

Oboe CD Review

By Leslie Odom
Gainesville, Florida

Nancy Ambrose King :
The Winning Program
(Boston Records) BR 1019CD

Nancy Ambrose King is currently professor of oboe at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. She shows great sensitivity to the musical lines, regardless of the time period. King makes it sound so easy. Her playing is effortless with a wide variety of tone colors. There is never any hesitation or struggle. King's wonderfully expressive playing is consistent throughout all the ranges. Her technical passage work is clean and accurate. I highly recommend this CD as a welcome addition to every oboist's listening library. For more information about Ms. King, please see the interview published in the IDRS Journal, Vol. 19, No. 1, Spring 1996.

Telemann Partita No. 5 in e minor for Violin or Oboe

This Partita will be a welcome addition to the oboist's repertoire. Overall, the writing lays nicely for the oboe as it is primarily on the staff. There is ample opportunity for ornamentation, as expected. Some interesting aspects found in this Partita include imitation between the solo voice and the continuo, chain suspensions, sequences of diatonic seventh chords and an unexpected use of chromaticism through the use of secondary dominants. Many of the movements are in some type of binary form with typical modulations to the minor dominant or the relative major.

Antal Dorati Duo Concertante for Oboe and Piano

This work was commissioned by **Heinz Holliger** in 1983, who also gave the premiere performance in 1984. It is a well constructed piece where the opening oboe line presents the intervallic material used in the rest of movement. Dorati expands the opening minor seconds and thirds to major seconds and thirds as the movement progresses. The first indication of this is in the piano accompaniment which utilizes chords built out of minor and major thirds. The entire first movement allows for the performer's freedom and interpretation since it is primarily cadenza-like throughout. The closing filled-in third provides the connection between the two movements.

In the second movement, the thematic material is shared between the two instruments. Often, the oboe fills in the missing pitch for the material in the piano's right hand. Thematically, the minor second and its inversion, the major seventh, provide much of the material. The major and minor thirds from the first movement are now combined in the oboe part to create various qualities of triads. Dorati continues to extend the harmonies by using quartal chords midway through the movement. As to be expected, whole tone scales (major seconds) also appear near the end of the movement as well. A small reference to the material from movement I appears near the end of movement II before the flashy ending.

Madeleine Dring (1923-1977) was an English violinist, pianist, singer and composer. While at the Royal College of Music in London, she studied composition with Herbert Howells, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gordon Jacob. Dring's compositional style has been described as simple, honest and unassuming. Her writing combines unique and distinct stylistic features with refined and subtle usage of harmonic and melodic aspects. Many of her oboe works were written for her husband, **Roger Lord**, himself a professional oboist. Dring's *Three Piece Suite for Oboe and Piano* is characteristic of her works. In the first movement, Showpiece, passages of irregular meters are alternated with regular meters, which keeps the listener unsettled as to where the downbeat is. The second movement, Romance, presents a lyrical melody over a simple accompaniment. Dring divides the movement into three parts. Instead of creating new material for the middle section, Dring merely writes the same melody at a pitch level of a third lower. The Finale is very technical and rhythmical, but unlike the first movement, the third movement stays in common time.

Memories for Solo Oboe, written by **Lawrence Singer** (b. 1942), was commissioned by Oboe International, the company which sponsored the Third New York Competition for Solo Oboists. Singer is himself an oboist. The four movements of this work expand the "normal" limits of oboe playing. Throughout the work, the performer must develop the flexibility to perform fast technical passagework over all ranges at extreme dynamic

contrasts. Often, lyrical melodic phrases are interspersed with these technical passages. The piece is very challenging in respect to endurance. The combination of constant playing with extreme range changes can take their toll on the player.

Giovanni Daelli - *Fantasy on Themes from Verdi's "Rigoletto" for Oboe and Piano*

This Fantasy was written as a virtuosic piece for the oboist. The composer, **Giovanni Daelli**, was solo oboist at La Scala in Milan and professor of oboe at the Conservatory. The material he used for the Fantasy are popular melodies taken from Verdi's opera, *Rigoletto*. All of the melodies used were originally written for the oboe, however, Daelli reworked them to keep them in the same key for this piece. Historically, the oboe had just been transformed from a two-keyed instrument to a multi-keyed system. Daelli's variations are quite typical with most being an embellishment of the theme. One melody is presented in the parallel minor key at a slower, more expressive tempo. This brings the piece to fast, technical passage work at the end, all in the effort to show off the abilities of the performer. ❖

About the Author ...

Dr. Leslie Odom is currently associate professor of oboe and music theory at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. Most recently, Dr. Odom was elected to serve as national vice president, college chapters, for Sigma Alpha Iota International Music

Fraternity for Women. In this position, she is responsible for supervising and directing the work of the fraternity's 180+ college chapters over the next three years.

*Originally from Indiana, Dr. Odom received her bachelor of music in oboe performance with a minor in music theory from Butler University in Indianapolis. After spending the next few years at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Dr. Odom went to the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, where she studied oboe with **Richard Killmer**. Along with receiving a master's degree in music theory and a doctorate in oboe performance and literature (1989), she also was awarded the coveted Performer's Certificate.*

Dr. Odom performed as one of the three finalists in the Graduate Performance Competition at the 1987 National Convention of S A I, placing as first runner-up. She has performed with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, the Cedar Rapids Symphony (Iowa), the Jacksonville Symphony (Florida), the Central Florida Symphony (Ocala), and the Gainesville Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Odom has participated in various music festivals, including Tanglewood (1979), Aspen (1980, 1982, and 1983), and as a visiting artist at the Banff Centre for the Arts in Banff, Canada (1996).

Dr. Odom is a member of the International Double Reed Society, the Society of Music Theory, Music Teachers National Association, the International Alliance for Women in Music, the National Association of College Wind and Percussion Instructors, Pi Kappa Lambda, Order of Omega, and Mortar Board.