

The final volume of this series concludes the set of twenty-four preludes, and further emphasizes some of the common ground between jazz, classical music and the many fertile traditions of folk and art music which have evolved throughout the world. The range of influences is, perhaps, even broader than in the previous volumes. This is probably due to my more frequent remembrance of various musics which made a deep impression on my consciousness during a particular stage in my life. These remembrances seem to be, at least in part, a kind of involuntary protective response to the increasing banality and emptiness in the music which dominates contemporary life through its aggressive and relentless presence in films, commercials and radio and television programs. These older musics, which evolved out of a higher human need than merchandising or ego boosting, are reminders of the incredible power of music to communicate across cultures and through centuries or even millennia. Such music transcends historic and cultural differences which are often more a question of packaging than content, and speaks to the deepest levels of our common humanity. Such music is clearly, as Duke Ellington would have said, beyond category.

Preludes XIX and XX were inspired by my love of Brazilian music and, in particular, the work of Antonio Carlos Jobim. Of course, when discussing the fusion of jazz and classical elements with those of Brazilian music, the unique contribution of Clare Fischer is another important source which really sensitizes one's musical imagination. Prelude XIX is a bit more in the direction of a samba, while Prelude XX is a moody and reflective bossa nova. The "A" section of the AABA theme in Prelude XX is actually a variation of a 12-bar minor

blues, elaborately disguised by the chromatic harmony. Prelude XXI was inspired by the exotic sounds of Balinese gamelan music. It is based on a characteristic Balinese scale, called pelog, which consists of the third, fourth, fifth, seventh and eighth degrees of the major scale.

Prelude XXII was inspired by memories of Japanese koto music, which I listened to rather frequently during the 1980s. This piece uses a still different pentatonic scale, which consists of the first, second, fourth, fifth and sixth degrees of the natural minor scale (the sixth mode of the major scale, also known as the Aeolian mode).

The main theme of Prelude XXIII is based on the harmonic progression of the Gershwin standard, "I Got Rhythm." In addition to the obvious Tristano influence on the melody, my wide-ranging harmonic interests from Ellington and Gil Evans to Bob Brookmeyer and Clare Fischer are given some space in the "shout chorus," just before the return of the main theme.

Prelude XXIV returns to the influences of Spanish music, especially that of the flamenco tradition. Having spent many months throughout Spain while presenting workshops and playing concerts during the early 1980s, the music and its place in the everyday life of the people made a lasting impression.

Ludwig van Beethoven's Adagio Cantabile, from the Pathétique Sonata (opus 13), is one of classical music's most beautiful melodies. The opening phrases sound as natural and organic as the most enduring folk melody. It is no coincidence that folk music has been an indispensable musical resource for classical composers from Bach to Stravinsky. Even pop artist Billy Joel was moved to write lyrics for this melody, which he recorded under the title, "This Night," on the 1983 album, *An*

### *Innocent Man.*

After Johann Sebastian Bach and Duke Ellington, Clare Fischer has been one of the strongest influences on my musical aesthetic. “Ornithardy” and “Igor” are two of his compositions from the truly unique recording, *Extension*, which was the first Clare Fischer recording I ever heard. Although I bought the record when it came out in 1963, it wasn’t until 1976 that I finally began to hear and understand how this music worked, and why it sounded so special. I am still convinced it was one of the most musically worthwhile investments of time and effort I have ever made. “Ornithardy,” one of my favorite jazz waltzes, is dedicated to Clare’s ornithologist friend John William Hardy, who also wrote the liner notes for many of Clare’s recordings. “Igor” refers to Stravinsky, and takes its opening harmonies from his historically influential ballet, “The Rite of Spring.” The second theme of “Igor,” with its incorporation of stride piano elements and the blues, is a perfect example of a natural and convincing fusion of jazz and classical elements.

“Comrade Conrad,” by pianist Bill Evans, has long been a predilection of mine, both for its melody and for its unique harmonic construction. The sixteen-measure theme is composed so that it ends in a minor key which is a perfect fifth higher than that of the opening minor key (a minor to e minor, for example). Since the theme begins with phrases in relative major and minor keys (C major and a minor, for example), an extended performance eventually covers all twelve major and minor keys. That makes it an ideal workout piece for developing facility at playing and improvising in all the keys. Since my twenty-four preludes also cover all major and minor keys, it seemed fitting to include this Evans com-

position in the final volume.

“Amazing Grace” was my mother’s favorite hymn, and it has roots in a variety of cultural contexts from the folk music of Great Britain to the American gospel music tradition. I have always loved its melody. Through recent tragic events, however, it has achieved special significance. On Tuesday, September 11, 2001, terrorists hijacked four commercial airliners and crashed two of them into New York’s World Trade Center and a third into the Pentagon in Washington, D.C.. With thousands of casualties in New York alone, this was easily the worst single criminal act in U.S. history. People throughout the world were literally numbed for days and weeks following the horrific event. For some reason, “Amazing Grace” was one of the most frequently heard songs to be included in the many religious and civil ceremonies which gave expression to the indescribable feelings of loss and vulnerability shared by survivors throughout the world. The comforting message of this song in the face of such tragedy confirmed my feeling that it would provide the right conclusion for this series.

I would like to dedicate this recording to my sister, Sharon. Although she is almost eight years younger than I am, we have grown especially close since her late teen years. We have both been misfits of sorts, but in the best sense. We don’t tend to feel strongly identified with particular social, political, cultural or religious categories. The advantage of this, however, has been the luxury of enjoying and appreciating the best that any and all such groups have to offer. Such cultural free spirits can often recognize common elements shared by diverse traditions which are not always easily spotted by those whose nature tends toward a more partisan stance.