

GÖRAN MARCUSSON  
*flute*

JOAKIM KALLHED  
*piano*

**American Sonatas**

*Liebermann, Copland, Biscardi, Piston and Burton.*



# AMERICAN MUSIC FOR FLUTE AND PIANO

*This disc includes five compositions for flute and piano, all of which were written in the USA between 1930 and the present day. The composers have all been inspired to write these works by renowned flutists of their times.*

The earliest work is by **WALTER PISTON** (1894-1976). Piston composed his Sonata for flute and piano in 1930. Since then it has become a standard repertoire piece, particularly for American flutists. The Sonata is close to the neo-classical style, and, as always, Piston displays outstanding compositional skill, balancing the form superbly and expressing himself tastefully throughout.

The piece was composed for Georges Laurent, who was the well-known principal flutist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra for many years.

**ELDIN BURTON** (1913-1979) was never a very famous composer and surviving few musical works. He was born in Georgia, became a

skillful pianist and harbored a desire to compose. In order to further his training he took a course in composition "in the small form" at the Juilliard School in New York with Bernard Wagenaar. During that time he composed a piece for the piano in three movements.

Among the participants on this course was Samuel Baron, who became a lifetime friend of Burton's, and who later became a widely acclaimed flutist. Baron felt that the above-mentioned composition for piano was better suited as a Sonatina for flute and piano. Burton revised his work according to the suggestion of his flutist acquaintance, and went on to win the Composition Contest of the New York Flute Club in 1948 with the piece, premiering it in the next year with Baron. The first prize consisted of its publication by Schirmer, thereby ensuring its considerable distribution amongst flutists.

Burton later composed a flute concerto in the same style as the Sonatina - neo-romantic with strong influences from the French impressionists, although it was never published. Burton went on to live a solitary life, making his living at Schirmer's, and later retiring to Florida. The elegant Sonatina for flute and piano is virtually his only surviving work still performed today.

**AARON COPLAND** (1900-1990) composed his Duo as late as 1971. The music is very "Typically American", similar to the mood of his Appalachian Spring. He was requested to write a piece in memory of William Kincaid by a group of former students and admirers of this great flutist. Kincaid had played with the Philadelphia Orchestra for 40 years. The dedication to the memory of Kincaid explains the elegiac qualities of the first two movements.

In the latter part of Copland's life, at least, the flute seems to have been the medium through which Copland could best express feelings of grief, loss and forlornness. A few months after completion of the Duo, he composed Threnody I for flute and string trio directly after the death of Igor Stravinsky. And in 1973, Threnody II, "Beatrice Cunningham in memoriam" was composed for the same instruments.

The remaining two pieces on this disc were both composed in 1987 and had their official premier in May of the next year. The music of **CHESTER BISCARDI** (born 1948 in Kenosha, Wisconsin) is often performed in the USA, as well as in South America, Japan and Europe. In 1987, when the National Flute Association planned its Young Artist Competition, it commissioned Biscardi to write a composition for the

semifinals, and hence the piece *Traverso* was born. The winners of that competition were Göran Marcusson and Joakim Kallhed. As part of their first prize, they performed a recital at Weill Recital Hall in Carnegie Hall, at which *Traverso* was first performed in public.

Biscardi's intention behind this lyrical piece was to test the musical and artistic capabilities of the instrumentalists rather than their virtuosity. The piece placed high demands on intonation, as well as their ability to balance and fuse the sounds of the two instruments.

"*Traverso*" means "across" in Italian, and can also be interpreted as meaning "broad". Therefore, the title refers not only to the flute, which, of course, is held horizontally, but also to the fact that the music employs a wide range of emotions and thoughts, and a broad musical landscape. The composer himself writes: "In this work I blend a Japanese landscape, in the sense of stillness, with an open landscape, in the sense of American harmonies of the 1930's and 40's."

**LOWELL LIEBERMANN** (born 1961 in New York City) has already produced an extensive number of compositions in various styles.

His Sonata for Flute and Piano, Op. 23 was commissioned by the Spoleto Festival for the flutist Paula Robison who performed the piece there for the first time in 1988, with Jean-Yves Thibaudet. The next year, the Sonata won first prize in the National Flute Association Newly Published Music Competition. The piece is also in the repertoire of James Galway who later also requested Liebermann to compose the Flute Concerto, Op. 39. Galway premiered that piece in 1979 with the St. Louis Symphony, conducted by Leonard Slatkin.

The Flute Sonata has two movements. In the first, Lento, three main themes are developed in various ways, conversing with each other to form a kind of hybrid between sonata form and arch form. In the latter part of the movement, the composer quotes material from Wotan's farewell as well as another section of Wagner's Die Walkure. The parallels are partly a result of similarities between one of the themes in the Lento and Wagner and are partly an expression of gratitude for two summers spent in Bayreuth as the guest of Wagner's granddaughter Friedelind. The second movement, entitled Presto energico, is a Tarantella-like moto perpetuo in the form of a rondo, using thematic material from the first movement. It demands extreme virtuosity of both the performers.

# GÖRAN MARCUSSON

Göran Marcusson began playing the flute at the municipal music school in Södertälje, Sweden. After studying musicology at Stockholm University, he was accepted as a flute student in the performance program at the School of Music of the University of Göteborg.

He completed his studies with a Masters degree, followed by soloist's diploma in 1992. He has won a number of prizes in international music competitions, which have provided him with the opportunity to concertize internationally.

# JOAKIM KALLHED

Joakim Kallhed began playing the piano at an early age. He completed his graduate studies in 1990 at the School of Music, Göteborg University, Sweden, where he studied with Ingmar Bergfelt. He made his debut appearance as a soloist with the Gborg Symphony Orchestra. Joakim has made numerous recordings for radio and television, including one performance on television with Victor Borge.

He has also toured the USA, South America and several European countries.



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LOWELL LIEBERMANN (1961)

Sonata

- |   |                        |       |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | <i>Lento</i>           | 10.54 |
| 2 | <i>Presto energico</i> | 3.45  |

AARON COPLAND (1900-1990)

Duo

- |   |                                  |      |
|---|----------------------------------|------|
| 3 | <i>Flowing</i>                   | 5.43 |
| 4 | <i>Poetic, somewhat mournful</i> | 5.44 |
| 5 | <i>Lively, with bounce</i>       | 3.33 |

CHESTER BISCARDI (1948)

- |   |                 |      |
|---|-----------------|------|
| 6 | <i>Traverso</i> | 8.01 |
|---|-----------------|------|

WALTER PISTON (1894-1976)

Sonata

- |   |                                      |      |
|---|--------------------------------------|------|
| 7 | <i>Allegro moderato e con grazia</i> | 5.19 |
| 8 | <i>Adagio</i>                        | 6.13 |
| 9 | <i>Allegro vivace</i>                | 3.21 |

ELDIN BURTON (1913-1979)

Sonatina

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 10 | <i>Allegretto grazioso</i>             | 3.31 |
| 11 | <i>Andantino sognando</i>              | 3.46 |
| 12 | <i>Allegro giocoso; quasi fandango</i> | 2.14 |

Tot. 62.09

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