

# THE CIOMPI QUARTET



## Melancholie

EARL KIM  
THREE POEMS IN FRENCH  
SUSAN NARUCKI, MEZZO-SOPRANO

PAUL HINDEMITH  
MELANCHOLIE, OP. 13  
SUSAN NARUCKI, MEZZO-SOPRANO

ARVO PÄRT  
EIN WALLFAHRTS LIED, PSALM 121  
STEVEN THARP, TENOR

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS  
ON WENLOCK EDGE  
STEVEN THARP, TENOR  
JANE HAWKINS, PIANO



This recording project was sparked by concerts in New Hampshire (Monadnock Music) and North Carolina (Duke University) performed by the Ciampi Quartet with guest artists, Susan Naruki and Steven Tharp. We loved working with both singers, and had the idea that a disc of music featuring a solo singer with string quartet would be both unusual and intriguing. Each of the four works on the disc is wonderfully evocative, and each exploits the medium extremely well. Our title for the CD, *Melancholie*, is taken from the Hindemith cycle, but it also expresses the overall feeling of the four works.

The two larger pieces on this CD, Hindemith's *Melancholie* and Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, have interesting parallels. Both are works by young men who went on to have long and distinguished careers. Both works represent a coming of age for their respective composers. At the time these works were written, the com-

Hindemith and Vaughan Williams were reviled by modernists and by academics as hopelessly conservative. Subsequently, each composer has had a resurgence of attention and respect. Finally, both Hindemith and Vaughan Williams must be counted among the major figures of 20th century music, with many works in the standard repertory.

For Vaughan Williams, *On Wenlock Edge*, written in 1908-09 was an important breakthrough. Along with the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* it established him as an important presence in the English musical scene. His development had been slow. A long apprenticeship included studies at The Royal College of Music, Cambridge, in France with Ravel and in Germany with Max Bruch. His prominent family included important judges on his father's side, and Darwins and Wedgewoods on his mother's. Vaughan Williams received early musical training from a cousin, but was slow to acquire skill as a composer. Another relative

quarters, and barely survived Allied attacks himself. Although the poet Christian Morgenstern wrote his famous cycle *Melancholie* in around 1906, the four poems drawn from it served as perfect vehicles for the young Hindemith to reflect on the war, and to memorialize his friend, Karl Kohler, who was one of its victims.

When Hindemith was not on duty, he found time to compose and perform music. His performances were often as a member of a string quartet consisting of soldiers. (Hindemith played first violin; soon afterwards he switched over to viola.) It is likely that *Melancholie* was conceived for performance by his own group. Among the many marvelous instrumental effects is the undulations in the strings beginning the second song to portray the deep mists in the forest. The passage evokes Debussy's string quartet, and indeed Hindemith and his colleagues had played through this work on hearing of its composer's death in 1917. There is a heart-felt quote by Hindemith paying homage to Debussy, despite the war raging

between their nations. Hindemith wrote that in playing the Debussy quartet, he first realized the transcendental power of music. Other brilliant touches include the deathly dry plucked strings in "Dark Drop" (players are instructed to pluck at the bridge, which takes away almost all resonance from the sound). The soprano sounds a funeral march in short, halting phrases. In each song the composer paints the phrases with deft strokes. The final song, "Dreamwood" is a vision of an afterlife. Here there is a touch of Wagner's "Libestod" and a sigh of resignation in the vocal line. The instrumental coda is of an other-worldly sweetness.

Both *On Wenlock Edge* and *Melancholie* speak of the tragic aspect of life. Listening to them reminds us that art, even when its content is suffering and death, is ennobling rather than depressing.

Earl Kim has written the following about his *Three Poems in French*:

"*Three Poems in French* represents a long-standing desire on my part to do a setting of some French texts. The ones most familiar

## Texts

### Earl Kim Three Poems in French

*En Sourdine*

(Paul Verlaine)

(from *Fêtes Galantes*, 1st Collection)

Calmes dans le demi-jour  
Que les branches hautes font,  
Pénétrons bien notre amour,  
De ce silence profond.

Fondons nos âmes, nos coeurs  
Et nos sens extasiés,  
Parmi les vagues languors  
Des pins et des arbousiers.

Ferme les yeux à demi,  
Croise tes bras sur ton sein,  
Et de ton coeur endormi  
Chasse à jamais tout dessein.

Laissons-nous persuader  
Au souffle bercuer et doux  
Qui vient à tes pieds rider  
Les ondes des gazon roux.

Et quand, solennel, le soir  
Des chênes noirs tombera,  
Voix de notre désespoir,  
Le rossignol chantera.

*Muted*

(Paul Verlaine)

(from *Fêtes Galantes*, 1st Collection)

Calm in the half-light  
That the high branches make  
Let our love be penetrated  
By this profound silence.

Let us fuse our souls, our hearts,  
And our ecstatic senses,  
Amid the vague languors  
Of the pines and the arbutus.

Close your eyes halfway,  
Cross your arms on your breast,  
And from your sleepy heart  
Chase forever all design.

Let us be persuaded  
By the cradling and soft wind  
That comes to your feet to ripple  
The waves of russet grass.

And when, solemnly, the evening  
Falls from the black oaks,  
Voice of our despair,  
The nightingale will sing.

Paul Hindemith  
Melancholie

(Christian Morgenstern, trans. Yvonne Ivory)

Die Primeln blühen und grüßen

“Die Primeln blühen und grüßen  
so lieblich mir zu Füßen,  
die Amsel singt so laut.  
Die Sonne scheint so helle –  
nur ich weiß eine Stelle,  
dahin kein Himmel blaut.”

–Feins Kind, muß nicht so sagen!  
Es bringt der Himmelswagen  
auch deiner Brust den Tag.  
Es wird auch deine Seele  
der lieben Vogelkehle  
gleichetun mit lautem Schlag.

“Die Primeln blühen und grüßen  
so lieblich mir zu Füßen,  
die Amsel singt so laut.  
Die Sonne scheint so helle–  
Mein freundlicher Geselle,  
mir ward viel Leid vertraut.”

Nevelweben

Der Nebelweber webt im Wald  
ein weißes Hemd für sein Gemahl.  
Die steht wie eine Birke schmal  
in einem grauen Felsenspalt.

Im Winde schauert leis und beb't  
ihr dämmergrünes Lockenlaub.  
Sie läßt ihr Zittern ihm als Raub.  
Der Nebelweber webt und webt...

The Primroses Bloom and Greet Me

“The primroses bloom and greet me  
Arrayed at my feet so sweetly  
And loudly the blackbird sings.  
The sun's rays brightly glow  
But there's one place I know  
that never sees a blue sky sees.”

–Dear child, don't say such things  
Heaven's chariot also brings  
daylight into your heart.  
Your spirit too will rejoice  
like a bird with a precious voice  
and bring forth a resounding beat.

“The primroses bloom and greet me  
Arrayed at my feet so sweetly  
And loudly the blackbird sings.  
The sun's rays brightly glow–  
But alas, dear friend, I know  
And have known much suffering.”

Mistweaving

Among the trees the mistweaver weaves  
a white shift for his lady.  
To a rocky gray crevasse she cleaves,  
standing slim as a birch tree.

The wind trembles gently and shakes  
Her curly dusk-green crown of leaves.  
As his prize her shudders are all he takes,  
The mistweaver who weaves and weaves...

Arvo Pärt  
Ein Wallfahrtslied (Psalm 121)

Ich hebe meine Augen auf zu den Bergen.  
Woher kommt mir Hilfe?  
Meine Hilfe kommt vom Herrn,  
der Himmel und Erde gemacht hat.  
Er wird deinen Fuß nicht gleiten lassen,  
Und der dich behütet, schläft nicht.  
Siehe, der Hüter Israels  
schläft und schlummert nicht.  
Der Herr behütet dich;  
Der Herr ist dein Schatten über deiner rechten Hand,  
daß dich des Tages die Sonne nicht steche  
noch der Mond des Nachts.  
Der Herr behüte dich vor allem Übel,  
Er behüte deine Seele.  
Der Herr behüte deinen Ausgang und Eingang  
Von nun an bis in Ewigkeit!

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills.  
From whence cometh my help?  
My help cometh from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth.  
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:  
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.  
Behold, He that keepeth Israel  
shall neither slumber nor sleep.  
The Lord is thy keeper:  
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.  
The sun shall not smite thee by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:  
He shall preserve thy soul.  
The Lord shall preserve thy going out  
and thy coming in for now and evermore.

### Oh, When I Was I Love With You

Oh, when I was in love with you  
Then I was clean and brave,  
And miles around the wonder grew  
How well did I behave.

And now the fancy passes by  
And nothing will remain,  
And miles around they'll say that I  
Am quite myself again.

### Bredon Hill

In summertime on Bredon  
The bells they sound so clear;  
Round both the shires they ring them  
In steeples far and near,  
A happy noise to hear.

Here of a Sunday morning  
My love and I would lie,  
And see the coloured counties,  
And hear the larks so high  
About us in the sky.

The bells would ring to call her  
In valleys miles away:  
"Come all to church, good people;  
Good people, come and pray."  
But here my love would stay.

And I would turn and answer  
Among the springing thyme,  
"Oh, peal upon our wedding,  
And we will hear the chime,  
And come to church in time."

But when the snows at Christmas  
On Bredon top were strown,  
My love rose up so early  
And stole out unbeknown  
And went to church alone.

They tolled the one bell only,  
Groom there was none to see,  
The mourners followed after,  
And so to church went she,  
And would not wait for me.

The bells they sound on Bredon,  
And still the steeples hum.  
"Come all to church, good people," –  
Oh, noisy bells, be dumb;  
I hear you, I will come.

### Clun

In valleys of springs of rivers,  
By Ony and Teme and Clun,  
The country for easy livers,  
The quietest under the sun,

We still had sorrows to lighten,  
One could not be always glad,  
And lads knew trouble at Knighton  
When I was a Knighton lad.

By bridges that Thames runs under,  
In London, the town built ill,  
'Tis sure small matter for wonder  
If sorrow is with one still.

And if as a lad grows older  
The troubles he bears are more,  
He carries his griefs on a shoulder  
That handselled them long before.

Where shall one halt to deliver  
This luggage I'd lief set down?  
Nor Thames, nor Teme is the river,  
Nor London nor Knighton the town:

'Tis a long way further than Knighton,  
A quieter place than Clun,  
Where doomsday may thunder and lighten  
And little 'twill matter to one.

began his studies as a youth in Detroit, later graduated from the Juilliard School, and then received his M.M. from SUNY-Binghamton, where he also performed as a member of the Amici Quartet. Mr. Raimi won the International Cello Competition in Portugal in 1971 and was a member of Pablo Casals' final master class. He has participated in chamber music festivals throughout the country, including the Spoleto Festival, Marlboro Festival, and Monadnock Festival.

### Steven Tharp

Opera, concert and recital feature equally in the career of tenor Steven Tharp, who was born in Springfield, Missouri and attended the Wichita State University School of Music. Mr. Tharp has appeared with most of the major U.S. orchestras, including the Chicago Symphony (under Solti and Barenboim), the New York Philharmonic (Masur), the Cincinnati Symphony (Conlon), and the Cleveland Orchestra (von Dohnanyi), as well as the Royal Philharmonic, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and orchestras throughout the United States and Canada. Always highly regarded in the lyrical concert works of Bach and Mozart, Mr. Tharp has gradually expanded his repertoire to include Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* and *Missa Solemnis*, the Verdi *Requiem*, Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* and

Britten's *War Requiem*.

In 2002, Mr. Tharp debuted with the Metropolitan Opera in Prokofiev's *War and Peace*. He has also appeared with the New York City Opera, Glimmerglass Opera, Opera Pacific, the Minnesota Opera, and the companies of Dallas, Houston, Seattle, Memphis, Omaha, Salt Lake City and Miami. He has performed abroad with the Netherlands Opera, the Badisches Staatsooper in Karlsruhe, and in other theaters in Germany, Belgium and Hong Kong. He has sung more than 50 operatic roles, including the major tenor parts of Mozart, many Handel roles (including Emilio in the American premiere of *Partenope* and Lelio in the first modern revival of *Scipione*), Nemorino in *L'Elisir d'Amore*, Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, David in Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*, the Steersman in *Der Fleigende Holländer*, Lysander in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Victor Frankstein in the world premiere of Libby Larsen's *Frankenstein, the Modern Prometheus*.

Mr. Tharp has appeared in recital at the Newport Chamber Music Festival, the Carmel Bach Festival, the Monadnock Festival, Caramoor, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, the 92nd Street Y and Weill Recital Hall. He has recorded for the Decca/London, Newport, BBC Music and Naxos American Classics labels.



Ansell, Gregory Fulkerson, Charles Wadsworth, and Sharon Robinson.

A faculty member at Duke University during the academic year, Hawkins spends her summers teaching and performing at the Musicorda Festival in Massachusetts. She frequently performs contemporary chamber music, and has worked with composers John Harbison, Barbara Kolb, Maxwell Raimi, and Robert Ward, with whom she has made two recordings on the Bay Cities label. With violist Jonathan Bagg, she has recently completed a CD of the works of Robert Fuchs. With violinist Sarah Johnson, Hawkins performed the program "Aural Landscapes" throughout the Southeast, including appearances at Piccolo Spoleto and SECCA in Winston-Salem. She is a founding member of the Mallarmé Chamber Players and North Carolina Chamber Soloists.

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