



meridian
arts **ensemble**

CHANNEL CLASSICS

CCS 9496

BRASS QUINTET



(Five)

Ira Taxin (1950)

- | | | |
|---|---------|-------|
| 1 | Fanfare | 00.55 |
|---|---------|-------|

Stephen Barber (1952)*Gone Is the River (1990)*

- | | | |
|---|-------------|-------|
| 2 | Sacrificium | 03.02 |
| 3 | Angels | 05.02 |
| 4 | Mbube | 03.09 |
| 5 | Sacrum | 02.55 |

Jan Radzynski (1950)*Take Five (1984)*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------|-------|
| 6 | Alla Bulgarese | 02.29 |
| 7 | Allegretto giocoso | 03.01 |
| 8 | Adagio molto tristamente | 03.03 |
| 9 | Suza | 05.01 |
| 10 | Molto Allegro | 04.52 |

David Sampson (1951)

- | | | |
|----|----------------------|-------|
| 11 | Morning Music (1986) | 12.32 |
|----|----------------------|-------|

Peter Robles (1961)*Finale Rounds (1990)*

- | | | |
|----|--------------------|-------|
| 12 | Transcendent Tones | 07.25 |
| 13 | Fractured Forms | 03.37 |
| 14 | Finale Rounds | 05.29 |

Total time	62.50
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MERIDIAN ARTS ENSEMBLE

Jon Nelson trumpet
Wayne J. du Maine trumpet
Daniel Grabois horn
Benjamin Herrington trombone
Raymond Stewart tuba

Recording: Muziekcentrum Frits Philips (Eindhoven), June 1995

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from left to right:
sitting: Jon Nelson, Jared Sacks, Raymond Stewart
standing: Daniel Grabois, Wayne J. du Maine,
Benjamin Herrington,
photo: Ruud Balk

This recording of music by living American composers was made possible with generous grants from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, and The Mary Flagler Cary Charitable Trust. Special thanks also to the Fort Washington Collegiate Church of New York.

other recordings from the MAE on Channel Classics:
CCS 2191 Hindemith, Lutoslawski a.o.
CCS 4192 Smart Went Crazy: Zappa, Hendrix, Nurock

CCS 6594 Visions of the Renaissance
CCS 8195 Prime Meridian

This is our fifth CD, played by five musicians, with music by five American composers (including a five-movement work entitled Take Five). This circle of Fives brings us back to our roots: five brass players' exploration and love of new music. We founded the MAE to expand our musical horizons - to stretch our understanding of musical language. We have moved in many directions while never losing sight of our initial focus. This CD is the realization of our ongoing effort to seek out pre-existing works, and to generate new works through commissioning. We present here an exciting variety of sounds and rhythms. We hope you enjoy them as much as we do. Our thanks to the composers, and to you, the listeners. New music is alive and well.

Meridian Arts Ensemble

THE MERIDIAN ARTS ENSEMBLE:

- has established itself as one of America's finest chamber ensembles through its innovative repertoire and critically acclaimed performances. First Prize Winner of the 1990 Concert Artists Guild New York Competition, the Ensemble also won First Prize in 1994 from ASCAP/Chamber Music America for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music.
- has commissioned numerous works, and has also collaborated with or premiered works by Frank Zappa, Milton Babbitt, Kirk Nurock, Ira Taxin, Phillip Johnston, David Sampson, Tom Pierson, Stephen Barber, and Elliott Carter. The Ensemble's interest in expanding the horizons of concert repertoire has been further demonstrated through adaptations and performances of works by Don Carlo Gesualdo, J.S. Bach, Frank

Zappa, Jimi Hendrix, Captain Beefheart, and Afro/Cuban dance styles.

- has performed in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Cleveland, Atlanta, Juneau, and other cities. The Ensemble has also toured Europe and Japan extensively, and in 1995 gave its South American debut in Bogota, Colombia. Collaborations have included a performance at Alice Tully Hall for the 25th Anniversary of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center. The Ensemble has also performed in many European festivals, including Köln Musiktriennale, Schleswig-Holstein, Bochum Klavier Festival, Graz (Austria), and November Music (Holland and Belgium). Club appearances have included performances in New York at the alternative spaces CBGB's, The Knitting Factory, the Cooler, and the Kitchen; in Washington, DC at the Black Cat; and at the House of Blues in Los Angeles.

- has been seen internationally on German, Dutch, and Austrian state television, and in the U.S. on public television's *Live From Lincoln Center*. Radio broadcasts have included National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition*, *St. Paul Sunday Morning*, WDR (Germany), Dutch National Radio, ORF (Austria), Voice of America, and Radio Free Europe.

FANFARE

Ira Taxin was born in New York in 1950. He studied composition with Gardner Read at Boston University, and with Roger Sessions, Elliott Carter and Milton Babbitt at The Juilliard School. Mr. Taxin has received commissions from the Fromm and Koussevitzky Music Foundations, grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, and fellowships to Tanglewood. He has been the recipient of awards and prizes from BMI and the National Institute of Arts and Letters, and his works have been

performed by leading orchestras such as the New York Philharmonic and Cincinnati Symphony. Active as a composer, arranger, and producer of music for television, films, and commercials, Mr. Taxin currently resides in New York where he has his own production company, Aquarius Music Productions. He is also on the faculty of The Juilliard School, and his music is published by Theodore Presser Company.

Fanfare for Brass Quintet was commissioned by the Empire Brass Quintet in honor of the American Bicentennial, and was originally intended as the first movement of the composer's *Brass Quintet*. The composer describes the piece as the traditional fanfare or call-to-order in an atonally-dissonant style.

GONE IS THE RIVER

Stephen Barber was born in 1952 in Abilene, Texas. His early musical studies were in piano and guitar, and in his youth he performed in various ensembles in Texas, most of which concentrated on Texas traditions of folk music and the blues from the Delta. He studied music and marine biology at the University of Texas and Southwest Texas University, continuing his musical studies in New York with John Corigliano.

Commissioned by the Meridian Arts Ensemble, *Gone Is the River* was given its world premiere in New York City in 1990. The four movement piece was inspired by the release from prison of Nelson Mandela, as well as by the composer's affinity for the choral music of black South Africa. The composer has provided the following commentary: "*Gone Is the River* is concerned with the rhythms and physicality of kinetic energy. The first movement, *Sacrificium*, is loosely based on the rhythms

of the Bushmen of South Africa. The letters M-A-N-D-E-L-A correspond to notes in the various scales I have constructed, which can be heard in the fanfares of the first and fourth movements. The second movement, *Angels*, involves the unconscious energy in kinetics, trying to conjure up musical hallucinations of Africa, both physical and spiritual. The third movement, *Mbube*, is based on the beautiful intricacies of black South African harmony. This extraordinary style is known generically as mbube. The movement is traditional and a homage to the genius of the African vocal ensembles such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo. In the title of the final movement, *Sacrum*, I was trying to thread together all four movements. *Sacrum* embraces the alchemy of spiritual transformation and ritual. It conveyed to me an image of time slowly fading away”.

TAKE FIVE

Jan Radzynski (b. 1950) left his native Warsaw in 1969 to settle in Israel. His teachers include Krzysztof Penderecki and Jacob Druckman at Yale University, where he received his Doctorate in 1984. A former Associate Professor of Composition at Yale, he currently serves on the faculty at Ohio State University. His extensive catalogue of compositions has won many awards, fellowships, and residencies. *Take Five* was commissioned in 1984 by the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, summer home of the Yale School of Music. Each movement is the musical realization of an anecdote concerning one of five friends, all composers at Yale during the composer's student days: Martin Bresnick, Jacob Druckman, David Lewin, Suzy Blaustein, and Michael Friedmann.

MORNING MUSIC

David Sampson (b. 1951) is teacher, conductor, and performer in the New York area. Mr. Sampson's compositions have earned him an ASCAP grant and several 'Meet the Composer' commissions. Mr. Sampson is a member of the Board of Composers Guild of New Jersey, founding member of 'Solid Brass', a ten piece brass ensemble, and Founder/President of the 'Hardly any Sampson' Music Festival. The composer writes:

"Morning Music for Brass Quintet was written during the summer of 1986 for the American Brass Quintet. It is a sequel to a previous work of mine entitled *In Memoriam: W.E.S.* for woodwind quintet, written in 1981 and premiered by the Dorian Woodwind Quintet. The subject of that piece was the murder of my brother by the Ku Klux Klan and American Nazis in 1979. *Morning Music* deals with my thoughts and feelings seven years later. As you will hear, the anguish over the death is as intense as ever, but strength ... will gradually emerge from the despair. The work is in one movement, with clearly delineated sections and ending with a fast-paced coda. I have dedicated this work to my mother, whose optimism and resiliency have been an inspiration to me."

FINALE ROUNDS

Peter Robles was born in New York City in 1961. He received his Ph. D. from Princeton University and his Bachelor's Degree from the New England Conservatory of Music. He has studied with Steven Mackey, Arthur Berger, William Bolcom, Jacob Druckman, Paul Lansky, Fred Ler-

dahl, and Scott Burnham. He lives in Manhattan.

Robles started composing *Finale Rounds* in Princeton (N.J.), in the fall of 1990, and completed it at Yaddo Colony in Saratoga Springs (N.Y.), in December 1991. Though the brass quintet was written in three movements and is unified by a specific melodic and harmonic idea, the composer has come to view each movement as a separate work.

The first movement, inspired by the work of American painter Richard duPont, is a search for resolution in an abstract environment. It's a wry musical take on the stasis inherent in abstract painting. With unexpected climaxes and a hint of blues, *Fractured Forms* deconstructs the harmonies established in the first movement, as it seeks resolution. *Finale Rounds*, a distortion of the American aesthetic, with references to everything from Batman to Aaron Copland, reveals, in its first few measures, the harmonic and melodic sequence explored throughout all three movements.

The composer dedicates *Fractured Forms* to Sue Spolan and Steven Colaprete of Philadelphia, and *Finale Rounds* to the Meridian Arts Ensemble.

Nicholas Paumgarten

COLOPHON

Production:	Channel Classics Studio B.V.
Producer/Recording engineer:	C. Jared Sacks
Editing:	Tom Peeters/C. Jared Sacks
Cover design:	Jan van Waarden (bNO)
Liner notes:	Meridian Arts Ensemble



"All Channel Classics recordings are realised with extensive use of custom made Rens Heijnis Audio equipment & microphones"

Technical information

Microphones:	Bruel & Kjaer 4003 Rens Heijnis omnidirectional DCS 900C
Analogue to digital converter:	Celestion & AKG K1000
Speakersystems:	Headphones
Recording location:	Muziekcentrum Frits Philips, Eindhoven
Recording dates:	June 1995

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