



Charles
WUORINEN

Tashi

**Percussion
Quartet**

Fortune

**New Jersey
Percussion Ensemble**

**The Group for
Contemporary Music**

Charles
WUORINEN
(b. 1938)

Tashi (1975)

1 Movement I	7:32
2 Interlude	2:44
3 Movement II	10:38
4 Interlude II	2:44
5 Movement III	7:18

The Group for Contemporary Music

Jean Kopperud, Clarinet • Curtis Macomber, Violin • Fred Sherry, Cello • James Winn, Piano

Recorded at the Recital Hall, State University of New York, Purchase, on 13th and 14th May, 1993

Producer and engineer: Judith Sherman • Assistant engineer: Jonathan Schultz

Percussion Quartet (1994) **18:25**

6 I. $\text{♩} = 72$	11:00
7 II. $\text{♩} = 108$ (leggiero)	7:25

New Jersey Percussion Ensemble

Paul Carroll, John Ferrari, Tom Kolor, Alex Bocchino, Percussion • Peter Jarvis, Conductor

Recorded at Theater C, State University of New York, Purchase, on 3rd June, 1996

Producer and engineer: Judith Sherman • Assistant engineer: Jeanne Velonis

Fortune (1979) **18:23**

8 Before	9:10
9 After	9:13

The Group for Contemporary Music

Alan R. Kay, Clarinet • Curtis Macomber, Violin • Fred Sherry, Cello • James Winn, Piano

Recorded at the Recital Hall, State University of New York, Purchase, on 17th February, 1993

Producer and engineer: Judith Sherman • Assistant engineer: Jonathan Schultz

This recording was made possible with support provided by the National Endowment for the Arts
and the Aaron Copland Foundation.

All works published by C.F. Peters Corporation (BMI) • Remastered by Scott Hull, New York, in May 2006

Executive producer: Howard Stokar

Charles Wuorinen (b. 1938)

Tashi • Percussion Quartet • Fortune

Charles Wuorinen writes virtuosic music for virtuoso performers. That statement is incontrovertible, but it is also true that the term “virtuoso” has come to connote a type of empty display for display’s sake, a connotation not at all germane to the music under consideration here. The original derivation of the word refers to the quality of being learned or skillful. Those adjectives certainly describe Wuorinen, a superbly trained, highly skilled master who takes the job of writing music very seriously, but they do not capture something equally if not more fundamental. Properly understood, virtuosity serves the composer’s profound desire to engage with the listener and with sympathetic performers, using his learning and skill as well as that of his executants to explore the widest possible expressive range. Essential to this engagement is a spirit of adventure and fun, with composer and performers alike taking genuine pleasure in the play of musical ideas, and in projecting those ideas in fresh and invigorating ways by bringing to bear all of their technical prowess. This sense of play and savoring of possibilities add crucial elements to a more expansive definition of virtuosity, and they inform every work on this disc.

Both *Tashi* (1976) and *Fortune* (1979) were written for the ensemble Tashi, founded in 1972 and originally comprised of violinist Ida Kafavian, clarinetist Richard Stoltzman, cellist Fred Sherry, and pianist Peter Serkin. The works share certain concerns, perhaps most notably Wuorinen’s increasing interest during that period in pitch centricity within a basically non-tonal language (*Tashi* is centered on A, *Fortune* on F), but in other ways the two pieces complement one another. For example, the rate at which events unfold in *Fortune* is considerably more gradual overall than in *Tashi*, where the textures are much more complex and active at the very outset. In addition, it could also be said that *Fortune* is somewhat lighter in its overall mood (though by no means lightweight musically) than its more relentlessly intense older sibling.

Tashi exists in two different versions, one for chamber ensemble and orchestra, and the other for ensemble alone, which the composer worked on concurrently, from April 1975 to January 1976. Wuorinen completed the version with orchestra first, but the chamber version was the first to be performed, by Tashi in Colorado Springs on 15th January, 1976. The orchestral version was first heard on 13th October, 1976, played by Tashi and the Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by the composer.

The outer movements of *Tashi* are roughly equivalent in length, the central movement being the longest. The interludes (also approximately equal to one another in length) basically continue to explore, in a somewhat more relaxed fashion, material set forth and dealt with in the main movements, as well as continuing their respective basic characters or affects. For example, the first interlude is in keeping with the tempo and basic rhythmic gestures of the first movement, and the second interlude maintains the essential mood and pacing of the middle movement.

In *Tashi* two prominent musical gestures take on motivic status and can help to serve as a thread for the attentive listener: the tremolo figure of a minor third first heard in the piano in the second bar of the piece, and the trill figure first heard in the clarinet approximately one minute into the first movement. This movement also contains very intricately worked out polyrhythmic counterpoint, especially for the piano, a feature that recurs in the other main movements as well.

Generally much more lyrical in character, the central movement, while its main tempo is not far from that of the first, gives the impression of much slower motion, as well as a more subdued, though ultimately no less intense, expressive quality. A particularly poignant moment occurs shortly after three minutes have passed: a restrained, extremely soft chorale-like section for the entire ensemble, suggesting the key of A flat minor, all the more moving for the fact that it is fleeting, dispelled

almost immediately by the reappearance of the aforementioned trill motto in the clarinet.

The final movement recalls the boisterous exuberance of the first, but gradually is overtaken by smoother, quieter material flowing mostly in equal note values, with rich chordal cushioning provided by the piano. This coolly placid music finds its ultimate rest in the final A major first-inversion triads, intriguingly (and perfectly) voiced, and the final *sforzando* A in the clarinet and piano.

While Wuorinen is always utterly assured in his handling of whatever musical forces claim his attention, he seems especially in his element when writing for percussion instruments, delighting in their nearly unlimited combinational potential. His *Percussion Quartet* (1993-94) tends to treat the ensemble, particularly in the first movement, as a collection of duos and quartets. The meticulous deployment of the instruments within each player's bailiwick is crucial to the structure of the work, and the resultant mixing and matching of the "ensembles within the ensemble" can provide a convenient way to follow the progress of the music. To give a few examples, the first and second percussionists might be heard as a homogeneous duo playing vibraphones. That duo might be contrasted with the drier tone of a second duo playing marimbas, but may also form with them a quartet of mallet instruments that creates a more blended sonority. Each player is assigned one timpano, so there is a prominent timpani quartet that makes its presence known throughout the piece. There is also a mixed quartet of drum blocks (Players 1 and 2) with tom-toms (3) and bass drums (4), a quartet of non-pitched metals (anvils, almglocken, cymbals, tam-tam), among numerous other groupings. Dedicated to Claire Heldrich, and commissioned by the New Music Consort, New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, and the Percussion Group of Cincinnati, the work is slightly over eighteen minutes long, and cast in two movements. The first of these begins dramatically, rapidly exposing the various duos and quartets in a constantly mutating texture that often emphasizes multiple rhythmic levels. At two points in the

movement—the first slightly more than two and a half minutes in, and the second at a little after six and a half minutes—events of widely varying lengths, for the different duos and quartets are separated by precisely measured silences. The second movement is much lighter in tone, essentially a tripartite dance suggestive of a Baroque gigue, with an added rhythmic piquancy courtesy of the introduction of the claves, the one instrument withheld in the previous movement. The layering of cross-rhythmic patterns in the middle of the movement challenges the clarity of the dance-like pulse; though not entirely absent it is for a time harder to detect. But it re-emerges from behind its cloud in time to usher in the return of the A section, leading to a high-spirited ending, with all of the various instrumental groups taking a final turn in the spotlight.

Commencing, like *Tashi*, with an unusually voiced triad (this time F major, in root position), *Fortune* was commissioned by the city of Bonn for the Beethovenfest of 1980. It was completed in November 1979, and received its first performance in Bonn in October 1980. The work consists of two movements, *Before* and *After*, which the composer specifies may be performed without pause (as they are on the present recording). In contrast to the opening of *Tashi*, the first movement takes its time gathering momentum, eventually (during its final minute or so) reaching the speed and predicting the notes and gestures of the second movement. Besides the elemental Beethovenian power of the initial triads, this listener thinks he may detect (though he has no direct supporting evidence from the composer) a very subtle reference in the work's beginning to the famous slow movement (the "*Heiliger Dankgesang*") of the Opus 132 quartet. Be that as it may, the exquisite pacing and control of static, bare bones harmonic material evinced by Wuorinen at the work's outset, as well as his utter command of form in both large and small dimensions, is certainly a fitting and eloquent homage to Bonn's favorite son. Triadic harmonies exert great influence in the pitch world of *Fortune*, always rendered miraculously fresh-sounding by the ever-new but always logical contexts in which Wuorinen places them,

and, as often as not, by the spacings and instrumental colors he assigns them (string harmonics, soft chiming chords in the piano, etc.). The second movement takes a very different view of the material set forth in its predecessor; for instance, notice that this movement also begins with equally spaced repetitions of a chord, this time a non-triadic one in a much higher register.

Gradually a textural complexity is achieved that approaches that of *Tashi*, and the work ends with one of Wuorinen's "tonal puns" — an allusion to a traditional plagal cadence that affirms once and for all the primacy of F as pitch center.

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Alex Bocchino

Alex Bocchino is a percussionist and educator who has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, New Jersey Performing Arts Center, as well as Harvard, Princeton and Columbia Universities. Festival appearances have included Gaudeamus International Interpreters Competition, Piccolo Spoleto, and Columbia Festival of the Arts. As a member of the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble he has toured the United States and Europe and has performed in the premières of numerous works for percussion while working with several Pulitzer Prize winning composers. He has recorded for Koch International Classics, Composers Guild of NJ, Aggregate Music, Capstone Records, and L&A Records. In the educational realm, he has directed percussion ensembles and presented clinics throughout New Jersey and is on staff in the Summit, NJ, School District. Bocchino has studied at the Drummer's Collective, received his Bachelor and Masters degree from William Paterson University, and continued graduate study at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Paul Carroll

Paul Carroll holds a Doctor of Musical Arts and Masters degree from SUNY Stony Brook where he studied with percussion pioneer, Raymond DesRoches. Paul has performed with such prestigious groups as the New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, the Group for Contemporary Music, Ensemble 21 and the Princeton Composer's Ensemble. In 1995, Paul was the recipient of a grant from the Frank Huntington Beebe Foundation to study in Copenhagen, Denmark with percussionist, Bent Lylloff. Paul worked with various contemporary music ensembles in Denmark including the Athelas Ensemble and the Figura Ensemble. In 1995, he competed in the Gaudemus Interpreter's Competition in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. Paul Carroll has worked closely with many composers and has had solo percussion pieces dedicated to him including *Sit Down, Stand Up* by Robert Pollock and *Ritual* by Peter Zaporinuk. Since 2001, Paul has been working as a music educator in Newburgh, NY. He lives in New Paltz, NY, with his wife and five children.

John Ferrari

A versatile percussionist, drummer, conductor and educator in the New York area, John Ferrari is active in genres from classical to pop and the avant-garde. He is a founding member of the Naumburg Award winning New Millennium Ensemble. Since 1993 he has been a member of Meridian Arts Ensemble, in residence at Manhattan School of Music, and is a regular guest artist of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and Chamber Music Northwest. Musically involved in chamber, orchestral, pop, jazz, Broadway, dance, film and television, he can be heard on the Albany, CRI, Centaur CGNJ, Channel Classics, Koch International, Naxos, New World, Santa Fe New Music and Strange Music record labels. He holds DMA and MM degrees from SUNY Stony Brook, and a BM from William Paterson University in Wayne, New Jersey where he has been on the performing arts faculty since 2002.

Peter Jarvis

Peter Jarvis, director of the highly acclaimed New Jersey Percussion Ensemble, is active as a percussionist, conductor, composer and educator. He has played with or conducted many new music groups in New York and New Jersey. Jarvis has appeared as a soloist for numerous new music festivals including the Europe Asia Festival in Kazan Russia and the Hong Kong Arts Festival. He has performed numerous premières including music of Charles Wuorinen and Milton Babbitt. He can be heard on Nonesuch, CRI, Koch International, Composers Guild of New Jersey, October Music (for ECM), Capstone, Naxos, and Gram record labels among others. His compositions are published by Calabrese Brothers Music, LLC and he is a member of BMI. Jarvis is on the faculty of William Paterson University and Connecticut College where he teaches percussion, conducts chamber music and directs their respective New Music Series.

Alan R. Kay

Clarinettist Alan R. Kay joined Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in 2002. He was a winner of the C.D. Jackson Award at Tanglewood, a 2002 Presidential Scholars Teachers Award, and the 1989 Young Concert Artists Award with the sextet Hexagon featured in the film, *Debut*. A member of Windscape, he appears with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center and with the Mendelssohn and Mirò String Quartets. He appears annually at the Bravo! Vail and Yellow Barn Festivals. His chamber ensemble series at the Cape May Festival draws larger audiences each year. He studied orchestral conducting at Juilliard and has led orchestras at Purchase College, Juilliard, Buck's County, Staten Island, Asuza and New York City. He taught at the Summer Academy in Leipzig, Germany, in 2004 and teaches at the Manhattan, Hartt and Juilliard Schools. He has recorded wind music CDs with Hexagon, Windscape and the Sylvan Winds.

Tom Kolor

Tom Kolor appears regularly with such groups as Talujon Percussion, Da Capo Chamber Players, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Speculum Musicae, Sospeso, New York New Music Ensemble, Continuum, and the Orchestra of St Luke's. He holds a Masters degree from the Juilliard School and teaches at SUNY Purchase and William Paterson University.

Jean Kopperud

Jean Kopperud is one of the most versatile and innovative clarinetists appearing before the public today, known for her virtuoso performances both in the concert hall and in music theatre. A graduate of the Juilliard School and former pupil of Nadia Boulanger, she has toured internationally as a concert soloist and chamber musician. National acclaim for her performances of Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Harlekin*, a tour-de-force for dancing clarinetist, resulted in her Avery Fisher Hall debut, presented by the New York Philharmonic. She is currently a member of the New York New Music Ensemble, the Chamber Players of the League of Composers/I.S.C.M., Washington Square Chamber players, Ensemble 21 and the Omega Ensemble. She is on the faculty of SUNY Buffalo and the Juilliard School.

Curtis Macomber

Curtis Macomber is one of the most versatile soloists/chamber musicians before the public today, equally at home in repertoire from Bach to Babbitt. As member of the New World String Quartet from 1982-93, he performed in virtually all the important concert series in this country, as well as touring abroad. He is the violinist of Speculum Musicae and a founding member of the Apollo Trio. His most recent recordings include a solo recording, *Casting Ecstatic*, on CRI, the complete Grieg Sonatas on Arabesque, and an all-Steve Mackey record, *Interior Design*, on Bridge. He is presently a member of the chamber music faculty of the Juilliard School, where he earned B.M., M.M., and D.M.A. degrees as a student of 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, Lieberson, Mackey, Takemitsu, Wuorinen and Zorn. He has been a member of the Group for Contemporary Music, Berio's Juilliard Ensemble, 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 he 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.

James Winn

James Winn, University of Nevada, Reno professor of piano, composition, and member of Argenta since 1997, made his debut with the Denver Symphony at thirteen, and has been performing in North America, Europe, and Asia ever since. He was recipient of the top prize in the two-piano category of the 1980 Munich Competition, and has been a solo pianist with the NYC Ballet as well as a member of the NY New Music Ensemble and Hexagon. A specialist in new music, he has been involved in numerous world premières, among them works by twelve Pulitzer laureates. An active recording artist, Winn is featured in over three dozen CDs.

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Playing
Time:
67:44

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Charles
WUORINEN
(b. 1938)

Tashi (1975)

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|---|--------------|-------|
| 1 | Movement I | 7:32 |
| 2 | Interlude | 2:44 |
| 3 | Movement II | 10:38 |
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| 5 | Movement III | 7:18 |

The Group for Contemporary Music**Percussion Quartet (1994) 18:25**

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|---|------------------------|-------|
| 6 | I. ♩ = 72 | 11:00 |
| 7 | II. ♩ = 108 (leggiero) | 7:25 |

New Jersey Percussion Ensemble**Fortune (1979) 18:23**

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|---|--------|------|
| 8 | Before | 9:10 |
| 9 | After | 9:13 |

The Group for Contemporary Music

Full recording details can be found on page 2 of the booklet.

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Executive Producer: Howard Stokar

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Cover photograph of Charles Wuorinen and Lepton by Nina Roberts



AMERICAN CLASSICS

Charles Wuorinen writes virtuosic music for virtuoso performers. He has a profound desire to engage with the listener and with sympathetic performers, and essential to this engagement is a spirit of adventure and fun. Wuorinen's music, from his earliest pieces through the more recent masterworks, is a body of work as significant as one is likely to encounter. Both *Tashi* and *Fortune* were written for the ensemble Tashi, and although the rate at which events unfold in *Fortune* is more gradual than the relentlessly intense *Tashi*, the two works share certain concerns and complement each other. Wuorinen seems especially in his element when writing for percussion instruments, as demonstrated here by the rhythmically exciting *Percussion Quartet*.

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