

CONCERT-DISC

*Balanced
Acoustic*

STEREO

CS-223

the **NEW YORK
WOODWIND QUINTET**

ALEC
plays **WILDER**

WOODWIND QUINTETS Nos. 3, 4, and 6

CONCERT-DISC

An Everest Records Production
1313 N. Vine St., Hollywood 28, Calif.
Send for free catalog

THE NEW YORK WOODWIND QUINTET PLAYS ALEC WILDER'S QUINTETS No. 3—No. 4—No. 6

SIDE ONE

QUINTET No. 3

Alec Wilder and the New York Woodwind Quintet have been close musical friends since 1953, when Wilder's first woodwind quintet was given its first hearing. The friendship has led to a close and intimate working relationship, out of which has come a steady output of compositions by Wilder for woodwind quintet.

At this writing (early 1961) the total is seven woodwind quintets, a suite for woodwinds, numerous short pieces for quintet, incidental music for plays and films, a suite of children's pieces, and many transcriptions of other music for woodwind quintet. Much of this output was produced in a spirit of fun and enjoyment on the part of the composer (and, I might add, of the performers also). Some of it, however, is in the nature of serious creative work and will certainly find its way into the standard chamber music repertory.

For a historical parallel to this particular composer-performer relationship, one could go back to Anton Reicha, the Bohemian composer who lived in Paris and taught at the Paris Conservatory. In the year 1815 Reicha began to write woodwind quintets. He got together a group of five leading wind players, Messrs. Bouffil, Vogt, Guillou, Henry, and Dauprat, men who will always occupy a place of honor in the annals of woodwind chamber music, for they had the requisite skills as instrumentalists and the necessary ambition to create a new chamber music medium, and began to compose music for them. According to his own testimony, Reicha's first attempts at woodwind quintet composition did not produce interesting or successful works. (They were ultimately discarded.) But somewhere along the way, the composer began to discover the most effective vocabulary of his new medium. He began to think in terms of workable combinations for the woodwind quintet and, indeed, to conceive music directly in terms of this ensemble.

That this happened can only be explained by the musical experience, so valuable to a composer, of writing for a given medium and immediately hearing the music. To hear a performance of one's brainchild is, of course, extremely important to the composer, but what may be of even greater importance (for future efforts, anyway) is hearing many rehearsals and being able to make revisions on the spot. Furthermore, by maintaining a continuing relationship with the players, Reicha was able to progress in the development of his musical thinking so that expression in this medium became second nature for him.

And for the players, too, this type of experience is invaluable: the opportunity to work with the composer's insight into the music, rather than just with the player's insight.

An instrumentalist approaches music first of all from the viewpoint of how it is played. Mechanical problems of execution come first. To work on a new composition under the direct supervision of the composer is a precious experience, for you are working under the one person who can show you the composition as a whole — not only how the parts fit together (these are matters of ensemble and balance) but also how the musical thought progresses through a composition from beginning to end.

So the interaction between composer and performer is definitely two-way traffic and beneficial to both.

Reicha's quintet became enormously popular in Paris. The performers gave many, many soirees of chamber music and Reicha wrote an ever-increasing number of woodwind quintets, eventually reaching a total of 24 complete works in this medium. The first publication of Reicha's music bore a manifesto opposite the title page, which was signed by the five wind-playing pioneers: Vogt, Guillou, Bouffil, Henry, and Dauprat.

SIDE TWO

QUINTET No. 4

QUINTET No. 6

This manifesto made the following points:

1. That the string instruments were predominant in chamber music largely because of the classic literature of Haydn and Mozart.
2. If the players of wind instruments wanted to take their rightful place in chamber music, they would have to get composers to write for them.
3. That composers would be most stimulated to compose chamber music works for wind instruments if the members of wind ensembles made real efforts to improve their level of performance; that they should strive for color and expression in their playing.
4. That these works (the Reicha quintets) are now issued to the public with the hope that they would inspire wind ensembles already in existence to higher levels of performance and stimulate new group to form.

We thus see that our five wind pioneers had a definite sense of mission, and that Reicha, the composer, both inspired this and exploited it.

To complete the parallel between Anton Reicha and his five wind-player friends, and Alec Wilder and the New York Woodwind Quintet, I could point out that some of the same conditions existed. There was an ambitious young group of chamber-music players (The New York Woodwind Quintet) eager to expand their repertoire, looking for new musical experience, and a composer (Alec Wilder) well-known and successful in other areas of music, eager to write chamber music, specifically woodwind quintets. There were many meetings, rehearsals, discussions. There were concerts, recordings, playbacks. Finally, there emerged a style, expressive of the composer's true nature, expressive of the nature of the ensemble, — something quite unlike other trends in contemporary music, but something more intimate and personal.

The three quintets by Alec Wilder on this record date from the years 1957-1960. Quintet Number 3 is the most energetic and angular in its outer movements but it has a characteristic Wilder tenderness in the second movement and characteristic Wilder whimsy in the Scherzo. The original meaning of Scherzo is "joke" and this particular Scherzo has a joke within a joke. I refer to the section in the middle where the tempo suddenly doubles and assumes a rakish, strutting gait, not a little Chaplinesque. Towards the end of the third movement, and in the fourth movement again, there appears a thematic phenomenon not usually associated with the style of Alec Wilder — a twelve-tone row! Dodecaphonic musicologists, give careful attention!

The fourth quintet is sad in mood. It is a composition of farewell and was dedicated to Bernard Garfield, who was bassoonist of the New York Woodwind Quintet for many years.

Wilder took special delight in writing for Garfield, particularly complicated technical passages. It was a challenge for both men and there was much friendly rivalry and kidding between them. When Garfield left the New York Woodwind Quintet in 1957, (to become first bassoonist with the Philadelphia Symphony) Wilder dedicated his fourth quintet to him. The listener will notice, however, that even this quintet is not without its humor.

Quintet No. 6 is the most orthodox in design (for Alec Wilder). It has two middle movements that are characteristic pieces, a lullaby and a march, and more rhythmic and contrapuntal textures in the outer movements. One of the most striking moments in this quintet comes near the end, where there is a beautifully sentimental flowering of a theme or sub-theme that had always been played quickly and non-feelingly. In a way, this is profoundly characteristic of Wilder's music in its ironic insistence on tenderness.

Notes by: Samuel Baron, N. Y. W. W. Q.



CONCERT-DISC
Connoisseur Series

ALEC WILDER: Woodwind Quintets

CS-223

SIDE 1

The New York Woodwind Quintet

Samuel Baron, flute; Jerome Roth, oboe; David Glazer,
clarinet; John Barrows, horn; Arthur Weisberg, bassoon

Quintet No. 3

1. Allegro fugato
2. In choral style
3. Allegro Scherzando
4. Andante - Allegro

AN AFFILIATE OF EVEREST RECORDS • 10920 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024



CONCERT-DISC
Connoisseur Series

ALEC WILDER: Woodwind Quintets

The New York Woodwind Quintet

Samuel Baron, flute; Jerome Roth, oboe; David Glazer,
clarinet; John Barrows, horn; Arthur Weisberg, bassoon

Quintet No. 4

1. Andante cantabile
2. Allegro Energico
3. Allegro
4. Slowly, with warmth
and intensity

Quintet No. 6

1. Allegro
2. Andante
3. March
4. Allegro giocoso

AN AFFILIATE OF EVEREST RECORDS • 10920 WILSHIRE BOULEVARD • LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90024