

Leslie Bassett (b. January 22, 1923) received early musical training in California. Following service as trombonist and arranger with Army bands in the U.S., France and Germany during World War II, he became a pupil of Ross Lee Finney, Roberto Gerhard, and, as a 1950 Fulbright Fellow, of Nadia Boulanger and Arthur Honegger in Paris. He has been awarded the Rome Prize at the American Academy in Rome, two Guggenheim Foundation Fellowships, the Naumburg Recording Award, and is the Albert A. Stanley Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of Music at the University of Michigan, where he was the 1984 Henry Russel Lecturer, the University's highest faculty honor. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters,

Mr. Bassett received the 1966 Pulitzer Prize in Music for his *Variations for Orchestra* following its U.S. premiere by Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra. (The world premiere had been two years earlier by the RAI Orchestra of Rome under Feruccio Scaglia.) His U.S. Bicentennial score, *Echoes from an Invisible World*, has received over 60 performances by the country's finest orchestras. There have been performances of some of his dozen orchestral scores by Philadelphia, New York, Boston, Cleveland, Los Angeles, Rome, Zurich, Chicago, Detroit, Florida, Seattle, Indianapolis, Moravia, Grand Rapids, Oporto, Syracuse, Baltimore, American Composers Orchestra, Toledo, and others. His most recent *Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra* (Peters #67970) is on Equilibrium Records in performance by Clifford Leaman and the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra, Kenneth Kiesler, conductor.

Mr. Bassett has held major awards from the Koussevitsky Music Foundation, the Library of Congress, the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts, and many commissions from orchestras, ensembles and other performing groups. He was named Distinguished Artist by the State of Michigan and California State University. His string quartets have been performed by Juilliard, Pro Arte, Stanley, and Concord quartets, and the music for wind ensemble and bands is widely played. There is a substantial catalogue of chamber music, works for string groups, soloists, singers and choirs.

Most of Mr. Bassett's publications are with C. F. Peters Corporation, New York, [including a *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (Peters #66719)], but other scores are available from Robert King (Alphonse Leduc), Merion Music (Presser), World Library, and others. Full-disc recordings of his music are with CRI and MMC; other individual works appear on New World, Opus One, ACA Digital, Leonarda, Crystal, Mark, Fermat, Northwestern, Troy, North/South, Albany, Klavier, and Equilibrium.

There are two web pages:

- (1) http://www.amc.net/member/Leslie_Bassett/home.html (American Music Center)
- (2) <http://sai-national.org/phil/composers/lbassett.html> (SAI)



Gabriela Lena Frank: Praised by the Raleigh-Durham Spectator as a “splendidly realized” pianist, by the Washington Post as a composer of “unself-consciously craft and mastery,” and by the Springfield Union-News as an artist of “honesty and genius,” Gabriela Lena Frank’s musicianship has been hailed with acclaim from press and audiences across the three Americas and Europe. As a composer of Peruvian-American descent, she is particularly known for her fusion of Latin American folk music with classical strains and has written for numerous orchestras and ensembles. She has been recognized with awards and commissions from ASCAP, the Theodore Presser Music Foundation, the Society of Composers Inc., the National Federation of Music Clubs, the International Alliance of Women in Music, the Banff Centre for the Arts, the Atlantic Center for the Arts, the MacDowell Colony, the National Endowment for the Arts, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, Arts International, the American Composers Forum, and the Meet The Composer Fund.

Born in Berkeley, CA, in 1972, Dr. Frank holds degrees from Rice University and a doctorate (2001) from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Her teachers for composition have included William Albright, Leslie Bassett, William Bolcom, Michael Daugherty and Samuel Jones. Her piano studies have been with Jeanne Kierman Fischer and Logan Skelton.

Wendolyn Olson grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska, where she began violin lessons with Marilyn O’Boyle. Following studies at North Carolina School of the Arts and the Curtis Institute, she obtained her Bachelor’s degree in violin performance from Indiana University, and Master’s and Doctoral degrees from the University of Michigan, where she studied violin with Paul Kantor and chamber music with Andrew Jennings. A longstanding interest in contemporary music led to a series of recitals exploring the violin music of Bela Bartok and his influence on the twentieth-century and twentieth-first century violin repertoire.

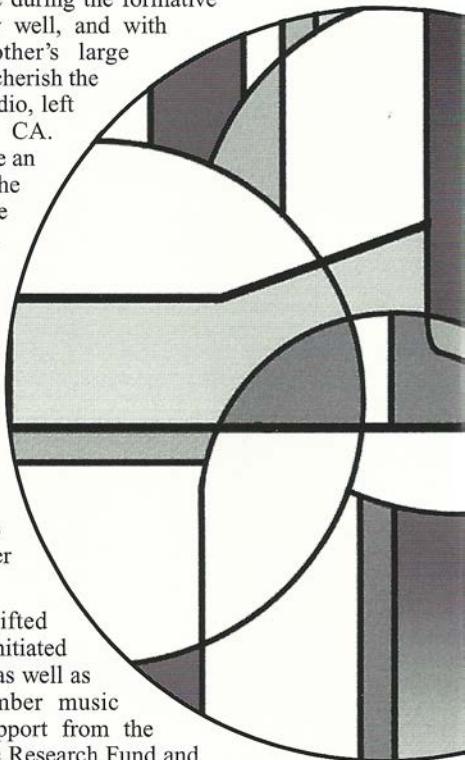


Dr. Olson is active as a performer of contemporary violin and chamber music, having premiered a number of works written specifically for her. She has also performed extensively and recorded as second violinist of the DaVinci String Quartet. She has taught at the University of Denver Lamont School of Music and the University of the Pacific in Stockton, California. In addition to performing and teaching, she is currently exploring ways of utilizing neurological research to develop more individualized approaches to teaching the violin.

Composer's Notes

Pianos, and piano music, loom large during the formative years of most composers. I remember well, and with affection, early lessons on my mother's large Jno. C. Fischer upright, and I especially cherish the 104-year-old rosewood Knabe in my studio, left me by her cousin from Oakland, CA. Nevertheless, writing for the piano can be an intimidating experience, for one feels the weight of all those masterpieces from the past, warehouses full of them. Even though I am at the piano daily (though not as a concert performer), the instrument never fails to fascinate, serving as a resource for orchestral and chamber music, songs, s with assorted instruments, concertos, etc. It always seems to be somewhere in my sound world, with its tremendous range and harmonic suggestions. This disc offers a retrospective of solo piano works, and, in the violin-piano duo, presents the piano as a chamber music partner.

I honor and thank the gifted composer-pianist Gabriela Frank, who initiated this project and performs in each work, as well as Wendolyn Olson, her excellent chamber music colleague. We are all grateful for support from the University of Michigan School of Music Research Fund and the Office of the Vice President for Research.



SOUNDS REMEMBERED

Sounds Remembered, completed January 3, 1972, was the response to a commission from the McKim Foundation in the Library of Congress, Washington, DC, where the premiere performance took place in the Coolidge Auditorium on December 8 of that year by Charles Treger and Samuel Sanders. They recorded the work for Desto Records (DC 7142), an LP disc long since out of print. My manuscript master sheets and sketches remain in the Library's archives, but the publication is available from C. F. Peters Corporation, New York. (Peters #66490)

The duo is a testament of admiration and affection for Roberto Gerhard (1896-1970), the distinguished Spanish-British composer, pupil of Schoenberg, friend and colleague since the winter of 1960, when he came as visiting professor to the University of Michigan. The "sounds" recalled for inclusion in the are fragments associated with several of Gerhard's late works: a chord, a quickly-ascending line, an insistent high note, a characteristic manner of working a line, unusual double-stops, etc. As with some things that we believe we remember, my "quotations" are not quotations after all, for they are inaccurate. (I deliberately avoided checking at the time!) Accurate or not, and brief as they are, they seemed Gerhard-like to me, potent generative sources for the four movements.

Some of these features include:

- Ascending violin "rockets" arriving at extended high notes.
- "Stopped" notes, with damper pedal depressed, fingers of one hand firmly pressed on the strings just beyond the agraffes (very near the keyboard), the keys then struck by fingers of the other hand.
- Accelerating, insistent repetitions of chords or potent high notes.
- Bell-like upper-register chords with damper pedal depressed to create echo-reverberation.
- Low piano clusters.
- Unmetered music.
- An open violin string (*f*) opposed by notes on an adjoining string that push against or around it.
- *Sul ponticello tremolo*, fading away.

The first two movements, variable in tempo, move in and out of meter, while the third progresses quickly and at a regular pace. The final movement, tied to the third after a slight pause, is essentially slow with frequent expressive pauses.

PRELUDES

The **Preludes** (Peters #67084) began as music for carillon, an out-of-doors offering for summer audiences. Effective in that role, on the whole, the piece remained, nevertheless, difficult to play and occasionally sounded, to me at least, harmonically disturbing and unexpected. Large carillon bells produce unusual overtones - sixths, minor thirds, etc. - which can cause discordant results when several bells are played together. While carillons require unique performance techniques that are fascinating to watch, the instrument, nevertheless, remains limited in expressive options. I eventually and reluctantly withdrew the piece, transferring several of its gestures and mannerisms to the piano.

The new work, completed July 25, 1984, was premiered the following February at the University of Michigan by Benning Dexter, distinguished artist and colleague, whose pianist friends sought a new score for his forthcoming concerts.

Flourish, the first movement, opens with a high five-note running outburst (damper pedal depressed) derived from the carillon's characteristic alternating-hand technique, in which the wooden keys are struck by the curled little fingers of each hand - right hand, left hand, right, left, right - followed by several seconds of reverberation. Similar alternating-hand passages follow, with liberal sustaining pedal. (Carillons, having no damper pedal, sustain everything.) Insistent chords and long runs lead the music to low arrival notes.

Toccata unfolds through a series of arpeggiated, fast-moving, high-pitched six-note broken chords. As the six-note repetitions unfold, six pitches shrink to five, then four, then three, etc. Similar procedures lead to bell-like chords, more arpeggios, and the final low arrival.

Procession, a slow march, marks its distinct pulse in the low register, with open sounds in the right hand. Reverberated chords form the center of the movement but the procession resumes to the end.

Declamation, unmetered and dramatic, offers a series of "rockets" toward high but potent melodic notes, followed by fast sixteenths, powerful chords, and a final sweeping downward thrust.

Peal begins with a full course of "Grandsire Doubles," a popular pattern in English change-ringing, in which five bells rotate through 30 permutations before returning to the original order. In this case, the numbers sequence follows the Grandsire model but the pitches undergo their own rate of change. Other similar, less subtle, sixteenth-note patterns push the fast motion toward solid chords which interrupt the quick-paced figurations.

Aria opens with a slow solo line in an effective mid-to-low register, a range that rings well for both carillon and piano. Fast figuration moves above, supporting the lyricism of the low singing line.

Clangor, with its fast driving triple meter, its loud aggressive chords, its ascending, repeating sixteenths, and its clanging bells, thrusts with ever-increasing pressure to the end.

ELABORATIONS

Elaborations (Peters #66272), four movements for piano, completed December 23, 1966, was premiered by Wesley True on November 2, 1970, at Central Missouri University, Warrensburg, MO. The Pulitzer Prize, awarded to me earlier that year, had called attention to my orchestral music, but I realized that I needed a new piano piece that adequately reflected the interests and directions in my work since the years in Rome (Prix de Rome, 1961-63). The movements are short, unworried about development or many other aspects of traditional musical language - potent music clearly intended to display the virtuosity and talents of the performer. Movement titles were reduced to simple single-word headings followed by a metronome mark.

Fast. The piece opens with the two hands as far apart as possible, quickly and dramatically moving toward the center of the keyboard in a burst of energy. High register brilliance continues, in contrast with the mellow beauty of low-range music, especially when the low notes are not doubled at the octave.

Slow. In the second movement, a low melodic line works its way upward, then peals off in a cascading flurry to the final chords.

Quiet. The third movement slowly unfolds with chords and occasional melodic fragments.

Brilliant. The final movement, dramatic and forceful, consists of flurries, runs, insistent repeating notes, driving trills, and a final ascending sixteenth-note thrust recalling the piece's dramatic beginning.

CONFIGURATIONS

Configurations (Peters #67164), music for intermediate-to-advanced young pianists, was commissioned by the Music Teachers Association of California and completed on February 13, 1987. The premiere took place on July 6, five months later, performed by several young people at the MTAC convention in San Jose. As is often the case with works for children, the five movements have been given titles that not only describe the music but seek to stir the young musicians' interest. Musical patterns and rhythmic expectations tend to be simpler than they might be for adult performers.

Whirling Triplets, the first movement, works steadily through an extended series of fast triple or sextuple patterns, usually arpeggiated and often ascending.

Lines, slow-moving, lyrical, contrapuntal and sonorous, is followed by **In Balance**, where the lyrical line sings in the low voice, supported by repeating patterns above.

Climbing, another slow movement, gradually ascends through its phrases to a high arrival, then does it again, suggesting invertible counterpoint.

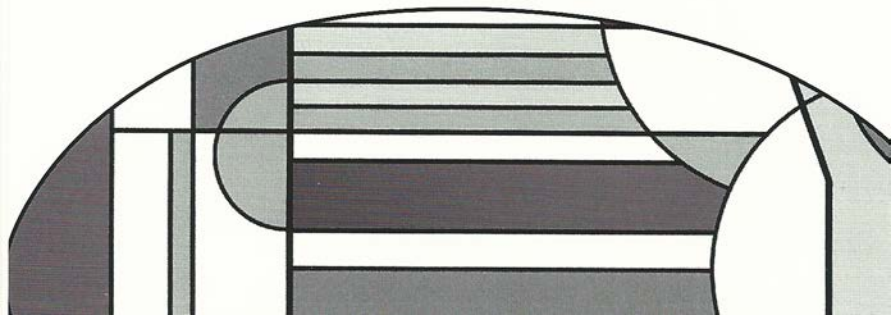
Spirals, the final movement, actively minimalist, thrusts a barrage of fast oscillating handfuls of arpeggiations, with damper pedal depressed, to a forceful climax. Mid-range “rockets” follow alternating with loudly-repeating arpeggios.

MOBILE

Mobile, completed in Rome (August 8, 1961) and premiered there at Teatro Goldoni by John Eaton on December 23, 1962, is a musical reference to the beautiful wind sculptures of Alexander Calder, constructions that slowly turn in the air.

SIX PIANO PIECES

Six Piano Pieces, cast in my earlier language and manner, was composed in Paris in 1951 while I was a Fulbright pupil of Arthur Honegger and Nadia Boulanger. Lillian Magidow gave the premiere performance in Los Angeles at the University of Southern California on April 27, 1952. The six movements are: **Allegro moderato, Allegro, Andante cantabile, Allegro brillante, Adagio ma non troppo, Allegro assai**





Performer's Note

I knew Leslie Bassett as a teacher before I knew him as a composer. As a graduate student at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, I'd viewed him with respect from afar for some time, well aware of his reputation as one of the preeminent American composers of our time. When word circulated that Leslie would be stepping out of retirement for a single semester to teach a few lucky students, I scrambled furiously for the front of the line... and so began a fortuitous mentorship. Our lessons consisted of admonishments ("Young lady, good orchestration can hide a multitude of sins."), humorous warnings ("Trombone players are boobs... and I'm speaking, of course, as a former trombonist myself!"), and enthusiastic advice ("Put oboes snarling down around a cluster on middle C... What a marvelous effect!"). For his unflagging belief in my fledgling voice as a composer and pianist, I wanted to thank him in some tangible way—and so the idea of releasing a CD of his piano and piano/violin works was born. It has been an honor for Wendy Olson and me to work closely with Leslie for each of the compositions featured on this album, capturing in performance the nuances that cannot always be conveyed in the—a specific way of maintaining a tone, a particular rate of accelerando, a certain interpretation of a tempo marking, and in a few rare spots, actual changes (albeit small). I hope that our efforts give justice to the artistry and passion of a remarkable man that I am lucky enough to claim as a dear friend.

Special thanks must be given to Rob Martens and Will Spencer, our very patient and expert engineers who met all demands with grace and humor. In addition, our gratitude goes to Bob Grijalva who, as our piano technician, provided us with an instrument that constantly elicited raised eyebrows of appreciation and approval from the composer.

Gabriela Lena Frank



SOUNDS REMEMBERED

1

LESLIE BASSETT

Violin $\text{♩} = 60$

Piano

ord.

stopped

bell-like

poco

a poco cresc. f
(Pedal sustains approximately one half the resonance of these chords)

10

mp

f

ord.

s

p

Publisher Information:

All but the two works listed below are available from C. F. Peters Corporation, 70-30 80th Street, Glendale, NY 11385.

Mobile, in a collection "12 x 11," is published by Alfred Publishing Co., PO Box 10003, Van Nuys, CA 91410-0003

Six Piano Pieces are available from the Composers Facsimile Edition, 73 Spring Street, New York, NY 10012

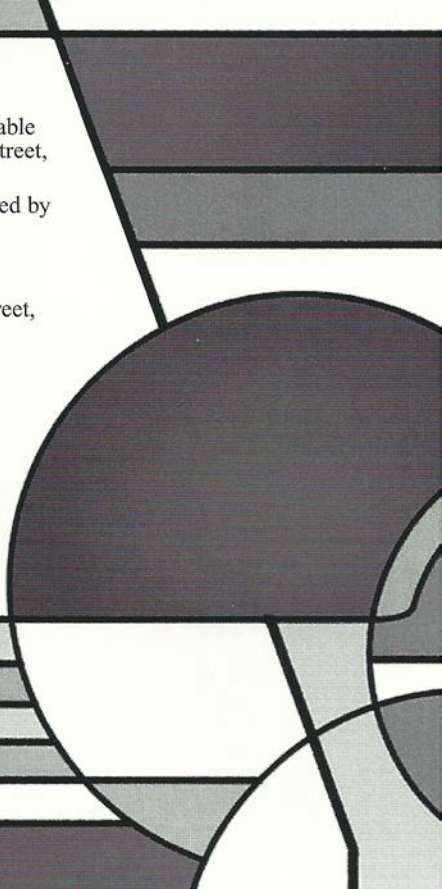


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Leslie Bassett

Sounds Remembered

Violin & Piano

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 1. Moderate, slow | 5:01 |
| 2. Moderately fast | 4:02 |
| 3. Very fast, attacca | 2:17 |
| 4. Slow | 4:46 |

Preludes

Piano

- | | |
|----------------|------|
| 5. Flourish | 2:50 |
| 6. Toccata | 3:02 |
| 7. Procession | 2:08 |
| 8. Declamation | 3:19 |
| 9. Peal | 2:02 |
| 10. Aria | 3:18 |
| 11. Clangor | 1:36 |

Elaborations

Piano

- | | |
|---------------|------|
| 12. Fast | 1:48 |
| 13. Slow | 2:33 |
| 14. Quiet | 3:12 |
| 15. Brilliant | 1:50 |

16:06

Configurations

Piano

- | | |
|-----------------------|------|
| 16. Whirling Triplets | 1:27 |
| 17. Lines | 2:26 |
| 18. In Balance | 2:07 |
| 19. Climbing | 2:30 |
| 20. Spirals | 2:43 |

11:13

Mobile

Piano

- | | |
|--------------------|------|
| 21. Slowly flowing | 2:45 |
|--------------------|------|

Six Piano Pieces

9:05

- | | |
|--------------------------|------|
| 22. Allegro moderato | 0:59 |
| 23. Allegro | 1:18 |
| 24. Andante cantabile | 2:20 |
| 25. Allegro brillante | 1:04 |
| 26. Adagio ma non troppo | 2:14 |
| 27. Allegro assai | 1:10 |

Total Time

66:47

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