

## THE REAL BEELER

This album represents the second collection of my orchestral works to be released by PARMA Recordings. It encompasses works that cover the span of over 50 years that I have been writing music, and demonstrates my interest in and love of the orchestra as a sound medium as well as features a number of solo instruments contained within it.

My career in music began with my studies in music theory and composition at Illinois Wesleyan University in Bloomington IL from 1957 to 1961. My theory training was with Dr. John Silber and my composition teacher was Dr. Will Ogden. My earliest attempts at writing music were completed in 1959. Dr. Ogden had me choose models to guide my efforts. For example, I chose some pieces from Bartók's *Mikrokosmos*, Volume 3 in creating my *3 Bagatelles after Bartók* for piano.

The earliest composition connected to this album collection was my *Piece after Sessions* for piano. It was based on an analysis of the second movement of Sessions' *From my Diary* pieces for piano. Twenty-five years later, I went back and orchestrated this piece, expanding it slightly in the process. This became my *Homage to Roger Sessions* for orchestra of 1986.

My graduate studies at Washington University in St. Louis (my hometown) were with Leigh Gerdine in theory, Robert Wykes, Robert Baker, and Harold Blumenfeld in composition. This was my more radical period of experimentation. In one of the works composed at this time, I attempted to create a setting of William Blake's *Mad Song* for chorus [SSATTB]. It proved too demanding for any available vocal ensembles, so I later decided to rewrite it for orchestra at about the same time as I orchestrated the *Homage to Roger Sessions*.

I had both works premiered at Eastern Kentucky University by the University Orchestra, conducted by John Roberts. Several years later I had the good fortune to get them recorded in Prague, Czech Republic, by the Prague Radio Orchestra directed by Vladimír Válek, thanks to the Master Musicians Collective and Tom McKinley. This experience encouraged me to try more orchestral works.

Just before I reworked the two earlier pieces for orchestra, I spent several years making a chamber setting of Eugene Ionescu's *The Bald Soprano* as a chamber opera. I had wanted to do this ever since I first read the play in graduate school. I had the first scene of this work performed at a festival of contemporary music at EKU. After several attempts to get the whole work done by small regional opera companies, I realized that this was extremely unlikely to happen. Since I liked the music, I decided in the early 1990s to create several orchestral pieces using selected passages from the score.

Each of the three orchestral works I fashioned featured some of the music associated with the various characters in the play. My Bald Soprano Fantasy used the music associated with the two interchangeable couples, the Smiths and the Martins, who are on stage throughout most of the play. This allowed me a chance to presentmusic drawn from passages at the beginning, middle, and end of the opera.

The second piece was my *Concertino* for bassoon, horn and orchestra that featured music associated with the role of the fire chief, who is the only bass voice in the opera.

Only one character was not represented in the first two pieces, Mary the maid. This role has the most interesting and varied music of the drama as well as has the highest soprano voice. I decided to make her music into a clarinet concerto. One of her solos uses a jazz beat that would be the basis of a swing section in the middle of the piece. I was very fortunate that Tom McKinley knew Richard Stoltzman well. He is famous for his willingness to play and record new works and he agreed to do my concerto. We all went to Bratislava in Slovakia to record it with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Kirk Trevor, who also later recorded my Symphony No. 2.

This was definitely the high point of my career. They all were great. The orchestra really got into the piece and enjoyed swinging along with the soloist in the middle section. Richard Stoltzman is well known as an accomplished jazz performer and really made it swing. Kirk Trevor was fantastic; nothing was a problem for him. At one point, we discovered that I had written an unplayable passage for the trombone at the climax of the last section. Rather than leave it out, he knew how to rewrite it to get a similar effect. This whole experience was really wonderful for me.

I was 64 when I decided to attempt my Symphony No. 1 for orchestra. I wanted to try to make a four-movement work in traditional classical forms employing the serial techniques of the Second Viennese School of the early 20th century, keeping each movement short yet in a complete formal structure.

I made the materials using the German and Italian names of the notes made from the names of some of my closest relatives for the construction of the tone rows involved. I probably got this idea from the music of Robert Schumann, who liked to play these sorts of games with note selection. I used one row for the first theme and another for the second theme of the first movement. I alternated use of these two rows throughout the remaining three movements. I also had it premiered by the EKU Symphony Orchestra conducted by Mark Chambers.

I particularly liked the effect of *klangfarben* harmonies in the slow movement. Each of these four-pitch chords is repeated several times before changing to the next chord. Each time a chord is repeated it moves from one

section of the orchestra to another. For example, a chord in the strings becomes a woodwind chord and that changes to the same chord in the brass.

I had some concern about getting minimal separation as the chords move from one section to the other, so I tried overlapping them a bit it the next composition. That was my *Violin Concerto*, written in that same year. When Vít Mužík and the Moravian Philharmonic recorded that work a few years later, I was very pleased with the overlapping sounds and also by my varied use of percussion in the three movements.

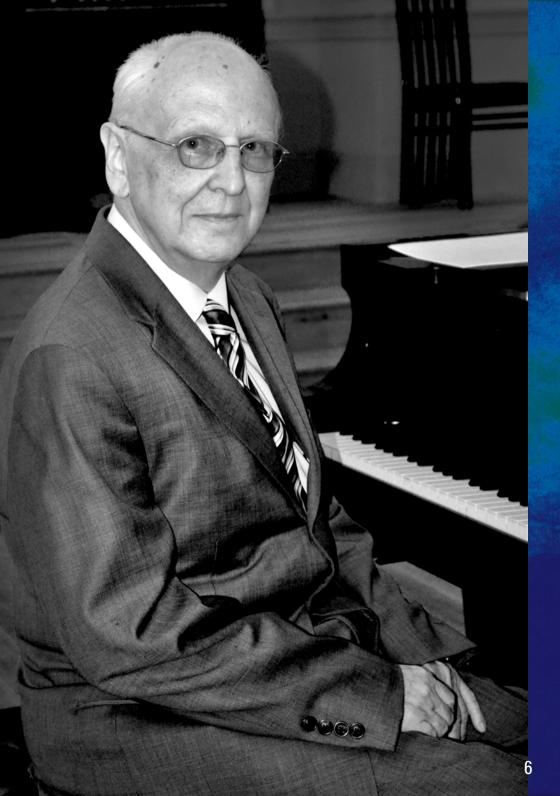
The last of my four symphonies was written about four years later than the first. It features different percussion instruments in each movement and is similar in structure to the Symphony No. 1, but only employs a single row for all four movements. The nature of this row accounts for the quite different sound and atmosphere of this work. Like most of my music, I use limited interval content to give each row, and the music made from it, a characteristic sound for the melodic and harmonic atmosphere.

My Marimba Concerto In Sixths was written at the suggestion of one of my students. At the time, I was having computer problems and was not able to complete it in time to have it performed. My writing was very conservative in its demands on the player, so when I made a second attempt at writing such a concerto several years later, I made it a bit more challenging.

The Marimba Concerto Da Chiesa uses the Baroque form of the Sonata Da Chiesa [slow-fast-slow-fast] and greatly reduces the ensemble size to ten players [fivestrings and woodwind quintet]. Like all my music, each marimba concerto uses freely chromatic materials in selective interval patterns whether serial or tonal.

I write music that pleases me and hope that the listener will be pleased as well. Form and technique are useless unless they produce a pleasing result. Having these works recorded is no substitute for having them performed in live concerts, but it does let the listener have a second and third chance to get acquainted with them. I hope that you, the listeners, will want to hear these pieces again and again. I hope you will find at least as much pleasure in hearing them as I had in creating them and hearing them performed and recorded. Many thanks to all who were involved in that process!

-Alan Beeler



**ALAN BEELER** completed his graduate study in theory and composition at Washington University, where he received an M.A. and Ph. D. He studied composition with Robert Wykes, Robert Baker, and Harold Blumenfeld, theory with Leigh Gerdine, and musicology with Lincoln Bunce Spiess and Paul Amadeus Pisk.

Beeler has taught music at Wisconsin State University at Stevens Point and Eastern Kentucky University, where he was Professor of Music Theory and Composition. His many compositions include works for solo piano, chorus, chamber ensemble, string orchestra, full orchestra, and voice.

www.alanbeeler.com

Tracks 1-3 recorded May 2005 in Bratislava, Slovakia Producer Mirko Krajci Engineer Hubert Geschwandtner

Tracks 4-6 recorded March 3, 2014 at Reduta Hall in Olomouc, Czech Republic Producer Richard Mlynář Engineer Zdeněk Slavotínek

Tracks 7-9 recorded November 19, 2012 at Reduta Hall in Olomouc, Czech Republic Producer Richard Mlynář Engineer Zdeněk Slavotínek

Tracks 10-13 recorded March 7, 2014 at Reduta Hall in Olomouc, Czech Republic Producer Richard Mlynář Engineer Zdeněk Slavotínek

Tracks 14-17 recorded March 2, 2011 at Reduta Hall in Olomouc, Czech Republic Producer Vít Mužík Engineer Zdeněk Slavotínek

Tracks 18-21 recorded November 10, 2013 at Reduta Hall in Olomouc, Czech Republic Producer Vít Mužík
Engineer Zdeněk Slavotínek

**Track 22** recorded in Bratislava, Slovakia Producer **Emil Niznansky** Engineer **Hubert Geschwandtner** 

**Track 23** recorded in Bratislava, Slovakia Producer **Emil Niznansky** Engineer **Hubert Geschwandtner** 

Tracks 22 and 23 were previously released on MMC2081



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	CLARINET CONCERTO [1997-2000]		
	Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra   Kirk Trevor, condu Richard Stoltzman, clarinet	ictor	
1	I. ANDANTE CON MOTO	5:05	
2	II. ANDANTE MODERATO;		
•	MODERATE SWING TEMPO	2-40	
3	III. ALLEGRETTO; CADENZA FINALE		
J	III. ALLEGNET TO, CADENZA FINALE	J.IU	
	MARIMBA CONCERTO NO. 1: IN SIXTHS [20	0041	
	Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra   Petr Vronský, conductor		
	Ladislav Bilan, marimba		
4	I. ALLEGRO MODERATO		
5	II. LARGO MISTERIOSO		
6	III. ALLEGRO	3:01	
	VIOLIN CONCERTO [2003]		
	Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra   Petr Vronský, condu	ictor	
	Vít Mužík, violin	10101	
7	I. ALLEGRO MODERATO	3:59	
8	II. ADAGIO	3:34	
9	III. ALLEGRO	3:07	
	MODIMES SOMETITE NO. 9. DO SUITOS		
	MARIMBA CONCERTO NO. 2: DA CHIESA [	2007]	
	Moravian Philharmonic Chamber Players Ladislav Bilan, marimba		
10	I. ANDANTE MODERATO	1:47	
11	II. ALLEGRO	4.04	
12	III. ANDANTE		
13	IV. ALLEGRO VIVACE		
IU		I.JU	

ý conductor	
SYMPHONY NO. 1 [2003]  Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra   Petr Vronský, conductor	
2:21	
4:19	
2:36	
2:50	
ý, conductor	
2:58	
3:47	
3:03	
2:25	
4:46	
4:02	