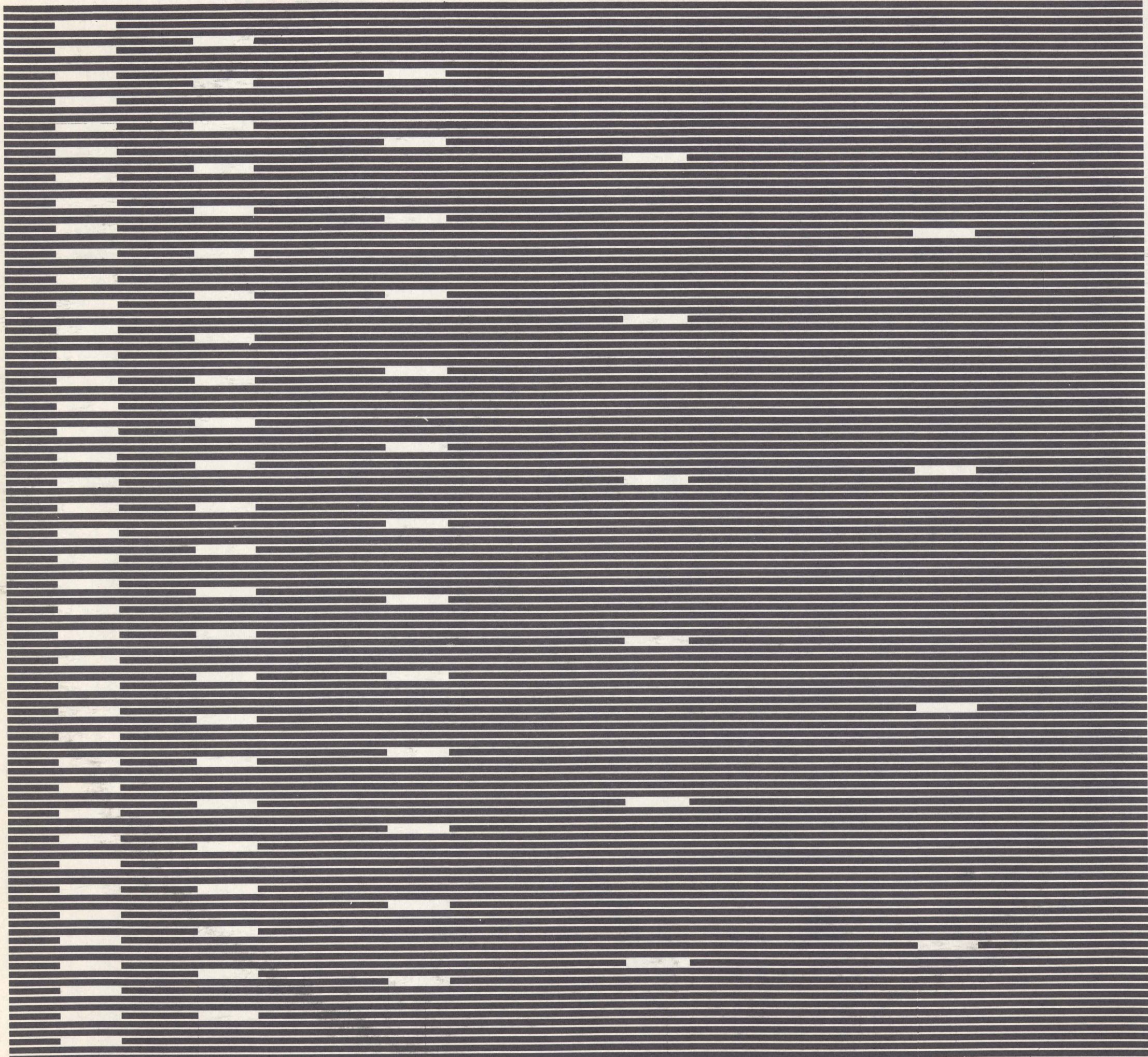


EXTENDED PIANO GRAND CONCERTO MIRRORS MUSIC FOR PRINCE ALBERT

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FSS 33431

EXTENDED PIANO ELLIOTT SCHWARTZ



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FSS 33431

Side 1

- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| (1) Extended Piano | 9:20 |
| (2) Prince Albert | 10:05 |

Side 2

- | | |
|--------------------|-------|
| (1) Mirrors | 7:18 |
| (2) Grand Concerto | 13:12 |

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EXTENDED
PIANO
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SCHWARTZ

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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EXTENDED PIANO

Elliott Schwartz

RECORD NOTES — *EXTENDED PIANO*

Music for piano and tape by Elliott Schwartz

ELLIOTT SCHWARTZ has worked in electronic music studios since 1963. His earliest works in this medium stressed tape collages of "concrete" sound, and (like many other composers of his generation) he became more interested in the possibilities of the voltage-control synthesizer in the 1970s. He is founder and director of the Bowdoin College Electronic Music Studio, which contains ARP and Electrocomp synthesizers as well as recording-mixing-playback equipment. Over the years he has also created music using the facilities of studios at the University of New Hampshire, University of Oregon, University of California San Diego, Brandeis University, Colorado College and the University of Washington. Schwartz is the author of *Electronic Music: A Listener's Guide*, a widely-read introductory book on the subject. He has composed numerous works for chamber ensembles and tape, orchestra and tape, and electronic sound tracks for theater and dance, that have been performed throughout the United States and Europe.

The pieces on this record were all composed for *piano* solo and pre-recorded *tape*. They have been performed by Schwartz in his own concert-lecture tours, and were designed to explore a variety of situations, formats and sound sources - that is, to be as different as possible within the given concept of the solo-piano-plus-tape genre. Although **EXTENDED PIANO** is the title of one of the pieces, it could also apply to this entire record: a continuing attempt to enhance, expand, obscure, develop or otherwise modify the piano sonority and the act of piano performance, through electronics.

* * * *

EXTENDED PIANO. For this work, the tape was created first (in 1973). In fact, the tape track has been performed as a self-sufficient composition, under the title *Fixations* (a reference to the obsessive little tune that dominates its structure); its sounds were made entirely on ARP 2500 and 2600 synthe-

sizers. In 1974-75 I decided to use the tape as a backdrop for an improvising soloist, and created a verbal cue-chart for oboist Joseph Celli to work with - now calling the piece (in this version) *Extended Oboe*. The same tape has also functioned for pieces called, appropriately, *Extended Violin*, *Extended Horn* and - in the version I often perform myself - *Extended Piano*.

The piano part, then, is improvised within the limits of a graphic score layout; no two performances are ever exactly the same. The tape part, however, is a fixed, permanent "object." It is a known quantity, against which the live improvisation unfolds.

MUSIC FOR PRINCE ALBERT (On His 150th Birthday). This piece was composed in 1969, on commission from the Composers' Theatre of New York, and was premiered in 1970 on that series by pianist Francis Brancialeone. I composed it when we were living in London, and when Prince Albert's 150th Anniversary was in the news fairly frequently. It turns out that Albert was a fine amateur musician - singer, pianist and composer. I decided to build my own work from Albert's compositions, as a sort of "birthday offering."

Accordingly, virtually all of the live piano soloist's music is derived from Prince Albert's own scores: distorted fragments, lengthy quotes, altered registers and rhythms, and so on. The live part is entirely written out, not improvised. The *taped* material exists on two separate reels, and must be operated on two decks by an assistant. One reel of tape contains a continuous band of ostinato-collage sonority, interjected into the performance by the assistant (using volume controls on playback); this aspect will vary from one performance to the next. The other tape contains fragments of music that Prince Albert enjoyed hearing - Handel, Mendelssohn, Beethoven - and recorded letters of the alphabet (stated by a very British voice).

The recorded letters, heard individually over the course of the piece, spell out T-R-E-B-L-A; the live soloist also "performs" (whispers, screams, moans) the letters P-R-I-N-C-E. This verbal interaction of live performer and loud speaker creates a certain level

of "form" which can be followed. It also adds to the crazy-quilt total effect of the piece - an effect that is enhanced in a live performance, by the presence of 4 loudspeakers, piano, and the lights fading to blackness during the screaming "L" and "E". The rushing collage of live-and-taped Beethoven and Schubert is performed with only the ghostly light of a flashlight (hidden inside the piano all the time). By the time the last extended quote (and taped vocal quote) takes place, the pianist has lighted a small candle as well.

Words are very important, obviously: not only the spoken letters, but the live pianist's quietly singing. (Prince Albert supposedly sang and accompanied himself at the piano in just this manner.) There are three verbal quotes at the very end of the piece. The first two (on tape) are Albert's own words—(a) a speech at the opening of the great Crystal Palace Exposition, and (b) a letter to a friend, hoping that an ugly monument would never be built in his name. The third quote, spoken by the *tape assistant* (!) in semi-darkness, appears on that actual monument which, in fact, was erected years later.

MIRRORS. The pianist has to make the tape used for this piece. In fact, the printed score looks exactly like a work for 3 pianos! The soloist's job is to record two of these parts on different stereo channels, and then perform the third part "live." There is no tape distortion or editing in the tape parts; in fact, the music *could* be played by three pianists, if it weren't for the necessity to have identical touches, gestures and even voices at all three levels. The "mirror" aspects of the music will be obvious, with various figures tossed about in imitation. The simple C major

triad at the very end finally rests on a sung (!) chord — the pianist's voice now heard in 3-part harmony.

The work was composed for the English composer-pianist Michael Finnissy in 1974. I have performed it often myself, and thanks to Stephen Montague (another composer-pianist) it has been performed at a number of European festivals.

GRAND CONCERTO. As with *Extended Piano*, the piano solo part is improvised, according to a graphic cue-chart that suggests and directs (but doesn't specify). The tape track has been created from fragments of 3 great Romantic piano concertos: the Grieg, Tchaikovsky No. 1, and Liszt No. 1 - fed into a synthesizer, and "processed" in a variety of ways.

What I wanted was a modern electronic "dream"-piece with the spirit of those grand concertos, a piece that would sound highly familiar and yet totally strange and unsettling. I was particularly interested, on another level, in the kinds of key relationships I could generate by juxtaposing fragments in D major, A minor, C minor, and so on (and what the live improvising pianist could do to either confirm relationships or contradict them).

This work, like *Music for Prince Albert*, has lighting instructions. Ideally, it should be played in the dark (since the soloist has no music to read from anyway), lit by a gentle strobe or candle. I have always played it in this way. E.S.

Music for Prince Albert pub. by Bowdoin College Music Press
Mirrors published by Carl Fischer Facsimile Edition.
Recording Engineer: David Hancock.
Tape assistant for Prince Albert: Jerome Bunke.