

Program Notes

Gift of Memories-Marilyn Shrude

A GIFT OF MEMORIES (1992), commissioned and premiered by Edwin London and the Cleveland Chamber Symphony, was inspired by the poem **ODE-Imitations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood** by William Wordsworth. The work is in one movement with six contrasting sections, each of which is subtitled with a line from Wordsworth and is dedicated to my mother.

I. With gentle mystery

*Whither is fled the visionary gleam?
Where is it now, the glory and the dream?*

II. Urgently

I hear the Echoes through the mountain throng. . .

III. Presto – driving

*Thou child of Joy,
Shout round me. . .*

IV. Blurred and timeless

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

V. With tenderness

*The innocent brightness of a new-born Day
Is lovely yet. . .*

VI. Hesitant and suspended

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting. . .

Six Little Symphonies- Milhaud

The Six Little Symphonies stem from the last two years of World War I. These were for Milhaud an incomparably stimulating period of Toynbeeian “withdrawal” from the world of orthodox – European-music-making, to which he “returned” just following the Armistice, brimming with brand new ideas inspired by Latin-American, African-American and Indian rhythms, tunes and timbres. A general revolt against the monstrous orchestras and inflated formal structures of Wagner, Richard Strauss and Stravinsky was long overdue in those days, so it was not only wartime exigencies that prompted many current and following experiments in miniaturizing both

the personnel and durational demands of not-too-serious musical works. Milhaud's "little" symphonies were trend-setting examples both in their scoring (for only a handful of soloists) and their concision.

Nos. 1 and 2 are subtitled, respectively, *Le Printemps* and *Pastorale*, and they were written, respectively, in Rio de Janeiro in 1917 and at sea in late 1918. Both are predominantly lyrical, pastoralish, and even mildly impressionistic. The first comprises a gurgly *Allant* first movement, a plaintive oboe *Chantant*, and a perkily, bubbling, folkish *Et vif!* finale. The second has a busily bustling *Joyeux*, a *Calme* featuring the English horn, and a jaunty *Joyeux* finale.

No. 3 was written in 1921 in Paris, after Milhaud had been accepted as a leading member of the *Le Six*. It is also subtitled (*La Sérénade*), but is more overtly saucy than its predecessors and more spicily harmonized and colored, although the only change from No.2's instrumentation is the substitution of a clarinet for the latter's English horn. The movements are an easygoing *Vivement*, a *Calme* featuring warmly songful strings and woodwinds over a warbling ostinato clarinet figure, and an infectiously gay, busily strumming *Rondement*.

Scarlet Dances-Larry Baker

SCARLET DANCES initially came from the question, in Halloween, why didn't Jamie Lee Curtis turn on a light? Perhaps Mortisha and Gomez Addams are dancing in another room.

The first movement is a tango, with all its starts and stops. The second movement is Dante walking in the forest, allowing his head to clear before continuing writing. The real Dante, not the character Dante created and happen to named Dante. The third movement begins with the Piano juggling notes and then passing those notes to the other instruments. It is a juggling match mixed with something like a cog dance for ballerinas.

The structure of the piece is dependent on the works of Gertrude Stein, whose writings, many times, are very much put together like a piece of music. There seems to be another story hidden away in the folds of her Cubism. SCARLET DANCES has a piano concerto hidden away in the folds of the fabric of the piece. It is always there ready to burst forth, but like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, we hear the backstage conversation, but Hamlet goes on someplace else.