

**Program Notes to New England Reveries CD recording,  
Crystal Records CD691**

**Mark Nelson, Tuba; Sylvia Parker, Piano**

**Program**

*Fantasia Breve* by Barton Cummings 11:49 tracks 1, 2, 3

Published by PRB Productions 963 Peralta Ave., Albany, CA 94706-2144.

The following notes were supplied by the composer:

It has been a desire of mine to have the time to concentrate on original composing and at the beginning of 1989, I plotted out a design whereby I could set aside time in large blocks that could be devoted to composing. *Fantasia Breve* is the third composition to be published in 1989. The other two are a set of pieces for solo tuba, now published, and a piece for younger band, also published. Both pieces led me to this current work by a somewhat circuitous route, yet a logical one in my mind. It is interesting to me that all three of the pieces, when once begun, flowed easily and completely and all three required little, if any, rewrite. *Fantasia Breve* is in three movements with the outer movements being fast and the middle movement, slow. A "fantasy" is not usually in any kind of strict form, although each movement is tied together, yet each movement could be placed independently of the others and make a complete piece, albeit short. That they proceed in a logical fashion is, I suppose, because during the time I worked on it, I worked only on it and with the thought that there would be three movements. I wanted to create, even in the slow movement, a virtuoso work that would contain intense rhythmic activity, harmonic diversity and a sense of drama. I also wanted to create a work that would display all of the many stylistic potentials of the tuba without reverting to any unusual or extended performance techniques and at the same time give the piano part its own integrity and independence within the whole. I wrote this piece specifically for Mark Nelson and it is respectfully dedicated to him.

The premiere took place on October 11, 1989 by Mark Nelson and Sylvia Parker at the University of Vermont Music Building Recital Hall.

Barton Cummings (b. 1946) is a noted tubist and scholar who has commissioned and premiered over thirty compositions and has four solo recordings to his credit. He has taught on the faculties of San Diego State University, Point Loma Nazarene College, and Delta State University in Mississippi. He is currently the Music Director of the Walnut Creek Concert Band, a music teacher in the San Francisco bay area, and an active writer and composer with several dozen compositions, several hundred music reviews, and many articles to his credit.

*Parable for Solo Tuba* by Vincent Persichetti 10:16 track 4

Published by Elkan-Vogel, Inc. C/O Theodore Presser Co., Presser Place, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010.

*Parable for Solo Tuba* was written at the request of Harvey Phillips, noted tuba soloist and impresario in 1981 and premiered by him on April 25, 1982 at Carnegie Recital Hall in New York City. It is published by Elkan-Vogel Music. The parable series all refer to earlier works of the composer for melodic and rhythmic inspiration. In a letter to Mark Nelson, Persichetti describes the *Parables* as "...musical essays that convey a meaning indirectly by the use of

comparisons or analogies." This work is based on sections of the *Creation* for mixed chorus, soloists, and orchestra which premiered in 1970. The text of the specific sections quoted in this piece recalls the void before creation gathered from various cultures and sources. In another letter, Persichetti describes the relationship of the Parable for Solo Tuba to the Creation as:

Think of the tuba player backstage during intermission improvising on a basic segment of The Creation having just been performed. Think of the composer (me) shaping fragments begot into a musical form that stands on its own.

For additional information regarding this composition, the reader is referred to "Program Notes for the Solo Tuba" compiled and edited by Gary Bird (Indian University Press) where the author has written a comprehensive overview of this work. The reader is also invited to read the author's DMA research paper from Arizona State completed in 1985 for an in depth study of all of solo brass Parables.

Vincent Persichetti (1915-1987) wrote for nearly every medium including twenty-six compositions entitled Parable. He taught at the Julliard School from 1947-1987 assuming the chairmanship of the composition department in 1963. He was appointed Director of the publishing firm Elkan-Vogel, Inc. in 1952 and has had over 150 compositions published through it. He wrote an enduring text entitled "Twentieth Century Harmony" which is still in print. Many of his early band works are frequently performed and are now considered classics in that medium.

*New England Reveries* by Neal Corwell 9:16 track 5  
Published by Nicolai Music P.O. Box 253 Clear Spring, MD 21722.

The following notes about *New England Reveries* have been supplied by the composer:

As a brass musician with a fascination for both synthesizers and composition, it was only natural that one day I would decide to combine these three musical loves. *Night Song*, a piece for solo euphonium accompanied by a pre-recorded synthesizer tape, was my first effort in this genre. Unlike many pieces for solo instrument with synthesizer, the music is tonal, and the synthesizer is NOT used merely as a source of bizarre sound effects. Instead, analog and digital synthesis techniques are utilized as a means of expanding the timbral palette available to the composer in support of the featured instrument. Mark Nelson was present at the 1989 premiere of *Night Song*. He later commissioned me to write a similar piece for inclusion on his compact disc with Crystal Records. *New England Reveries* composition for solo tuba with a taped synthesizer accompaniment, is the product of that commission. The score was completed during July of 1990, and the final version of the synthesizer accompaniment was recorded during the first few weeks of the following September, just in time for its premiere. Though not specifically programmatic in content, the composition was inspired by the scenic beauty of the forests, mountains, and lakes of New England. The music is intended to evoke images similar to those that might be conjured up while contemplating these wonders of nature.

Neal Corwell (b. 1959) holds music degrees from Frostburg State (B.S.), George Mason University (M.A.) and the D.M.A. from the University of Maryland. From 1981 until 1989, Neal served as a featured euphonium soloist with the Pershing's Own, The US Army Band in Washington, D.C. He is currently an adjunct faculty member at Shepherd College and is a euphoniumist in the acclaimed professional low brass ensemble, *Symphonia*. He is a published composer and arranger with his specialty being music for brass solo instruments with synthesizer accompaniment. Neal's debut CD recording as a solo artist, *Distant Images*, was released in Fall 1994 by Nicolai Music. The recording features over an hour's worth of original music for brass

and synthesizers, all composed, arranged, and performed by Mr. Corwell.

*Escher's Sketches* by Walter Ross 9:12 tracks 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Published by Mark Tezak Verlag Postfach 101360. 5090 Leverkusen 1, Germany.

*Escher's Sketches* for solo tuba was written for Mark Nelson after years of correspondence with the composer primarily regarding performances of several of his other works for tuba. The premiere by Mark Nelson took place on October 19, 1986 at the University of Vermont Music Building Recital Hall. This multi-movement composition is based upon selected lithographs of the noted Dutch artist M.C. Escher. There are many musical associations with the drawings. For example, the music of "Magic Mirror" is in itself a mirror, as the second half is an inversion at the major third of the first. Each movement in some way reflects the drawing which inspired it.

Walter Ross (b. 1936) is currently Professor of Composition at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville and former chair of the Department of Music. He has also served as President of the Southeastern Composer's League. Dr. Ross has written over 100 works, most of them for wind instruments in a variety of combinations, including two trombone concertos along with ten other concertos for wind instruments, a piano concerto, a symphony for chorus and orchestra, a one-act opera, chamber music and many songs. His works are published by Boosey and Hawkes, Tezak Verlag, Dorn Publications, and TUBA Press.

*Sonata-Fantasia* by Louis Calabro 23:00 tracks 11, 12, 13

Published by Tuba-Euphonium Press

The *Sonata-Fantasia* grew out of an exchange of correspondence between the performer and composer after a Vermont Symphony Orchestra performance of Calabro's *Third Symphony* in 1986. *Sonata-Fantasia* was premiered on September 16, 1987 by Mark Nelson and Sylvia Parker at a faculty recital at the University of Vermont Music Building Recital Hall. The piece, in Calabro's words, is "...sort of a 'macro-minimalist' composition where several melodies are heard over repeating ostinato figures by the pianist, especially in the outer movements." There are jazz elements such as added note chords and a modified "blues" scale in the second and third movements. He also makes daring use of sixteenth notes and extended range in fast tempo sections.

Louis Calabro (1926-1991) taught at Bennington College, Vermont from 1955 until his death. He has a diploma from the Julliard School where he studied with his long-time friend and colleague Vincent Persichetti. In addition to being a prolific composer, Calabro was also the conductor of the Sage Symphony in Bennington for over two decades and was a founding member of the Vermont Consortium of Composers.

total: 63:57

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