

Parts Unknown

for piano

In its principal colloquial meaning, "parts unknown" refers to an unknown destination. I have always appreciated the freedom and adventure that a phrase such as "they left for parts unknown" suggests, the sense of unlimited movement which it implies. I have also found that the musical experiences which have meant the most to me through the years were those which similarly - and often in the most unexpected and mysterious ways - carried me to "parts unknown", be they purely musical "parts" or more personal areas of sentiment and emotion.

Parts Unknown was begun in 1989 and completed in 1991. It is articulated in 12 sections. These sections are collected in 2 groups lasting approximately 30 minutes each. It is possible to characterize the 12 individual sections according to 4 general categories - lyric narratives, dramatic fantasies, technical studies and dances. Pieces belonging to the latter two categories tend to function as "entr'acte" music in contrast to the more intensely emotional characters of the first two categories.

Although there was no clear extra-musical program in my mind while composing Parts Unknown, it is also true that I selected the notes as much for their dramatic potential as for their structural possibilities. Each piece has a clearly defined emotional character and I found that as I ordered these characters into a larger sequence, a strong sense of dramatic consequence developed among them - as if each piece were a scene in a dramatic work which, though divided in parts, was nevertheless an emotional whole. In fact, what fascinated me about creating an hour long composition was the dramatic construction - the rhythm of the emotions - in a work where composition and story telling are one and the same and where any material which serves these purposes is freely used.

Richard Trythall

composer-pianist

Pianist-composer Richard Trythall was born in Knoxville, Tennessee (U.S.A.) and has lived in Rome for the past forty years. As pianist, Trythall won First Prize in the Kranichsteiner Competition for Interpreters of Contemporary Piano Music held in Darmstadt, Germany, in 1969. Since then, he has performed at the "Biennale Festival", Venice, the "Darmstadt Music Festival", Darmstadt, the "International Piano Festival", Brescia-Bergamo, "Evenings for New Music", Carnegie Hall, New York, "Music of Our Time", Milan, "September in Music", Torino, "Progetto Musica", Rome, and has performed extensively in Italy and Europe. He has performed as piano soloist with the Rome Radio Orchestra (Elliott Carter: Double Concerto, John Adams: Grand Pianola Music, Scriabin: Prometheus, Trythall: Ballad) and has recorded frequently for the RAI Third Program (Ives: Piano Sonata Nr. 2, Songs; Gershwin: Rhapsody in Blue, Songbook, Three Preludes; Jarrett: Ritual; Boulez: First Piano Sonata, Trythall: Recital, Mirage). He has recorded the piano music of Charles Ives for Centaur Records (CRC 2285) and the piano music of Jelly Roll Morton for Musicimmagine Records (MR 1047).

As composer he has received several important prizes in the United States: the Rome Prize, the Guggenheim Fellowship, the Naumburg Recording Award. His orchestral works have been performed by, among others, the Rome Radio Orchestra (RAI), the Hessian Rundfunk Orchestra, Frankfurt and the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, Massachusetts. His percussion quartet, Bolero, has been choreographed for the Ballet Company of the Municipal Theater of Sao Paulo, Brazil and for the "Danza Lorca" Company, Capetown, South Africa and his ballet, Capriccio, (commissioned by the "Il Corpo e la Mente" Company from Venice), was premiered in 1985 and successively broadcast by RAI Television. His compositions are available from CRI Records (USA), ReR Records (UK), Minstrel Records (Italy), and Thorofon (Germany). Trythall is also author of numerous articles about American music (written for the Italian magazine, Pianotime, for newspapers and various music festival publications). For many years he also wrote about the Italian scene for the American publication, Keyboard Magazine.

In addition to his activities as pianist and composer, Trythall is "Music Liaison" for the American Academy in Rome where he has overseen that prestigious institution's musical program since 1974.

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