, moving slowly or with dizzying speed to any part of the space. They dissolve into shards and coalesce to form larger shapes. The entropy changes from ordered to chaotic, as though the musicians are at times highly focused and controlled and at other times in a state of utmost freedom. The cello begins the second part with a shape that moves slowly but mutates quickly. The more relaxed ambience is underlined by the jazz-like striding bass figure that the cello begins at 1:48 and the other instruments pick up from time to time. The movement closes with the motion among the elements slowing down, as though the mobile that had been in motion finally comes to rest.

For the première of the *Second Piece for Violin Alone*, performed by Max Pollikoff at the 92nd Street YMHA in May 1966. Wolpe provided the following programme note:

Take these three notes G, A, and B, play them five times and then stop! Three notes found in the major scale—G, A, B—and played simply on the lowest string. Classical music, folk music, how many pieces start that way! How many pieces start that way and then take you on a musical journey, like a symphony, down the great Mississippi River from one state to another, from one region to another—levels, motion, development—how many! And then again, afterwards, how not to do it! How not to take that trip! Suppose you have a steady state in which you can elect to remain, but a state the parts of which can be rearranged endlessly, kaleidoscopically. Now let's start again! And then ...

In the steady state the time flows in all directions at once, and everything is available at any given moment. As Wolpe wrote, "There is nothing to develop because everything is already there in reach of one's ears. If one has enough milk in the house, one doesn't go to the grocery store". The imagination goes where one intends it to go. "One is there where one directs oneself to be: on the back of a bird, inside of an apple, dancing on the sun's ray, speaking to Machaut, and holding the skeleton's hand of the incredible Cézanne - there is what there was and what there isn't is also" (Thinking Twice, 1959).

Wolpe began his *Piece for Oboe, Cello, Piano and Percussion* while residing at Black Mountain College. He had just finished the monumental *Enactments for Three Pianos* (1950-1953), in which he realised a musical "actionism" analogous to the "gestural realism" of the abstract expressionist painters. When he finished it, he described it as, "Compressed, 'handy,' tight, wild, fluctuous, sometimes moist and like burning air. My Enactments poured into a bottle". Wolpe was also responding to the challenge that John Cage presented with indeterminacy. Wolpe understood the message of Taoism, as he had been influenced by that philosophy in the early 1920s. He rejected chance, however, as he believed that composers should retain full responsibility

for their choices. In a letter to his publisher, the oboist Josef Marx for whom he wrote the *Piece*, he wrote:

There are (I know, I am conscious of, I wanted it) situations which exist (as themselves) in many different ways and (always being right at a time) must be seen in their particular unstable, never crystallizable situation. Time-Schichten ohne Time-Axen (layers of time without any axis-like time-coordination of time).

The first movement, *Early Morning Music*, is a hushed happening of isolated figures, gestures, and sounds. The percussion includes biscuit tins, a kitchen grater, and rattles made from an aluminum pot and a glass jar containing long nails - found sounds from the College campus. Just before the end of the movement the cello has a call-like figure that spans the interval of a fifth and then sustains a hushed D. The piano reiterates a bird-like twittering in its highest register, while the oboe has a "call" and "echo" on a major third. The movement concludes in a state of suspended animation, "as if it hasn't ended yet". The second movement continues the process of the first movement while heightening the level of intensity. The third movement provides the purposeful, goal-directed, well-formed aspect of the work. Wolpe described the fourth movement as "multiple motions, quick, slow, hampered, expressive, popular, and with peopled speech". The opening is a collection of crudely dissociated elements. He inscribed the words "like chanting souls" beside a quasi-serioso duet of oboe and cello (1:03). The high-style duet is

interrupted by sounds from the piano, the kitchen grater, and the biscuit tin. Wolpe's answer to Cage was to compose dada situations. The cellist sings an A. Pitched events combine with a flurry of non-pitched events: the oboist and pianist alternate singing and playing short patterns on a whole-tone scale. The pianist gets up from the bench and together with the percussionist they stomp their feet and clap their hands. The movement concludes with an outlandish parody of a Shostakovich presto that collapses in disarray. Ralph Shapey conducted the first performance of the *Quartet* in Philadelphia in May 1959.

Austin Clarkson

Further Reading

Clarkson, Austin, ed. *On the Music of Stefan Wolpe: Essays and Recollections*. Hillsdale NY: Pendragon Press, 2003.

Recollections of Stefan Wolpe. <http://www.wolpe.org>. An oral history collection of interviews.

Stefan Wolpe, *Das Ganze Überdenken: Vorträge über Musik 1935-1962*, edited by Thomas Phleps. Saarbrücken: Pfau Verlag, 2002.

"In conversation with Eric Salzman," *The Musical Quarterly* 83/3: 378-412 (1999).

For more information, see www.wolpe.org

The Group for Contemporary Music

In 1985 The Group for Contemporary Music was awarded a citation from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters as follows: "The Group for Contemporary Music, founded in 1962 by Harvey Sollberger and Charles Wuorinen ... changed the musical climate by redefining the standards of performance of knowing, demanding contemporary composition. It was the first collection of musicians joined in ensemble to present new music exclusively and appropriately, with the necessary preparation, in time and understanding. Today its ideals, and its personnel have spawned a population of such groups across the country...wherever the music of our time has its rightful place." For four decades, the Group has been central to the American new music scene, and for more than a generation has trained or introduced a large number of distinguished musicians. The Group's primary aim is to present a broad spectrum of the highest compositional achievements of our time, from the classic works of our century to emerging new talents, never bowing to fashions of the moment, but always supporting excellence in composition and performance.

Stephen Taylor

Oboist Stephen Taylor holds the Mrs John D. Rockefeller III solo oboe chair with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. He is also solo oboe with the New York Woodwind Quintet, the Orchestra of St Luke's, the St Luke's Chamber Ensemble, the American Composers Orchestra, the New England Bach Festival Orchestra, Speculum Musicae, and plays as co-principal oboe with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra. Trained at the Juilliard School with teachers Lois Wann and Robert Bloom, he is a member of its faculty as well as of the Yale School of Music, SUNY Stony Brook and the Manhattan School of Music. The Fromm Music Foundation at Harvard University awarded him a performer's grant in 1981. Stephen Taylor plays on a rare Caldwell model Loree oboe.

Aleck Karis

For over twenty years Aleck Karis has been one of the leading pianists in the New York contemporary music scene. Particularly associated with the music of Elliott Carter, Mario Davidovsky, and John Cage, he has championed their works all over the world. Among his numerous solo piano discs on Bridge Records are acclaimed recordings of Stravinsky, Schumann, Carter and John Cage. He has recorded Feldman for Tzadik, Hyla's *Piano Concerto* for New World, and Glass for Romeo Records. Recently he has been performing and recording music by Birtwistle and Chopin. Aleck Karis is currently a Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. He is a student of William Daglian.

Harvey Sollberger

Harvey Sollberger is a composer, conductor and flautist who is currently Distinguished Professor of Music at the University of California, San Diego. The composer of over sixty works, his catalogue includes many pieces for flute as well as works for chorus, orchestra and a wide range of chamber combinations. He has received two Guggenheim Fellowships as well as commissions from the Fromm, Koussevitzky and Naumberg Foundations and from the NEA, NYSAC, Music from Japan and the Iowa Arts Council. His music has been performed by such ensembles as the New York New Music Ensemble, the New York Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony and internationally in

Japan, France, Finland and Italy. In San Diego, he often conducts the new music ensemble SONOR and was from 1997 to 2005 Music Director of the La Jolla Symphony. His work as a composer and performer is represented on over a hundred commercial recordings.

Charles Wuorinen

Born in New York in 1938, Charles Wuorinen is one of the world's leading composers. His many honours include a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship and the Pulitzer Prize (the youngest composer to receive the award). His compositions encompass every form and medium, including works for orchestra, chamber ensemble, soloists, ballet, and stage. Recent works include *Theologoumenon* for James Levine and the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra, *Fourth Piano Concerto* for Peter Serkin, James Levine and the Boston Symphony, *Flying to Kahani*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Peter Serkin and the Orchestra of St Luke's, and his opera, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, based on the novel of Salman Rushdie. Both as composer and performer (conductor and pianist) Wuorinen has worked with some of the finest performers of the current time and his works reflect the great virtuosity of his collaborators. His close association with Stefan Wolpe led Wolpe to compose the *Piece for Two Instrumental Units* and the *Trio in Two Parts* heard on this disc. Charles Wuorinen is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Theodore Arm

Audiences throughout the United States, Canada, Europe and Japan have responded with warmth and excitement to the artistry of the violinist Theodore Arm. He is a frequent soloist, recitalist and chamber music performer and has been a guest artist with such well-known organizations as the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the Group for Contemporary Music, New York's Festival Chamber Players and the Boston Chamber Music Society. He has been a member of the highly acclaimed chamber group TASHI since 1976 and has performed with Lukas Foss, Chick Corea and Gary Burton, among others. He has had works written for him, including a chamber violin concerto by Gabriela Frank that he performed at Carnegie Hall in November 2004, and a suite for violin and piano by David Schiff. Theodore Arm performs on an Andreas Guarneri violin dated 1652 and is a Professor of Violin at the University of Connecticut. He holds a Doctorate in Performance from the Juilliard School, where he studied with Christine Dethier and Joseph Fuchs.

Toby Appel

Toby Appel has appeared in recital and concerto performances throughout North and South America, Europe, and the Far East. He has been a member of such renowned ensembles as TASHI, and the Lenox and Audubon Quartets. He has been a guest artist with the Vermeer, Manhattan, and Composers Quartets as well as a frequent guest with the Lincoln Center Chamber Music Society and with jazz artists Chick Corea and Gary Burton. In 1975 he was featured in a CBS television special performing works commissioned by him for three violas, all played by Toby Appel, and in 1980 he was the winner of Young Concert Artists International. Toby Appel entered the Curtis Institute at the age of thirteen under the guidance of Max Aronoff. He is currently teaching on the viola and chamber music faculties at the Juilliard School in New York City and is Artist Lecturer at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. He has also held professorships at the State University of New York, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, and

the University of New Mexico. He has toured for the United States State Department and performed at the United Nations and at the White House.

Curtis Macomber

Curtis Macomber is among the most versatile soloists/chamber musicians, equally at home in repertoire from Bach to Babbitt. As member of the New World String Quartet from 1982 to 1993 he performed in virtually all the important concert series in the United States, as well as touring abroad. He is the violinist of Speculum Musicae and a founding member of the Apollo Trio, with a series of acclaimed recordings. He is a member of the chamber music faculty of the Juilliard School, where he studied with Joseph Fuchs. He is also on the violin faculty of the Manhattan School of Music, and has taught at the Tanglewood, Taos and Yellow Barn Music Festivals.

Fred Sherry

A pioneer and a visionary in the music world, the cellist Fred Sherry has introduced audiences on five continents and all fifty United States to the music of our time through his close association with such composers as Babbitt, Berio, Carter, Davidovsky, Foss, Knussen, Lieberon, Mackey, Takemitsu, Wuorinen and Zorn. He has been a member of The Group for Contemporary Music and the Galimir String Quartet, and a close collaborator with jazz pianist and composer Chick Corea. He was a founding member of Speculum Musicae and TASHI. Fred Sherry has been an active performer with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center since the 1970s, an Artist Member since 1984 and was the Artistic Director from 1988 to 1992. He is a member of the cello and chamber music faculty of the Juilliard School and the cello faculty of the Mannes College of Music. In the vast scope of his recording career he has been a soloist and “sideman” on hundreds of commercial and esoteric recordings. His long-standing collaboration with Robert Craft has produced recordings of Schoenberg’s *Cello Concerto* and *String Quartet Concerto* and other major works by Schoenberg, Stravinsky and Webern.

Daniel Kennedy

Daniel Kennedy holds a doctoral degree in percussion performance from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and has studied with multi-percussionist Raymond DesRoches, hand-drum specialist John Bergamo, and tabla master Swapan Chaudhuri. He has been the founding member of several contemporary music ensembles, including the California E.A.R. Unit and the Talujon Percussion Quartet, and has performed throughout the United States, Europe, India, Bali, and Japan. He is featured as a percussion soloist for the California Arts Council Touring Program, and has an extensive list of recordings. He is currently the Instructor of Percussion at California State University, Sacramento, and is a member of the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players and Gamelan Sekar Jaya.

Stefan Wolpe (1902–1972): Streichquartett · Trio in zwei Teilen für Flöte, Violoncello und Klavier **Zweites Stück für Violine allein · Stück für Oboe, Violoncello, Schlagzeug und Klavier**

Zu Wolpes Schülern gehörten unter anderem Robert Mann, der Primarius des Juilliard String Quartet, und Claus Adam, der von 1955 bis 1974 in diesem Ensemble das Cello spielte. Mann gab seinem Lehrer den Auftrag zu einem Quartettstück, und dieser schrieb 1950 einen Zyklus von zwölf kurzen Studien. Auch begann er damals mit einem „richtigen“ Streichquartett, dessen Bleistiftskizze allerdings schon nach vier Seiten abbricht. Beinahe zwanzig Jahre dachte er daran, dieses Quartett zu schreiben. 1968/69 dämpfte die versuchsweise Behandlung mit einem neuen Medikament für einige Monate die Symptome der Parkinsonschen Krankheit, unter der er litt, und in dieser Zeit entstand schließlich sein *Quartet*: „Dem großartigen Juilliard Quartet als verspätete Widmung“, überschrieb er die Partitur, und die Widmungsträger waren es auch, die im Oktober 1969 in der Alice Tully Hall die Uraufführung gaben.

Die Oberfläche von Wolpes später Musik ist trügerisch. Herbert Brün stellte fest, dass, wenn man von außen zuhört, alles gleich klingt, im Innern aber „alles explodiert“ und man „von Material überladen“ ist. Wolpe beschränkte sich auf eine recht einfache Klangpalette. Von Pizzikati, Flageolets und einigen wenigen Glissandi abgesehen, benutzte er keine fortgeschritteneren Streichertechniken. Die Virtuosität der Musik liegt in dem feurigen Zuschnitt und Antrieb der unterschiedlichen Bilder. Wie Wolpe gegenüber Eric Salzman äußerte: „Wenn man beobachtet, was in der Welt der Formen vor sich geht, dann ist der Mülleimer eine ebenso klare Illustration wie der Aschenbecher, wie alles, was einen umgibt – wenn man jenen weit offenen Sinn für Formen hat, der bewusste Erfahrungen begründet.“ In Wolpes kaleidoskopischer Spiegelwelt gibt es keine Handlung:

Gegensätze ergänzen einander, sie erlauben die unendliche, unmittelbare Verwandlung von Linien in Linien, in Klänge, in verschiedene Aktionsmengen, von viel zu nichts, von nichts zu wenig, von wenig zu kaum etwas, von kaum etwas

zu einer zauberischen Fülle der Unbeherrschtheit ... Das Stück nährt seine eigene Totalität und bringt alles in deren Brennpunkt (Thinking Twice, 1959).

Wie das *Trio* besteht auch das *Quartet* aus zwei Teilen, was Wolpes Markenzeichen war. Der erste Teil des *Quartet* bewegt sich in moderatem Tempo, und die Töne zirkulieren langsamer: Es ist vornehmlich eine gesammelte Aktion, die Gestalten sind wohlgeformt, die Gedanken introspektiv, gerichtet und stabil. Im zweiten, schnellen Teil dominieren zerstreute Aktionen. Die Gedanken sind disruptiv, die zwölf Töne kreisen schneller und weniger geordnet. Während das Material des ersten Teils aus Segmenten der chromatischen Skala hergestellt ist, bezieht der zweite Teil sein Material aus der octatonischen Skala, was an die Musik der Zeit in Palästina erinnert. Die F₅ der Bratsche, mit denen der erste Teil beginnt und beide Abschnitte enden – diese Töne liefern einen Orientierungspunkt im kontinuierlichen Spiel tonaler und atonaler Bezüge. Die Tendenz zum Chaotischen nimmt zu, bis die Musik beinahe entgleist. Nach einer langen Pause folgt die Coda, die an den Satzanfang erinnert. Aus heiterem Himmel entsteht eine Tanzfigur, eine kadenzierende Bewegung, und das lang ausgehaltene F der Bratsche weckt den Eindruck, als habe dieses tonale Zentrum die ganze Zeit über existiert.

In seinen letzten Jahren war Wolpe von klassischen Denkwesen fasziniert, die er einige Zeit abgelehnt hatte. In diesem späten Werk versöhnt er die disjunkte Natur der Momentform mit den einheitsstiftenden Tendenzen der entwickelnden Variation. Nicht länger entstanden Kompositionen in ausführlichen Arbeitsblättern. Sein Kollege Raoul Pleskow sagte, Wolpe habe ihm jede Seite des *Quartet* sofort nach der Fertigstellung gegeben, damit er die Noten schwärzte, da Wolpes Handschrift inzwischen so schwach geworden war. Das Stück entstand also, ohne dass sich der Komponist auf das hätte beziehen können, was er zuvor geschrieben hatte. Der bertückende

Fluss des *Quartet* bewegt sich an der Grenze von Komposition und Improvisation.

Mit dem *Trio in zwei Teilen für Flöte, Violoncello und Klavier* begann Wolpe 1963, als er sich vermöge eines Guggenheim-Stipendiums in Italien aufhielt. Den ersten Teil vollendete er in Rom, den zweiten 1964 in New York. Das Werk entstand auf Initiative von Harvey Sollberger und Charles Wuorinen für die *Group for Contemporary Music*, die das Stück im November 1964 zusammen mit dem Cellisten Joel Krosnick im McMillin-Theater (heute: Miller-Theater) der Columbia University uraufführte.

Während der sechziger Jahre reduzierte Wolpe die Komplexität seiner Musik, um essentielle Prozesse zu klären und zu intensivieren. Während er den ersten Satz komponierte, schrieb er einem Freund:

„Ich arbeite an dem Trio für Wuorinen und schreibe ein erstaunliches Stück (das heißt, dass ich erstaunt bin) aus einfachen Geschehnissen in einer weniger einfachen, syntaktischen Umgebung ... Ich habe (in diesem Augenblick) einen Horror vor Übertreibungen und lang ausgestalteter Grandeur. Ich wundere mich über die Gewichtslosigkeit von Blättern, Briefen und Gesichtsausdrücken.“

Der erste Teil des Trios ist der schnellere der beiden Abschnitte. Das Grundmaterial besteht aus verschiedenen viertönigen Figuren, die allesamt ihre eigenen harmonischen Färbungen haben. Das Klavier spielt die erste Figur, Flöte und Violoncello die zweite; die dritte erscheint nach 18 Sekunden im tiefen Pizzikato des Cellos. Wolpe setzt diese Figuren in Bewegung, als seien sie Elemente in einem fantastischen Mobile von Alexander Calder. Die Gestalten wechseln und verändern sich, bewegen sich langsam oder mit schwindelerregendem Tempo in irgendeinen Teil des Raums. Sie lösen sich in Splitter auf und verbinden sich zu größeren Formen. Die Entropie verändert sich vom Geordneten zum Chaotischen – als seien die Musiker in bestimmten Phasen überaus konzentriert und kontrolliert, während sie sich zu andern Zeiten in einem Zustand äußerster Freiheit

befänden. Das Violoncello spielt am Anfang des zweiten Teils eine Figur, die sich langsam bewegt, aber rasch mutiert. Das entspanntere Ambiente wird von der jazzartig schreitenden Bassfigur unterstrichen, mit der das Cello bei 1:48 beginnt und die die andern Instrumente von Zeit zu Zeit aufgreifen. Der Satz schließt damit, dass die Bewegung der Elemente untereinander langsamer wird – als ob das Mobile endlich zum Stillstand käme.

Zur Uraufführung des *Zweiten Stückes für Violoncello allein*, das Max Pollikoff im Mai 1966 im YMHA (Hebräischer Verein Junger Männer) spielte, gab Wolpe folgenden Kommentar:

Man nehme diese drei Töne G, A und H, spiele sie fünfmal und höre dann auf! Drei Töne, die man in der Durkskala findet – G, A, H – und die einfach auf der tiefsten Saite gespielt werden. Klassische Musik, Volksmusik – wieviele Stücke fangen so an! Wieviele Stücke fangen so an und nehmen einen dann mit auf eine musikalische Reise – wie eine Symphonie, den großen Mississippi herab von einem Staat zum andern, von einer Gegend zur andern – Ebenen, Bewegung, Entwicklung – wie viele! Und dann wieder, danach, wie sollte man es vermeiden! Wie nicht auf diese Reise gehen! Angenommen, Sie haben einen gleichbleibenden Zustand und können sich entscheiden, in diesem zu verharren – und doch ist es ein Zustand, dessen Teile unendlich umarrangiert werden können, kaleidoskopisch. Fangen wir also wieder von vorn an! Und dann ...

In diesem gleichbleibenden Zustand fließt die Zeit simultan in alle Richtungen, und alles steht in jedem Moment zur Verfügung. Wolpe schrieb: „Es gibt nichts, das zu entwickeln wäre, weil alles schon in Hörweite ist. Wenn man genug Milch im Haus hat, geht man nicht zum Krämer!“ Die Imagination geht dahin, wo man sie hingehen lassen will. „Man ist dort, wo man hin will: auf dem Rücken eines Vogels, in einem Apfel, man tanzt auf einem Sonnenstrahl, spricht mit Machaut und hält die Skeletthand des unglaublichen Cézanne – es ist da, was da

war, und das, was nicht ist, ist auch da“ (*Thinking Twice*).

Mit seinem *Stück für Oboe, Violoncello, Schlagzeug und Klavier* begann Wolpe, als er am Black Mountain College wirkte. Er hatte gerade die monumentalen *Enactments for Three Pianos* (1950-1953) vollendet, in deren musikalischem „Aktionismus“ er Analogien zu dem „gestischen Realismus“ der abstrakten expressionistischen Maler entdeckte. Nachdem er das Quartett abgeschlossen hatte, beschrieb er es als „komprimiert, ‚handlich‘, dicht, wild, fluktuierend, bisweilen feucht und wie brennende Luft. Meine *Enactments* in eine Flasche gegossen.“ Zugleich war das Wolpes Antwort auf die Unbestimmtheit, mit der John Cage herausforderte. Wolpe begriff die Botschaft des Taoismus, da ihn diese Philosophie in den frühen 1920er Jahren beeinflusst hatte. Gleichwohl lehnte er den Zufall ab, da er der Ansicht war, dass der Komponist die volle Verantwortung für all seine Entscheidungen behalten sollte. In einem Brief an seinen Verleger, den Oboisten Josef Marx, für den er das *Stück* schrieb, heißt es:

Es gibt (ich weiß, ich bin mir dessen bewusst, ich wollte sie) Situationen, die (als sie selbst) in vielen verschiedenen Weisen existieren, (zu irgendeiner Zeit immer richtig sind) und die in ihrer besonders instabilen, nie kristallisierbaren Situation gesehen werden müssen. Zeit-Schichten ohne Zeit-Achsen (Ebenen der Zeit ohne irgendwelche axiale Zeitkoordinationen).

Der erste Satz, *Early Morning Music*, ist ein geheimnisvolles Zusammentreffen isolierter Figuren, Gesten und Klänge. Das Schlagzeug besteht aus Keksdosen, einer Küchenreibe, Rasseln aus einem Aluminiumtopf sowie einem Glasgefäß mit langen Nägeln

– alles Geräusche, die er auf dem Campus gehört hatte. Unmittelbar vor dem Schluss des Satzes spielt das Violoncello eine ruf-artige Figur im Intervall einer Quinte und geht dann in ein geheimnisvoll ausgehaltenes D über. Das Klavier wiederholt in seinem höchsten Register eine Art Vogelgezwitscher, indessen die Oboe eine große Terz als „Ruf“ und „Echo“ intoniert. Der Satz schließt in einem bewegten Schwebezustand – „als sei er noch nicht zu Ende.“ Im zweiten Satz geht der Prozess des ersten weiter, indessen die Intensität zunimmt. Der dritte Satz bildet den zielbewussten, gerichteten und wohlgeformten Aspekt des Werkes. Den vierten Satz beschrieb Wolpe als „multiple Bewegungen, schnell, langsam, gehemmt, expressiv, populär und von bevölkerter Sprache.“ Der Anfang ist eine Kollektion grob voneinander gelöster Elemente. Neben das *quasi-serioso* Duett der Oboe und des Cellos (1:03) schrieb Wolpe: „wie singende Seelen.“ Das hochgestochene Duett wird von Klängen des Klaviers, der Küchenreibe und der Keksdose unterbrochen. Als Antwort auf Cage komponierte Wolpe Dada-Situationen. Der Cellist singt ein A. Fixierte Tonhöhen verbinden sich mit einem Durcheinander unfixierter Ereignisse: Der Oboist und der Pianist singen und spielen im Wechsel kurze Ausschnitte aus einer Ganztonskala. Der Pianist erhebt sich von seinem Sitz, um zusammen mit dem Schlagzeuger mit den Füßen zu stampfen bzw. in die Hände zu klatschen. Der Satz schließt mit der verrückten Parodie eines Schostakowitsch-Prestos, das in Unordnung endet. Im Mai 1959 leitete Ralph Shapey in Philadelphia die Uraufführung des *Quartetts*.

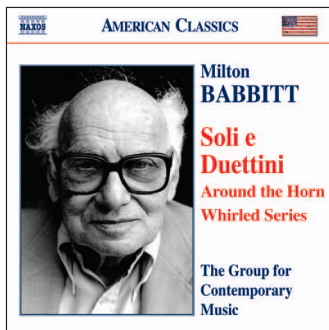
Austin Clarkson

Deutsche Fassung: Cris Posslac

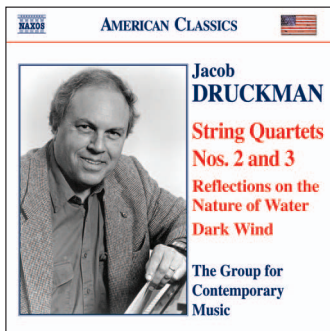
Also available in this series:



8.559190



8.559259



8.559260



8.559264

Playing
Time:
61:50

All rights in this sound recording, artwork, texts and translations reserved. Unauthorised public performance, broadcasting and copying of this compact disc prohibited.
© 1993, 1996 & © 2006 Naxos Rights International Ltd.
Made in the EU

DDD

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

8.559262

© 05537

NAXOS

Stefan WOLPE

(1902-1972)

- 1-2** **String Quartet (1968-69)** **18:06**
Curtis Macomber, Violin
Theodore Arm, Violin
Toby Appel, Viola
Fred Sherry, Cello
- 3** **Second Piece for Violin Alone (1966)** **2:58**
Curtis Macomber, Violin
- 4-5** **Trio in Two Parts for Flute,
Cello and Piano (1964)** **16:42**
Harvey Sollberger, Flute
Fred Sherry, Cello
Charles Wuorinen, Piano
- 6-9** **Piece for Oboe, Cello,
Percussion and Piano (1954)** **24:04**
Stephen Taylor, Oboe
Fred Sherry, Cello
Daniel Kennedy, Percussion
Aleck Karis, Piano
Harvey Sollberger, Conductor

First issued on Koch International Classics in 1996 (tracks 1-3) and 1993 (tracks 4-9).

A full track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

Support provided by The Aaron Copland Foundation, National Endowment for the Arts, and The Stefan Wolpe Society.

Tracks 1-3 recorded on 7th February, 1995, at the American Academy of Arts and Letters, New York • Producer and engineer: Judith Sherman • Assistant Editor: Jeanne Velonis

Tracks 4-9 recorded on 9th and 10th November, 1991, at Concordia College, Bronxville, New York
 Engineer: Michael Fine • Editor: Joanna Nickrenz.

Executive Producer: Howard Stokar

Remastered by Scott Hull, Jigsaw Sound, New York, June 2005.

Cover photograph of Stefan Wolpe courtesy of the Paul Sacher Foundation.



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Most of the works on this disc date from the 1960s, when Stefan Wolpe reduced the complexity of his music and became fascinated by classical modes of thought that he had at one time rejected. His *String Quartet* lies on the border between composition and improvisation, while the *Trio* is a constantly shifting kaleidoscope of musical shapes. The *Piece for Oboe, Cello, Percussion and Piano* of 1954 uses unorthodox sound sources such as biscuit tins and a kitchen grater, and was described by the composer as “tight, wild, fluctuous, sometimes moist and like burning air”.

Booklet notes in English
Kommentar auf Deutsch

www.naxos.com



6 36943 92622 2