



## DAVID HOWARD

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|------|--|-------|
| 1    | STEVEN STUCKY  | 05:47 |
|      | <i>Meditation and Dance</i> for Bb Clarinet and Piano                                    |       |
|      | with Vicki Ray, piano  |       |
| 2–4  | GALINA USTVOLSKAYA   | 14:33 |
|      | Trio for Clarinet, Violin and Piano  |       |
|      | with Johnny Lee, violin; Vicki Ray, piano  |       |
|      | I. Espressivo  | 06:16 |
|      | II. Dolce  | 03:05 |
|      | III. Energico  | 05:13 |
| 5–8  | ESA-PEKKA SALONEN  | 07:53 |
|      | <i>Nachtlieder</i> for Clarinet and Piano  |       |
|      | with Vicki Ray, piano  |       |
|      | I. Sehr innig  | 01:32 |
|      | II. Zart   | 02:12 |
|      | III. Frei, wie Kadenz  | 02:11 |
|      | IV. Ruhig und gesangvoll   | 01:58 |
| 9–12 | JOHANNES BRAHMS  | 38:35 |
|      | Clarinet Quintet in B Minor, Op. 115   |       |
|      | with Lyndon Taylor & Kristine Hedwall, violins; John Hayhurst, viola; Gloria Lum, 'cello |       |
|      | I. Allegro   | 13:05 |
|      | II. Adagio   | 11:41 |
|      | III. Andantino—Presto non assai, ma con sentimento                                       | 04:44 |
|      | IV. Con moto   | 09:05 |





## NOTES ON THE MUSIC *by Jim Svejda*

### *Stucky: Meditation and Dance*

Composer, conductor, writer, lecturer, teacher and winner of the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in Music, Steven Stucky has enjoyed the longest uninterrupted association between an American orchestra and a living composer. Appointed the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer in Residence in 1988 by Sir Andre Previn, Stucky now serves as the Philharmonic's Consulting Composer for New Music. In addition to helping sort through a bewildering variety of new music which regularly appears in the orchestra's subscription series, Stucky works closely with Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen on the selection of new commissions and the development of programs for young people. He also serves as the all-but-official host of the orchestra's celebrated "Green Umbrella" series, during which he leads lively discussions with participating musicians.

Composed in 2004 on a commission from the Friends of New Music program of the Music Teachers' Association of California, Stucky's *Meditation and Dance* was designed in the grand tradition of Debussy's *Premiere Rhapsodie* and countless other Paris Conservatory audition works as a test piece for student clarinetists. Shortly after finishing *Meditation and Dance*—heard here in its world premiere recording—the composer realized it is clearly the province of experienced (and fearless) professionals.

### *Salonen: Nachtlieder*

Unlike famous conductors from Wilhelm Furtwängler to Lorin Maazel who also happened to compose, Esa-Pekka Salonen is a composer who became a conductor for purely practical reasons. As he has said with disarming candor: "While at school, I realized that if anyone was going to conduct my music it would probably be me, since there were few other candidates vying for the honor." Along with his studies in composition at the Sibelius Academy with Einojuhani Rautavaara, he was also a member of Jorma Panula's now legendary conducting class which also produced Osmo Vänskä, Jukka-Pekka Saraste, Sakari Oramo and Mikko Franck. While some of Salonen's early works like *Music for Horn I and II* were written for his principal instrument—he was a pupil of the great Finnish horn player Holger Fransman—one of the earliest works he still acknowledges is *Nachtlieder*, dedicated to the clarinetist Kullervo Kojo, who introduced it on September 30, 1978.

Cast in four brief movements, *Nightsongs* clearly draws some of its inspiration from the *Four Pieces*, Op. 4 by Alban Berg. Yet along with the rigorous intellectual organization of the Second Viennese School, Salonen's early piece already hints at the clarity and wit that would become hallmarks of his later style. "It may sound a bit crazy," Salonen has said, "but I actually think of myself more as a composer than a conductor."

His recent decision to step down as Music Director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic to allow himself more time to compose only underscores that conviction.

### *Ustvolskaya: Clarinet Trio*

A virtual hermit who refused to give interviews and despised having her picture taken, Galina Ustvolskaya was one of the most distinctive and accomplished voices of Soviet music. She was also by far the most distinguished pupil of Dmitri Shostakovich, who said: “I am convinced that the music of G. I. Ustvolskaya will achieve worldwide renown, to be valued by all who perceive truth in music to be of paramount importance.” Ustvolskaya studied with Shostakovich at the Leningrad Conservatory between 1939 and 1947. He thought so highly of her work and opinions that he often sent unfinished works for her comments, and actually quoted the second theme from the finale of her Clarinet Trio in his Fifth String Quartet and *Michelangelo Suite*. The fact that the two apparently had a brief affair during the War did not prevent the two composers from remaining friends until Shostakovich’s death.

Although her early works showed unmistakable signs of Shostakovich’s influence, traces of her mentor’s style had clearly vanished by the early 1950s. “There is no link whatsoever between my music and that of any other composer, living or dead,” she once said, and the works of her maturity clearly support this claim. While not a musical radical in the Western sense, her concentrated, rigorously organized music was often criticized for its unwillingness to communicate with a larger audience. Apart from scattered patriotic pieces, few of her works were performed regularly prior to the fall of the Soviet Union. Until her death in 2006, she lived quietly in a tiny apartment in Prospekt Gagarina, apparently indifferent to both praise and neglect.

Composed in 1949, the Clarinet Trio is the pivotal work in Ustvolskaya’s tiny output. As she herself insisted, “All my music from this composition on is ‘spiritual’ in nature.” While the composer was predictably silent on the nature of the spiritual conflict which animates the Trio, the tension between the poignant clarinet melody and the ominous piano figure in the opening *Espressivo* never fully dissipates in either the deceptively tranquil *Dolce* or the ferociously driven *Energico*.

One thing is abundantly clear: Shostakovich was not merely being polite when he insisted “It is not you who are influenced by me; rather, it is I who am influenced by you.”

### *Brahms: Quintet for Clarinet and Strings in B Minor, Op. 115*

Although Brahms was only fifty-seven at the time he completed the G Major String Quintet in December of 1890, he was beginning to feel his career had come to an end. In a note dispatched with the manuscript to his publisher Simrock, he wrote: “With this letter you can bid farewell to my music—because it is certainly time to leave off.” In the following year, he drew up a will—the so-called “Ischl testament”—and shortly thereafter began going through his unpublished manuscripts, consigning everything he considered unworthy to the flames. Fortunately for posterity, he soon met the clarinetist Richard Mühlfeld, whose brilliant playing would eventually inspire the greatest work written for the instrument since Mozart’s.

By the summer of 1891, Brahms was writing a clarinet trio for Mühlfeld and in a letter to his friend Eusebius Mandyczewski mentioned “a far greater piece of foolishness” that he was endeavoring “to nurse along.” The “foolishness” proved to be the crowning work of the instrument’s chamber music literature, the B Minor Clarinet Quintet on this album.

The opening *Allegro* begins with one of those amiable themes that the composer characterized as *unscheinbarket*—unobtrusive—although contained within this lovely melody are all the thematic seeds from which the rest of the Quintet will grow. A bold staccato transition leads to the secondary theme, derived from the first theme’s rapid passage work.

Bathed in that celebrated mood of autumnal melancholy that haunts all of Brahms’ later works, the Adagio is introduced by a serene melody in the clarinet, supported by an idea in the viola derived from the first movement’s opening theme. Following a wild, gypsy-like central section dominated by the clarinet’s passionate improvisations, the wistful mood of the opening returns.

The charming Andantino begins with an expansive clarinet melody again derived from the Quintet’s opening theme, after which a giddy, light-footed Presto develops the opening phrase of the Andantino melody.

As in the Mozart Clarinet Quintet, the finale, *Con moto*, is cast in variation form, each of the five variations exploring an aspect of a theme with several family ties to the Andantino melody. In the coda, Brahms recalls the Quintet’s opening theme in its original form, as though to remind the listener of the unobtrusive seed from which grew one of the most monumental of chamber works.

—*Jim Svejda*

***About this performance of the Brahms Clarinet Quintet Alan Rich wrote:***

“Midway in an all-Brahms chamber concert by Philharmonic members came the Clarinet Quintet, a late work not often heard, music of lavender and deep purple, shot through with burnished-bronze outcries from the solo wind player. Memories of the similarly scored work by Mozart are not out of place; nothing else of Brahms—possibly excepting the Trio with French Horn—sends forth such immediate waves of deep, penetrating beauty. Midway in the slow movement David Howard’s solo clarinet unwound its slithering melodic line across the musical spectrum; the strings answered with passionate shivers, and their moonstruck conversation continues to echo in my skull days later. That’s Brahms.” —*Alan Rich*

“His tone...is free and pure, a limpid wonder that filled the room...” —*John Henken*

“During David Howard’s superbly controlled, ethereal clarinet playing...the sound became magic.” —*Terry McQuilkin*

*And from David's earlier performances:*

"Howard's limpid tone and musical sensitivity created genuine poetry..."

—Albert Goldberg

"A performer of exceptional musicality and finesse." —Martin Bernheimer

## ARTIST'S NOTES

The Brahms Quintet is a clarinetist's dream. It is a piece of music that mines and celebrates the deepest expressive possibilities of my instrument. It stands proudly as the core of our repertoire and remains central to our collective musical consciousness. We are delighted to include this live performance from Walt Disney Concert Hall on this album. Galina Ustvol'skaya's trio may be as austere and brooding as the Brahms quintet is warm and expansive. I love both. Interestingly, the technical challenges are similar. But Ustvol'skaya's creation is musically much more difficult. Her work is both emotionally removed from our contemporary experience, and terrifically exciting to hear and to play. I learned much as we opened this Stalinist time capsule. I am particularly happy to include music of two contemporary composers with whom I have worked closely for many years. I thank my friends Esa-Pekka Salonen and Steve Stucky for their indelible musical impact on me and on the musical life of Los Angeles. They've enriched so many with their invention, musical intellect and artistic integrity. And they've challenged me as they found engaging ways to expand the clarinet's musical vocabulary.

—David Howard

Clarinetist David Howard joined the Los Angeles Philharmonic in 1981 when he was 25 years old, hired by Music Director Carlo Maria Giulini. During the 2006–2007 season, he performed and gave master classes at international festivals in Tel Aviv, Vancouver, Helsinki, Beijing, and Stockholm. As a chamber musician he concertizes widely in southern California, and recently performed live for the BBC in Edinburgh and earlier for WFMT at the Dame Myra Hess Memorial concert series in Chicago. With the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group, Howard performed as soloist in John Harbison's Concerto for Oboe, Clarinet and Strings under the direction of the composer; he was also the bass clarinet soloist in Iannis Xenakis' *Échange*, conducted by Esa-Pekka Salonen. Since 1986, Howard has served on the faculty of the Thornton School of Music at the University of Southern California. Previously, Howard was principal clarinetist with the New Jersey Symphony and the New Haven Symphony. A Los Angeles native, he received a B.A. in Russian literature from Yale University. Howard's recordings include a collaboration with former Los Angeles Philharmonic pianist Zita Carno for the Centaur label entitled *Capriccio: Mid-Century Music for Clarinet*, including works of Leonard Bernstein, Paul Hindemith, and Witold Lutoslawski.



David plays nickel-plated Buffet R13 clarinets. For our recording he used a Vandoren B40 mouthpiece, Vandoren traditional number 3 reeds, and a Rovner dark ligature. For the works by Steve Stucky and Esa-Pekka Salonen which we recorded September 4, 2007 in Zipper Hall at Colburn School, Vicki plays Steinway Concert & Artists piano number 599 made in New York, thanks to support from Steinway & Sons (New York) and David Ida at Fields Pianos in Los Angeles. For the trio by Galina Ustvolskaya, Vicki plays New York Steinway # 562930, chosen for the opening of Walt Disney Concert Hall with the help of Hélène Grimaud. Violinist Johnny Lee plays an instrument made in 1807 by Pirot. In the Brahms quintet, first violinist Lyndon Taylor plays the Perkins Stradavarius from 1708, Kristine Hedwall plays a Carletti violin made in 1941, John Hayhurst plays a Sgarabotto viola from 1908, and cellist Gloria Lum plays a Vincenzo Postiglione, built in 1877.

We wish to thank Gail Eichenthal who first suggested Yarlung Records produce this recording. Many thanks to Deborah Borda, Adam Crane and Michele Zukovsky at the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to Craig Mathew of Mathew Imaging for our photograph of David in Walt Disney Concert Hall, to Andrea Bell and Benjamin Maas, and to Jim Svejda for our liner notes.

For the Zipper recordings, Gearworks Pro Audio gave us the use of two matched Neumann U-47 microphones with their original VF14M tubes, which are metal-clad pentode tubes configured as triodes. We spent eight hours setting the microphones, making many adjustments, half-centimeter at a time. We wanted to avoid making further adjustments in mastering. There are no adjustments to the EQ of the Zipper recordings. We made all “EQ adjustments” with microphone placement at the start. It is always our goal to record this way, and we succeeded similarly with *Evening Conversations* released in 2006, and *Orion, Dialoghi, Inner World: Music by David Lefkowitz, Joanne Pearce Martin: Barefoot*, and *Ryan MacEvoy McCullough in Concert* among others to be released in 2008.



David Howard and Vicki Ray, *Meditation and Dance*



Steinway technician Fred Fehl and Vicki Ray



For this recording we used short (five feet) stranded silver interconnects designed by Yarlung Records, customized vacuum tube microphone preamplifiers, no mixer, and recorded directly to two tracks sampled at 176,400 samples per second at 24 bit depth. Engineers Steve Hoffman, Kevin Gray and I worked at AcousTech Mastering at Record Technology Inc. in Camarillo to convert these high resolution tracks to CD Audio.

—*Bob Attiyeh, producer*

Graphic design: Erin Hauber

Cover photo: Los Angeles Philharmonic (Craig Mathew). Session photography: Yarlung Records

Tracks 1 & 5-8 recorded 9/4/07 in Zipper Hall at Colburn School, Bob Attiyeh, recording engineer. Tracks 2-4 recorded live 2/27/07 and tracks 9-12 recorded live 5/8/07 in Walt Disney Concert Hall, Fred Vogler, recording engineer.

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Recorded in Walt Disney Concert Hall & Zipper Hall  
at Colburn School, Los Angeles

*Recording Engineers:* Bob Attiyeh & Fred Vogler

*Mastering Engineers:* Steve Hoffman & Kevin Gray

*Steinway Technicians:* Fred Fehl & Daniel Ene

*Microphones:* Gearworks Pro Audio

*Monitoring Equipment:* Acoustic Image

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