

James Dashow — Thomas DeLio



JOHN FONVILLE , FLUTE
STEVEN SHICK, PERCUSSION
MAURO MAUR, TRUMPET
LUCIA BOVA, HARP
ALECK KARIS, PIANO
JACQUES LINDER, PIANO
SANDRA SPRECHER, PIANO

JAMES DASHOW • THOMAS DELIO

James Dashow

1. **Morfologie** for trumpet-player and computer (1993) 14:07
2. **Punti di Vista** No. 2 for piano solo (1976, revised 1990) 12:32
3. **Reconstructions** for harp and computer (1992) 13:36

Thomas DeLio

4. **anti-paysage** (1990) 09:53
 5. **Of** for tape (1990) 03:34
 6. **Though** for tape (1993) 06:05
 7. **so again** for tape (1994) 01:54
 8. **on again** for tape (1994) 02:57
 9. **of again** for tape (1994) 04:24
- Total Playing Time** 71:16

Compositions by James Dashow: *Morfologie* and *Punti di Vista* © BMG-Ariola, S. p. A. Rome, Italy.

Reconstructions © Edition Pro Nova; Sonoton; Munich, Germany

All compositions by Thomas DeLio © Smith Publications/Sonic Art Editions, Baltimore Maryland, USA.

Program Notes: James Dashow

MORFOLOGIE (Morphologies) for trumpet player and computer is the most recent (as of 1994) of Dashow's series of works for soloist with digitally synthesized electronic sounds. It presents the composer in a lyrical vein; the musical echoes of Miles Davis and of Chet Baker are purely intentional, Dashow having subtitled the piece *In Memoriam* to these two superb musicians who had so much to do with the composer's early musical formation in the 1950's, especially the young Baker.

The piece is divided into two major parts. The first is very active and highly charged, but with sudden fallings off of energy and gradual returns to even higher levels of intensity. The trumpet player begins on cornet, playfully using a harmon mute at first; the intertwining of electronic sounds specially designed to go with the harmon muted cornet creates a lively counterpoint of gesture and line that spills over into the first open cornet section. Waves of energy continue to grow inexorably, overcoming a dramatic interruption to build to a climactic arrival point with the soloist near the top of the range of the small D trumpet. The two protagonists, trumpet and computer, now unexpectedly play exactly together in a powerfully extended phrase that brings this first major part to a close, the electronic sounds finally falling off into the distance. Yet, phoenix-like, the sounds revive, and set the stage for the second major part, the entrance of the soloist on flugelhorn.

The long lyrical line that follows is exactly right for the foggy nostalgic tone of the flugelhorn; the music is a prolonged exploration of specific intervallic patterns and the kinds of rich sounds these intervals can be made to generate according to the composer's, by now well-known, procedures. Once again, the electronic sounds are designed especially for blending (or contrasting in timbrally interesting ways) with the soloist's instrument. The music here has reached a sort of emotional plateau; after the stormy ups and downs of the first part, the music invites the listener into a more serene atmosphere, formally a large-scale contrast to what has been experienced before. And then we are at the second major arrival point, the closing "soliloquy" which proposes a re-statement of the earlier energy but now utterly transformed by the tranquility of this part. This section contains the most complex music of the work, and at the same time it is the music's emotional high point; it magically works a synthesis of the two major areas of the piece through the mutual transformation of musical materials drawn from both parts. The idea of a transformed synthesis becomes completely specific with the final

phrases of the soloist who must keep the flugelhorn in one hand and quickly alternate to the harmon muted cornet in the other hand. The effect of the harmon muted cornet interrupting the eloquent flugelhorn line with the sadness of the remembrance of far-off times provides a structurally and emotionally satisfying close to the piece. MORFOLOGIE was composed for Mauro Maur, the soloist on this recording.

PUNTI DI VISTA (POINTS OF VIEW) n.2 is the second of what is an ongoing project: a book of piano pieces, each composed for a specific performer, and named after a particularly beautiful viewpoint where the performer lives or which the performer admires. The play on words is, of course, intentional. In each piece, the composer is expressing his point of view about musical matters in a highly condensed fashion. This particular Point of View is subtitled MONTIANO and was composed for composer/pianist Frederic Rzewski who at one point in his life lived in the small hill town of that name in southwest Tuscany.

Musically, Dashow is working out further extensions of musical procedures that concerned him in the late 1970's: relating harmonies by common tones and constructing form by means of highly contrasting sub-sections, where each such sub-section fulfills a structural function. For example, sections of high energy are sustained for moments of movement or tension, while sections of low energy are elaborated for moments of repose or suspension. The kinds of textures, the kinds of harmonies and their linear connecting across these sectional differences adds a more global form-building dimension to the music. As usual, Dashow's music can be listened to on more than one level, or several at once. What is at issue for the composer is the effect of the work perceived as a whole, its overall rhythm and dynamic shape, which depends to a great deal on the listener. It is music that invites the listener to participate in a re-creative experience, picking up on the abundance and variety of detail in different ways at each hearing, which nevertheless conveys a single underlying musical conception. Like looking at a sculpture from different points of view: it is always the same piece, but has a different sense about it, depending on your angle of vision.

RECONSTRUCTIONS for harp solo and computer was composed for the harpist on this recording, Lucia Bova. It too has a bi-part form, but where MORFOLOGIE can be heard as a large upbeat (Part I) leading to a large downbeat (Part II), RECONSTRUCTIONS is more static, more symmetric, a kind of "twin peaks" form. Part I is active and dynamically linear, but

about two-thirds of the way there comes a major contrasting interruption, a slow sub-section that for just a moment prolongs some of the linear events by turning them into special timbral events.

After this moment of suspension, the music continues once again more actively to the sectional conclusion. Part II plunges the listener immediately into that world of special timbral events; it is rich with chordal-timbres that use with extraordinary delicacy and sensitivity the harp's vast range of tone color. The result is beautifully haunting, with an overall sense of luxurious suspension. Yet there comes another moment of contrast, a powerful linear section that works the reverse of the contrasting interruption in Part I: some of the chordal-timbres are broken up into their separate components and spun out into fast energetic lines. The formal construction, symmetry with a twist, becomes clear; where the early contrasting section is an anticipation of events to come, the contrast in Part II recalls events (their texture and energy, not literally) that have been. Schematically, the composer has suggested thinking of Part I as consisting of materials +A and contrasting materials -b, Part II of materials +B and contrasting materials -a.

In both parts, Dashow plays with subtle sub-sectional contrasts to provide form building energy. Where the piano piece has abrupt textural changes, leading to immediate high degree tension, the music in RECONSTRUCTIONS is more broadly conceived; that is, the musical ideas are of larger proportions within which Dashow evidences gradual differences and quieter tensions. There is here, too, the wave-like approach to energy accumulation in Part I, but within a conception that is more self-contained, requiring more of a sense of closure within both of the two major parts than is the case with MORFOLOGIE. Whereas in the latter Part I strongly goes to Part II, in RECONSTRUCTIONS Parts I and II balance with each other.

And, as always, the multiplicity of structural levels, the specific pitches, the intervals, the succession of interval types, the kinds of electronic sounds that Dashow's computer procedures allow him to derive from any particular interval, the rhythm and phrasing intersections between harp and computer, all these dimensions interact to produce a work that can be heard in many different ways. Dashow has always been interested in sharing with his listeners a delight in the variety offered by clearly conceived complexity. Each listening produces a perceptual variation of the work's complex of ideas, thanks to the vitality of these multi-dimensional

interactions, not least of which is the listener's own interaction with the work itself. And it is all the more satisfying each time around for this mixture of familiarity and newness that successive hearings can produce.

— Sahlan Momo
Rome, Italy

Program Notes: Thomas DeLio

If only existence could be cut down to the pinpoint of here and now, with no echoes reverberating from the past, no tinglings of expectation from time not yet arrived.

—Paul Bowles
Let It Come Down

It has always seemed to me that the relentless processes of change, formation and re-formation which constitute our world are experienced as a succession of moments striving toward isolation. In the words of the great American poet Charles Olson: "The motive... of reality is process, not goal." Yet, Olson also notes: "Nature takes nothing but leaps." Everywhere we sense the struggle between continuity and discontinuity; not a struggle to fashion one from the other, but a struggle to integrate the two as they act, simultaneously, to shape our perceptions. We sense a world in constant flux; yet it seems to me that what we often experience is a succession of moments which are both interconnected, and at the same time isolated from one another. The recognition of both the continuity of events and the fragmentary, isolated nature of experience lies at the very center of my work.

My approach to composition involves the reduction of the music's surface to a few disjoint sound events separated - pushed apart - by large quantities of silence; sound events pushed into isolation. Moreover, I find myself reducing the sound events themselves to only the barest essentials. *anti-paysage* (1990), scored for flute, percussion, piano and computer-generated tape, is in four parts and constitutes one of my more extensive explorations of discontinuity and non-linearity. I incorporated enormous spans of silence into the design of this piece

without losing the coherence of a single musical evolution. I wanted each silence to push the sonic events surrounding it away from one another thereby ensuring the ultimate isolation of each event. In this sense, as in all of my works, silence became an active force pushing out from within itself, keeping the events of sound from connecting. At the beginning of *anti-paysage* I integrated a rather irregular sequence of silences into a somewhat conventional phrase structure. Silences within phrases tended to be rather long - relative to the lengths of the phrases themselves - and often stretched those phrases nearly to the breaking point of coherence. This is reflected in the overall evolution of the piece for silence comes more and more to dominate the composition as it unfolds. In addition, gradually, over the course of the piece, flute, percussion and piano drop out leaving the tape alone sounding in the final minutes. Thus, in terms of its overall form *anti-paysage* evolves toward a sparse texture of electronic sounds filled with longer and longer silences.

Of (1990) for computer-generated tape and *Though* (1993) for piano solo are both typical of my recent compositions in that they are constructed from discrete segments of music which, though they coexist as a group, never become fixed with respect to one another through hierarchical relationships; in this respect my recent pieces are never organic. To achieve this end I avoid constructing transitions linking individual events. I avoid anything which might convey a sense of continuity and connection. I try to make every aspect of the music seem segmented, halted and separated. I try to isolate and emphasize the direct experience of the moment.

so again, on again and of again (1994) constitute a series of compositions for computer-generated tape which can be heard individually or as a set. As always, in these pieces, I was concerned with presentation rather than development. Moreover, I was interested in identifying junctures between apparently unrelated things. Such unrelatedness, I believe, forces the listener to confront each gesture - each sound - as if heard for the first time and adds a heightened sense of immediacy to the musical experience.

With regard to my most recent pieces, I have found myself moving more toward a point where each work in its entirety must be regarded as a moment in isolation. This has led me to reduce the size of my pieces. Thus, though many of the works on this recording are very short, in no way are they sketches or miniatures. Rather, they are full scale works which consist of a few highly compressed sound events stripped to their essentials. These events are in turn surrounded by a silence which is activated by their presence. Finally, I should note that, as is

the case with many of my recent tape pieces, *Of, so again, on again* and *of again* were written specifically for the recorded medium and are not generally intended for presentation on concerts.

*...the surface
glistens, only the surface.
Dig in - and you have*

*a nothing, surrounded by
a surface...*

Paterson (Book III)
William Carlos Williams

—Thomas DeLio
1994

Composers

THOMAS DELIO is a composer and theorist. His compositions are published by Smith Publications/Sonic Art Editions (Baltimore) and Editore Semar (Rome). His works are recorded on the Wergo, Spectrum, 3D and Neuma labels. Articles about his music have appeared in *Perspectives of New Music*, *Interface*, *Leonardo*. As a theorist Thomas DeLio has published several books, most notably *Circumscribing the Open Universe*, *Contiguous Lines: Issues and Ideas in the Music of the '60's and '70's*, *The Music of Morton Feldman* and numerous essays in such journals as *The Musical Quarterly*, *MusikText*, *Interface*, *Perspectives of New Music*, *The Journal of Music Theory*, *The Contemporary Music Review*, *Revue d'Esthetique* and *Artforum*. DeLio is also the recipient of numerous grants, awards and commissions.

JAMES DASHOW, born 1944 in Chicago, makes his home in the Italian countryside just north of Rome. He studied with Babbitt, Cone, Randall and Kim at Princeton University, with

Berger, Shifrin and Boykan at Brandeis University and with Petrassi at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, Rome. For several years he directed the Forum Players in Rome, a contemporary music ensemble, and is now director of the Studio di Musica Elettronica Sciadoni. He has been associated as composer and teacher with the Centro di Sonologia Computazionale of the University of Padua. From 1985 to 1992 Dashow was producer of the weekly broadcast of contemporary music for Italian National Radio (RAI), *Il Forum Internazionale*.

Dashow has composed for large and small ensembles, solo pieces and opera. He has been the recipient of numerous prizes and commissions, among which are a Fulbright fellowship to Rome, first prize at the V Concorso Internazionale di Musique Electroacoustique, Bourges, 2 NEA (USA) grants for works with soloist and computer generated electronic accompaniment, 2 commissions from the Venice Biennale, a Rockefeller Foundation grant, the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters prize, a grant from the Guggenheim Foundation, and a commission from the Fromm Foundation (Harvard University). Dashow also regularly receives commissions from individual musicians for works for their instrument with electronic sounds, two of which are included on this Neuma CD.

Dashow has been invited to present solo concerts of his work for acoustic and electronic instruments at major new music festivals and in conjunction with European national radio networks. He has lectured widely in the U.S. and Europe, and in 1983 was acting director of the M.I.T. Experimental Music Studio, while teaching the Studio's graduate music seminar. Dashow also taught graduate and undergraduate composition courses at Princeton University in 1987. He contributes irregularly to several professional journals and magazines, including *Perspectives of New Music*, for which he serves also as a member of the editorial board, *Computer Music Journal*, *Fare Musica*, *Interface* and *La Musica*. He is also the author of the MUSIC30 computer language for digital sound synthesis which was used to generate the electronic sounds for RECONSTRUCTIONS and MORFOLOGIE.

Complete CD and LP recordings of Dashow's music are on the WERGO, PAN and PROVIVA labels; other works have been included on CDs from RCA, Neuma, CDM, and CRI. His music is published by Schott, Semar Editore, BMG Classica and Edi-Pan.

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Performers

Lucia Bova (1966, Naples) received her degree in harp at the Salerno Conservatory of Music at an early age, and continued in France with Elizabeth Fontan-Binoche at the Conservatory of Nice where she received the Unanimous First Prize and her diploma for advanced studies. Bova has also won the Italian National Competition at Taranto.

She was principal harpist with the Italian National Radio (RAI) Orchestra "A. Scarlatti" in Naples, and dedicates much of her time to contemporary music. In 1994 Bova was named principal harpist for the Arturo Toscanini Symphony Orchestra of Parma. She has performed with Ex Novo Ensemble (Venice), the Logos Ensemble (Rome) and Artisanat Furieux (Perugia), and has been soloist during the Festival Roma-Europa, for Musica Verticale (Rome), the Annual International New Music Festival at Macerata, the concerts of the X International Colloquium of Musical Informatics in Milan, the International Festival at Urbino and the series of New Music concerts organized by EDI-PAN, Italy's third largest publisher of contemporary music. She was invited in 1994 by Radio 3 of the RAI to present a recital of contemporary and traditional harp music, and is called upon regularly by the German, Dutch and Japanese Cultural Institutes in Rome to perform on their concerts.

Composers who have written pieces for Lucia Bova include Fernando Mencherini, Ennio Morricone, Fausto Razzi and James Dashow. Bova is currently working on a book specifically for composers about contemporary harp techniques and notation, and has published articles on these subjects in professional journals. She has recorded for EDI-PAN (Rome), RCA (BMG-Ariola, Rome).

John Fonville is a flutist-composer who received a DMA from the University of Illinois before joining the music faculty at the University of California at San Diego. He has appeared as soloist with numerous ensembles in both the United States and Canada and has been a member of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, The Early Music Ensemble and Roulette, among others. He is currently active as a soloist and a member of the Tone Road Ramblers (a performer/composer ensemble) and serves as co-music director of SONOR the contemporary music ensemble based at the University of California at San Diego. He was featured soloist at

the International Festival of Contemporary Music held in Darmstadt in 1988. John Fonville has recorded as a soloist on Lumina, CRI and New World Records.

Aleck Karis studied piano with Artur Balsam, Beveridge Webster and William Daglian. He has appeared at festivals in Bath, Geneva, Sao Paulo, Los Angeles, Miami, Caramoor and on the Warsaw Autumn Festival. He is the pianist for the contemporary music ensemble Speculum Musicae and has recorded on Bridge, Nonesuch, New World, CRI and Neuma records and CDs. He is presently a member of the faculty at the University of California at San Diego.

Jacques Linder is a graduate of the University of Illinois. He studied with Harriet Shirvan and Gabriel Chodos. He has given solo recitals at such institutions as the University of South Florida, Clark University, The Camargo Foundation (Cassis, France), Colgate University, Hamilton College and the University of Maryland. He has been featured soloist at numerous contemporary music festivals including those at the University of Maryland, the Clark University European Center in Luxembourg and Tufts University. He has taught at Clark University and is currently at the University of South Florida.

Mauro Maur received his diploma in music in Trieste and in 1976 won admission to the Paris National Conservatory where he studied with Pierre Thibaud. He then completed his training at Northwestern University. In 1979 Michel Plasson invited Maur to become trumpet soloist for the National Orchestra in Toulouse with which he subsequently played in many of the most prestigious concert halls (Carnegie Hall, Kennedy Center, Hercules Salle, Victoria Hall, etc.). Maur has also performed with the Paris Opera Orchestra, the French National Orchestra and the Orchestra of Radio France under the baton of important conductors such as Riccardo Muti, Seiji Ozawa, Pierre Boulez, Leonard Bernstein and others. His prizes include: First Prize (unanimously) of the Advanced National Conservatory in Paris, winner of the Lille Competition, and of competitions under the auspices of the Rome Opera, San Carlo in Naples and the National Academy of Santa Cecilia in Rome. Currently (1994), Mauro Maur is first trumpet for the Rome Opera Orchestra, and is the soloist of preference for I Solisti Veneti. He also teaches the International Music Courses in Portogruaro and is on the faculty of the Whitworth College Music Program of the American University in Rome. His recitals and

concerts take him all over the world.

Steven Shick studied at the University of Iowa and the Musikhochschule in Freiburg. He has lectured and performed throughout the United States and Europe presenting the works of numerous contemporary composers including Xenakis, Stockhausen and Ferneyhough, among others. He is presently on the faculty of the Music Department of the University of California at San Diego. He has also been Visiting Professor at the Manhattan School of Music and the Conservatory of Rotterdam and is on the faculty of the International Festival of Contemporary Music in Darmstadt.

Sandra Sprecher is a composer and pianist. She received a diploma in piano at the Ecole Normale de Musique in Paris where she studied with Jules Gentil. In addition she studied piano and composition at Indian University School of Music with Edward Auer and Harvey Sollberger. She has written for many ensembles including The San Francisco Chamber Players, The Stonybrook Contemporary Chamber Players, The Contemporary Chamber Players of Chicago and the New Millenium Ensemble. She is the 1994 League ISCM winner and recently received commissions from the Fromm Foundation and the Contemporary Sacred Music Festival of Rome. She has been recorded as both a composer and performer on Neuma, RCA/BMG and Edi-Pan and is published by Edi-Pan, Semar and Rugginenti.

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Computer parts for *Morfologie* and *Reconstructions* were generated with the MUSIC30 language for sound synthesis on an accelerator board for PC, the SPIRIT-30 by Sonitech International, Wellesley, MA, built around the Texas Instruments' DSP TMS320C30.

Computer sounds for *anti-paysage*, *Of, so again, on again, of again* were generated with the Csound language on a Micro Technology Unlimited Digital Audio Workstation.

Morfologie and *Reconstructions* were recorded
at Wonderland Studio, Rome.

Punti di Vista was recorded at BMG-RCA Studios, Rome.

anti-paysage was recorded by Joe Kucera at the
University of California at San Diego

Though was recorded by Mike Cerri, University of Maryland,
Baltimore County Campus, Catonsville, Maryland.

Of, so again, on again, of again were recorded at the
composer's studio in Washington, D.C.

*This recording was made possible by a grant from the University of Maryland
at College Park and the generous support of the University of California at San Diego.*

Produced by Shirish Korde

Cover Art: *Chyrow II* by Frank Stella 1972

(mixed media, 112" x 100"—National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Design/Layout by Susan Calkins