WAYNE PETERSON: TRANSFORMATIONS
AND THE WINDS SHALL BLOW
THE FACE OF THE NIGHT, THE HEART OF THE DARK
WAYNE PETERSON  b. 1927

TRANSFORMATIONS

AND THE WINDS SHALL BLOW

THE FACE OF THE NIGHT, THE HEART OF THE DARK

PRISM QUARTET

BOSTON MODERN ORCHESTRA PROJECT

Gil Rose, conductor

   PRISM Quartet


TOTAL  57:08
By Wayne Peterson

I was a Fulbright scholar at London’s Royal Academy of Music in 1954. During that period the Martha Graham Dance Company appeared offering programs with music that was exclusively by American composers. I was enormously impressed by the early works of Aaron Copland, William Schuman, and Elliott Carter. Their music featured a clear, simpler texture, vital rhythms emanating from the syncopations of jazz, and light but brilliant orchestration. I was fortunately able to get a few of their scores from the American Embassy and assiduously studied them. Those efforts yielded a stimulation of musical ideas which have served me well ever since.  

(San Francisco, 2017)

My compositional procedure in Transformations can best be described as “developmental variation.” The first seventeen measures, which cadence in the depths of the orchestra, constitute an expository statement from which all that follows is derived. After the first major climax is achieved, a long lyric adagio section ensues. At its conclusion the harmonies ascend and regain the momentum of the original allegro. The subsequent events are too numerous and complex to be described here in detail. Suffice it to say that they lead to a point of culminating intensity. A long transition serves to dispel most of the tensions on its way back to a slower tempo. Thus reached, the adagio, while presenting some of its earlier gestures in cancrizans, assumes a retrospective nature. The remaining fragments of conflict resolve as it broadens to a tranquil conclusion.  

(from program note on Transformations, 1986)

The saxophone quartet Windup (1996) contains three interconnected movements which bring to ultimate fruition gestures and ideas first conceived in my And the Winds Shall Blow (1994)—a concerto written for and inspired by the remarkable Raschèr Quartet. These include expository motifs and rhythmic figures that are continually varied throughout the piece, a jazzy allegro, individual cadenza-like flourishes, polyrhythms between coupled saxophones, a frenetic climax, and a raucous and flamboyant canon.  

(from program note on Windup, 1996)

Back when Blomstedt was at the San Francisco Symphony, David Zinman conducted The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark and did a beautiful job. But they never did it again and nobody else has ever played it. It’s a very difficult piece. I write chromatic music and chromatic music is not in vogue at the moment. I think that has not helped things.

Winning the Pulitzer Prize has benefited me in other ways, however. You get a lot of notoriety out of it. My commissions have soared and everything I have written since that time has been published. And I am fortunate enough to have some of the best musicians in the world playing my chamber music.  

(from “Has Winning the Pulitzer Made a Difference? Wayne Peterson, Winner of the 1992 Pulitzer Prize in Music” in NewMusicBox, June 1, 2000)
TRANSFORMATIONS, for chamber orchestra, was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and dedicated to Charles Wuorinen, who led the SF Symphony in the premiere on April 11, 1986 at Davies Hall in San Francisco.

AND THE WINDS SHALL BLOW, for saxophone quartet, winds, and percussion, was commissioned by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Freiburg im Breisgau and dedicated to the Rascher Saxophone Quartet, who premiered the work under conductor Johannes Fritsch in November 1994 in Freiburg, Germany.

THE FACE OF THE NIGHT, THE HEART OF THE DARK, for full orchestra, was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony and dedicated to David Zinman, who led the SF Symphony in the premiere on October 17, 1991 at Davies Hall in San Francisco.

The Tongue of the Flame: The Music of Wayne Peterson
by Eric Moe

Wayne Peterson’s music, represented on this disc by three mature masterworks, is quintessentially American, a distillation of thoughtful synthesis and organic evolution of diverse and vital stylistic influences. Peterson was and is no mere dabbler in diverse musics. Nor was or is he content to rest on laurels earned: each phase of his musical life has been marked by mastery, and also with recognition of that mastery. He began as a jazz pianist, growing up in Minnesota, performing with his uncle’s touring dance band at a tender age. His skills as an improvising bebop pianist blossomed and, at the same time, his musical horizons expanded. Following study at the University of Minnesota, he won a Fulbright Fellowship to attend the
Royal Academy of Music in London, where he planned to develop into a classical concert pianist. Composition became more intriguing, however, and he began to study it in earnest at RAM. Upon his return to the US, he completed a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and became a rising star in the Copland-led diatonic American school of the 1950s. His breakout composition was an orchestra piece, *Free Variations*. The conductor Antal Dorati of the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra (now the Minnesota Orchestra) championed the prize-winning work, performing it many times and recording it. A subsequent commission from the Ford Foundation for the same orchestra, *Exaltation, Dithyramb, and Caprice*, was premiered under the baton of Stanisław Skrowaczewski and cemented Peterson’s reputation as a brilliant mainstream composer. But Peterson felt the tidal pull of chromatic modernism and became restless with his musical language. He devised a singular brand of serialism: Peterson mentions Elliott Carter and Charles Wuorinen as two of his strongest influences in fashioning a strand of distinctively individual, distinctively American modernism. His uncanny sense of pacing and keen musical instincts were if anything intensified by the stylistic shift, and recognition followed swiftly, crowned by a Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for *The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark*, the capstone piece on this disc.

Despite this strong evolutionary trajectory, jazz remained a vital part of his compositional DNA. (Peterson maintained his chops as a jazz pianist throughout his life, and continued actively gigging for many decades despite a heavy teaching load at San Francisco State University.) Bebop rhythmic sensibility and excitement is pervasive in his music. Performances of his works by classically trained performers don’t always put this in the foreground, but it is palpable in almost every piece, appearing often as riff-like streams of syncopated sixteenth-notes. His beautiful, dynamic,angular melodies and bracing harmonies are similarly jazz-inflected, though the connection may be less obvious. Most profoundly affected by his jazz background, however, is the larger musical continuity, which showcases an expert improviser’s handling of material, engaging formulas that are perpetually transformed, adapted, mutated, re-purposed, and recontextualized in a deeply informed, deeply intuitive process. Peterson has an unerring instinct for the right thing at the right time—*le mot juste au bon moment*—that feels both spontaneous and intentional. And beneath this bubbling surface flow deeper, slower-moving currents, with an occasional tectonic shift that triggers a tsunami, sweeping all inexorably before it.

Another hallmark of this composer is an uncommon sensitivity to instrumental sonority. Texture and timbre are as crucial to the musical argument as pitch and rhythm. This is hardworking music: no sonic dimension coasts along in a subordinate role. Instead, each plays a stirring part in the unfolding musical drama. Profoundly idiomatic instrumental writing is a vital part of the whole: Peterson’s timbral combinations and recombinations have perpetual freshness and vitality. The major works on this disc display a suppleness that covers a full range of ensemble expressivity—this is orchestral music with the intimacy of chamber music, chamber music with the power of orchestral music.

*Transformations* [1] is a wonderful example of this. Scored for chamber orchestra with single winds, it turns on a dime from interior to grand expression. Peterson’s description of the opening gives a sense of the maximalism of the piece:

> The first seventeen measures, which cadence in the depths of the orchestra, constitute an expository statement from which all that follows is derived. Some of its more obvious elements consist of an anacrusic gesture which comes to rest on the interval of a major second, a pulsating chord, a confused textural effect, glissando harmonies and a lyric statement by the bassoon.

Though the opening music is as complex and kaleidoscopic as this description suggests, the overall effect is remarkably clear. The initial upbeat gesture is defined by two melodic lines, the top descending, the lower ascending, each speeding up but at different rates, arriving together in time but not quite in pitch. All that follows is a transformation (hence the title) of this brief flurry of contrary-motion excitement. The “pulsating chord” that extends the
arrival threbs in a slow polyrhythm, like a tranquilized version of the first rhythms of the piece. An overlapping trumpet solo revs up quickly from four to five, then to six subdivisions of the beat, like the acceleration in the opening gesture. The “confused textural effect” that happens soon after is yet another expansion of the initial upbeat gesture, spotlighting and intensifying the polyrhythm; the string glissando chords are a further re-enactment of the opening, this time with the emphasis on the contrary motion. The basic shape outlined in these few seconds of music—an accelerating upbeat to an arrival which is then extended—stretches out to form subsections and large structures. The repeated fast-slow shape of the whole piece is the largest elaboration and transformation. The final adagio, instead of revving up once more, is extended to extinction; as Peterson puts it, “the remaining fragments of conflict resolve as it broadens to a tranquil conclusion.”

And the Winds Shall Blow [2] was commissioned by the Philharmonic Orchestra of Freiburg im Breisgau for the Raschèr Saxophone Quartet. The impetus for this unusual piece came from the enthusiasm of the Raschèr Quartet for Wayne’s music and their desire to explore the possibilities and challenges presented by the combination of saxophone quartet and a full orchestra minus strings. The piece is not really a concerto—Peterson carefully subtitles it “A Fantasy for Saxophone Quartet, Winds and Percussion”—though it has concerto-like moments. Nor is it simply an orchestra piece, with the saxophones substituting for the string section—though the casual first time listener may have the sensation of listening to a full orchestra. Ken Coon, the baritone saxophonist of the RSQ, comments:

I’m struck by how seemingly easily Wayne deals with such an ensemble’s immense plethora of instrumental colors. It’s difficult to find a single balance issue. The virtuosic yet sparse orchestration throughout the opening shows both a clever and patient composer. Not only are the musical gestures both crafty and quirky, so too are the instrumental color mixes and transitions. Even within the entity of the sax voices themselves, one notices a deliberate attempt to establish the characters of the individual voices and pairings before the eventual exploration of the quartet’s tutti.

The piece has two movements, connected without a break. The first begins tentatively, but, as Peterson himself says in a program note, “becomes increasingly volatile. As tensions mount, a jazzy allegro gradually emerges and builds to a considerable climax only to be abruptly terminated by the onset of the second movement.”

It’s difficult to improve on Coon’s description of the musical narrative of the big, fascinating concluding movement:

These gestures slowly begin, gradually and often violently develop into a grand culmination which gradually eases back into an extended quartet cadenza, which develops and transitions into the work’s finale, with a seriously cool paired, polyrhythmic bridge that Wayne uses as the main rhythmic motif for the remainder of the work.

Many a composer would be content to call it a day after penning the penultimate cadence of the piece; the rhythmic unison that follows sweeps up all complexities and compresses them, hammering out a javelin of notes which hurls itself towards an overwhelming finish.

The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark, completed in 1990, was commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony. The work was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1992.

The title comes from a passage in From Death to Morning by the novelist Thomas Wolfe: “The face of the night, the heart of the dark, the tongue of the flame—I had known all things that lived or stirred or worked below her destiny.” Inspired perhaps by Wolfe’s three-pronged rhetoric, Peterson initially conceived of a three-part work but soon realized that the piece was calling for a two-movement design: an Adagio, [3] initially and ultimately tranquil, followed by a bracing fast movement [4]. The piece embodies a fundamental duality defined by its tempi, but, as in Peterson’s title, the two parts reflect one another—to pick one example,
the fast subdivisions of the slow pulse of the opening music are no slower than the simple subdivisions of the rapid pulse of the Allegro movement.

The nocturnal, impressionistic landscape of the first movement quickly intensifies. In his program note, Michael Steinberg observes that,

> Often, wind instruments propose a thought and strings complete it. And just as this is true locally, so does it apply to the movement as a whole, string sonorities becoming ever more prominent.

At the movement’s end, the listener is led back to the tranquil mood last heard at the beginning. The second movement begins somewhat briskly, though still suggesting a nocturnal character from time to time. The overall trajectory is forward, however, and the piece first gradually, then quickly gains momentum. Full of surprising and engaging twists and turns, it is the privilege of the piece, as Wordsworth might say, to lead from unexpected joy to joy. Hard on the heels of a powerful rhetorical climax is a startlingly abrupt precipitando ending, which terminates the dance definitively and impetuously, almost wrong-footing the listener, with a stunning seven-octave tutti C.

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Eric Moe is a composer and pianist. He is currently the Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Music at the University of Pittsburgh.
Wayne Peterson was born on September 3, 1927 in Albert Lee, MN. He was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in Music in 1992, crowning a distinguished career which began in 1958 with the Free Variations, premiered and recorded by the Minnesota Orchestra under Antal Dorati. Peterson’s orchestral compositions include Three Pieces for Orchestra; And the Winds Shall Blow, a fantasy for saxophone quartet, symphonic winds, brass, and percussion; Transformations for chamber orchestra, and The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark, commissioned by the San Francisco Symphony (awarded the Pulitzer). Other works include a String Trio, Pas de Deux (flute and percussion), Two Poems of Delmore Schwartz (chorus), Scherzo (mixed quartet) and Full Circle for brass quintet and percussion.

Peterson’s catalog of more than 75 compositions includes works for orchestra, chorus, and chamber ensemble. In addition to the Pulitzer, Peterson has been honored with fellowships and commissions from the Guggenheim, Koussevitzky, Fromm, Meet The Composer, Gerbode, and Djerassi Foundations, as well as an award of distinction from the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. In 1990 he was a visiting artist at the American Academy in Rome.

His discography includes two all-Peterson discs (Albany), his three string quartets performed by the Alexander Quartet (Foghorn Classics), Windup featuring the Raschèr Quartet (BIS), and Janus (North/South Consonance). He has been active as a guest composer at Indiana University, the University of Minnesota, Brandeis University, UC Santa Barbara, the Composers Conference in Wellesley, and the Festival of New Music at Sacramento State University. Peterson has served on the Nomination Committee for the Pulitzer Prize in Music, and was a jury member for the first Seoul International Competition for Composers. In addition, in joint sponsorship with San Francisco State University, he established and administered the Wayne Peterson Prize in Music Composition from 1998 to 2002.

Peterson was professor of music at San Francisco State University for more than three decades and from 1992 to 1994 was a guest professor of composition at Stanford University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and was a Fulbright Scholar at the Royal Academy of Music in London from 1953 to 1954. Peterson’s music is published by C.F. Peters Corporation, Boosey and Hawkes, Seesaw Music, Trillenium Music, and Lawson-Gould.

The PRISM Quartet, one of America’s foremost chamber ensembles, has been distinguished by intriguing programs of great beauty and breadth. “A bold ensemble that sets the standard for contemporary-classical saxophone quartets” (The New York Times), PRISM has performed in Carnegie Hall on the Making Music Series, in Alice Tully Hall with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and throughout Latin America, China, and Russia under the auspices of the United States Information Agency and USArtists International. PRISM has also been presented to critical acclaim as soloists with the Detroit Symphony and Cleveland Orchestra, and conducted residencies at the nation’s leading conservatories, including the Curtis Institute of Music and the Oberlin Conservatory. Two-time recipients of the Chamber Music America/ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, PRISM has commissioned over 250 works, many by internationally celebrated composers, including Pulitzer Prize-winners Julia Wolfe, William Bolcom, Jennifer Higdon, Zhou Long, and Bernard Rands, and MacArthur
“Genius” Award recipients Bright Sheng and Miguel Zenón. PRISM’s discography includes releases on Albany, ECM, Innova, Koch, Naxos, New Dynamic, New Focus, and its own newly launched label, XAS Records. In 2016, PRISM was named by its alma mater, the University of Michigan, as the first recipient of the Christopher Kendall Award in recognition of its work in “collaboration, entrepreneurship, and community engagement.”

Gil Rose is a conductor helping to shape the future of classical music. His dynamic performances and many recordings have garnered international critical praise.

In 1996, Mr. Rose founded the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP), the foremost professional orchestra dedicated exclusively to performing and recording symphonic music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under his leadership, BMOP’s unique programming and high performance standards have attracted critical acclaim and earned the orchestra fifteen ASCAP awards for adventurous programming as well as the John S. Edwards Award for Strongest Commitment to New American Music.

Mr. Rose maintains a busy schedule as a guest conductor on both the opera and symphonic platforms. He made his Tanglewood debut in 2002 and in 2003 debuted with the Netherlands Radio Symphony at the Holland Festival. He has led the American Composers Orchestra, Warsaw Philharmonic, National Symphony Orchestra of the Ukraine, Cleveland Chamber Symphony, Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, and the National Orchestra of Porto. In 2015, he made his Japanese debut substituting for Seiji Ozawa at the Matsumoto Festival conducting Berlioz’s Béatrice et Bénédict, and in March 2016 made his debut with New York City Opera at the Appel Room at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

Over the past decade, Mr. Rose has also built a reputation as one of the country’s most inventive and versatile opera conductors. He founded Odyssey Opera, a company dedicated to presenting eclectic operatic repertoire in a variety of formats, in September 2013. Prior to Odyssey Opera, Mr. Rose led Opera Boston as its Music Director starting in 2003, and in 2010 was appointed the company’s first Artistic Director. He led Opera Boston in several
premieres including the world premiere of Zhou Long’s *Madame White Snake*, which won the Pulitzer Prize for Music in 2011. With Opera Unlimited, a contemporary opera festival associated with Opera Boston, he led the world premiere of Elena Ruehr’s *Toussaint Before the Spirits*, the New England premiere of Thomas Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, as well as the revival of John Harbison’s *Full Moon in March* and the North American premiere of Peter Eötvös’s *Angels in America*.

Mr. Rose and BMOP partnered with the American Repertory Theater, Chicago Opera Theater, and the MIT Media Lab to create the world premiere of composer Tod Machover’s *Death and the Powers* (a runner-up for the 2012 Pulitzer Prize in Music). He conducted this seminal multimedia work at its world premiere at the Opera Garnier in Monte Carlo, Monaco, in September 2010.

An active recording artist, Gil Rose serves as the executive producer of the BMOP/sound recording label. His extensive discography includes world premiere recordings of music by John Cage, Lukas Foss, Charles Fussell, Michael Gandolfi, Tod Machover, Steven Mackey, Evan Ziporyn, and many others on such labels as Albany, Arsis, Chandos, ECM, Naxos, New World, and BMOP/sound.

Mr. Rose has led the longstanding Monadnock Music Festival in historic Peterborough, NH, since his appointment as Artistic Director in 2012, conducting several premières and making his opera stage directing debut in two revivals of operas by Dominick Argento.

Mr. Rose has curated the Fromm Concerts at Harvard three times and served as the first curator of the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music at Boston’s Institute of Contemporary Art. As an educator, he served five years as Director of Orchestral Activities at Tufts University and in 2012 joined the faculty of Northeastern University as Artist-in-Residence and Professor of Practice. In 2007, Mr. Rose was awarded Columbia University’s prestigious Ditson Award as well as an ASCAP Concert Music Award for his exemplary commitment to new American music. He is a four-time Grammy Award nominee.

The Boston Modern Orchestra Project is the premier orchestra in the United States dedicated exclusively to commissioning, performing, and recording music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. A unique institution of crucial artistic importance to today’s musical world, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) exists to disseminate exceptional orchestral music of the present and recent past via performances and recordings of the highest caliber.

Founded by Artistic Director Gil Rose in 1996, BMOP has championed composers whose careers span nine decades. Each season, Rose brings BMOP’s award-winning orchestra, renowned soloists, and influential composers to the stage of New England Conservatory’s historic Jordan Hall in a series that offers the most diverse orchestral programming in the city. The musicians of BMOP are consistently lauded for the energy, imagination, and passion with which they infuse the music of the present era.

BMOP’s distinguished and adventurous track record includes premières and recordings of monumental and provocative new works such as John Harbison’s ballet *Ulysses*, Louis Andriessen’s *Trilogy of the Last Day*, and Tod Machover’s *Death and the Powers*. A perennial
winner of the ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming, the orchestra has been featured at festivals including Opera Unlimited, the Ditson Festival of Contemporary Music with the ICA/Boston, Tanglewood, the Boston Cyberarts Festival, the Festival of New American Music (Sacramento, CA), Music on the Edge (Pittsburgh, PA), and the MATA Festival in New York. During its 20th anniversary season, BMOP was named Musical America’s 2016 Ensemble of the Year, the first symphony orchestra in the organization’s history to receive this distinction.

BMOP has actively pursued a role in music education through composer residencies, collaborations with colleges, and an ongoing relationship with the New England Conservatory, where it is Affiliate Orchestra for New Music. The musicians of BMOP are equally at home in Symphony Hall, Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, and in Cambridge’s Club Oberon and Boston’s Club Café, where they pursued a popular, composer-led Club Concert series from 2004 to 2012.

BMOP/sound, BMOP’s independent record label, was created in 2008 to provide a platform for BMOP’s extensive archive of music, as well as to provide widespread, top-quality, permanent access to both classics of the 20th century and the music of today’s most innovative composers. BMOP/sound has garnered praise from the national and international press; it is the recipient of five Grammy Award nominations and its releases have appeared on the year-end “Best of” lists of The New York Times, The Boston Globe, National Public Radio, Time Out New York, American Record Guide, Downbeat Magazine, WBUR, NewMusicBox, and others.

BMOP expands the horizon of a typical “night at the symphony.” Admired, praised, and sought after by artists, presenters, critics, and audiophiles, BMOP and BMOP/sound are uniquely positioned to redefine the new music concert and recording experience.
**VIOLIN II**
Elizabeth Abbate [3]
Colleen Brannen [3]
Micah Brightwell [3]
Piotr Buczak [1]
Sasha Callahan [3]
Julia Cash [3]
Gabriela Diaz* [3]
Lilit Hartunian [3]
Kay Rooney Matthews [3]
Annie Rabbat [3]
Zoya Tsvetkova [3]

**VIOLA**
Mark Berger [3]
Abigail Kubert Cross [3]
Joan Ellensick* [1, 3]
Nathaniel Famy [3]
David Feltner [3]
Noriko Futagami [3]
Dimitar Petkov [3]
Emily Rideout [3]

**CELLO**
Brandon Brooks [3]
Ariana Falk [3]
Loewi Lin [3]
Ming-Hui Lin [3]
Rafael Popper-Keizer* [1, 3]
David Russell [3]

**BASS**
Anthony D’Amico* [1, 3]
Scot Fitzsimmons [3]
Robert Lynam [3]
Bebo Shiou [3]

**KEY:**
[1] Transformations
[3] Face
*Principals

**Wayne Peterson**
Transformations
And the Winds Shall Blow
The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark

Producer: Gil Rose
Recording and postproduction: Joel Gordon
SACD authoring: Brad Michel

All works on this disc are published by C.F. Peters.

Transformations was recorded on January 31, 2011 at Distler Performance Hall (Medford, MA), And the Winds Shall Blow was recorded on January 24, 2010 at Mechanics Hall (Worcester, MA), and The Face of the Night, the Heart of the Dark was recorded on June 29, 2015 at Jordan Hall (Boston, MA).

This recording was made possible in part by the National Endowment for the Arts, Wayne Peterson, and an anonymous donor.

Special thanks to Gil Rose. –Wayne Peterson

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