

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FTS 33875

MUSIC OF A TIMELESS EARTH

Music reflecting the blending of many cultures from the University of Texas-Austin

CHARLES GRUBER BARTON McLEAN GENE MENDER CATHERINE SCHIEVE

PHOTOGRAPH BY KARL KORTE

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



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Side I:

Barton McLean *Mysteries from the Ancient Nahautl-Excerpts* 12'

Charles Gruber *Ranjō* 4' 18"

Gene Menger *Welcome Rain in Bannana Grove* 7' 45"

Side II:

Catherine Schieve *Serpentine* 11' 25"

Catherine Schieve *Mablick* 7' 22"

Charles Gruber *Gōryū* 5' 15"

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43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., 10023 N.Y., U.S.A.

Producer: Barton McLean
Album Cover Photo: Karl Korte

MUSIC OF A TIMELESS EARTH

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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Music of a Timeless Earth

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Order of pieces:

Side I: Barton McLean *Mysteries from the Ancient
Nahuatl-Excerpts* 12'

Charles Gruber *Ranjō* 4'18"

Gene Menger *Welcome Rain in Banana
Grove* 7'45"

Side II: Catherine Schieve *Serpentine* 11'25"

Catherine Schieve *Mablick* 7'22"

Charles Gruber *Gōryū* 5'51"

varied moods, sounds, and idioms of pre-literate musics filtered through the minds of composers schooled in the Western tradition, and as such seeks, each in its own way, to touch an unexplored avenue of the human mind.

—Barton McLean
Austin, 1980

A Blending of Cultures

Although "world music" based on non-Western oral and pre-literate tradition has often fascinated Western composers, it has only been since 1950 that two parallel developments in new music have broken loose our non-Western creative energies on a larger scale: (1) the development of notations capable of expressing the wide range of sounds and gestures from the human and natural world, and (2) the advent of electronic music. Both of these influences are strongly felt on this album.

To many composers today new notational systems incorporating improvisation, performer choice of events, a continuous gamut in pitch, rhythm, timbre, etc., and graphic ideograms which present a holistic view of the event to be sounded, offer exciting possibilities for combining the best of world music cultures. Similarly, electronic music, with its capability of plugging directly into the composer's imagination by bypassing the "translation" barrier of notation, can provide a nuance and subtlety impossible to notate.

Music of a Timeless Earth presents several highly individualistic approaches to the combination of cultures in sound. It is a product of the rich cross-cultural environment in Austin, Texas, particularly at the University of Texas. It brings forth the rich and

The Music and its Creators

Barton McLean

Mysteries from the Ancient Nahuatl is a large choral-instrumental-electronic work with narrator and soloists affording a multidimensional view of Nahuatl cultures of ancient Mexico and Southwestern U.S. (the best known of which is the Aztec), drawing exclusively from the rich storehouse of Nahuatl poetry.

The pre-Columbian Nahuatl civilization had developed a wealth of philosophy and literature comparable to our own today in many ways. The particular genius of its poets is to be found in the way they combine traditional Indian traits of basic directness, naivete, and sincerity with highly stylized and sophisticated syntax and ideas.

Throughout the poems is a feeling of oneness with nature and God (often described as the same), coupled with a feeling of awe of the natural inexorable forces which are all-powerful and which shape their destiny. The many allusions to natural beauty and joy are often tempered with hints of impending death, but a death that is part of the natural process of life.

The excerpts comprise essentially the beginning and the ending of the large choral-dramatic work. In between are the large choruses. Reduced to two performers, who play a multitude of traditional and non-traditional instruments. The *Excerpts* include most of the narrative material of the large work, and thereby convey similar dramatic and poetic power. Along with prepared piano, flutes and recorders, assorted steel rods, crowbars, triangles, bowed gong, and wind chimes, the narrator part is prominent in the *Excerpts*. This recording was made shortly after a nationwide performance tour by the "McLean Mix", a duo formed by Barton and his wife, Priscilla McLean. During the tour, *Mysteries* was described by *Musical America* as having "an immediate appeal by virtue of its colorful, impressionistic textures, poetic texts, and abundance of concrete sounds." In the

Kansas City Star, Haskell noted its "alluring musical landscapes drenched in exotic colors."

Barton McLean's (b. 1938) first exposure to "world music" was at the hands of his teacher Henry Cowell in 1964. He subsequently studied at Indiana University and received a Mus. D in 1972. During his stay there he received training in electronic music from Jay Williams and Micheal Babcock, and later from Bruce Hemingway. As Director of the Electronic Music Center and teacher of composition at the University of Texas-Austin, he has had an opportunity to combine these two areas in his own composition as well as to support the recording of some of the activity of his colleagues and students. He has written a number of works in more traditional genre as well.

8.

Gong: roll with gong mallets

Soprano Recorder

Fingerings given will seem out of tune by traditional measurements.

There comes from within the heavens a good flower, a good song, which will destroy your grief, destroy your sorrow; Here delightful friendship, turning about with scarlet dyed wings, rains down its flowers, and the warriors and youths, holding in their hands the fragrant xilo flowers, walk about inhaling the sweet odor.

30" 35" 40" 45" 50" 55" 1

In this sample page from the excerpts of *Mysteries* from the Ancient Nahuatl (about 3:30 into the piece), the dark arrows cue the performers from the tape part.

Charles Gruber

Within the Bugaku performance tradition of Gagaku, the Imperial Court music of Japan, there are types of (flute) (fue) preludes called "ranjo". Literally, ranjo in English is "disordered voices". The ranjō in the Gagaku repertory includes groups of flutes often

playing in a canonic style the result of which perhaps sounds "disordered" but is actually a highly structured canon. So too, "ranjō" by Charles Gruber is a music piece for flutes (specified to be of different sizes and from different cultures—in this

performance a ryuteki flute from Japan, a Caribbean flute, and modern Western flutes of different sizes) based on a tightly controlled canonic structure. The interacting and overlapping rivulets of microcanonic structures are designed to come together into a unified flow of seemingly static introspection but simultaneously a vibrant rush forward.

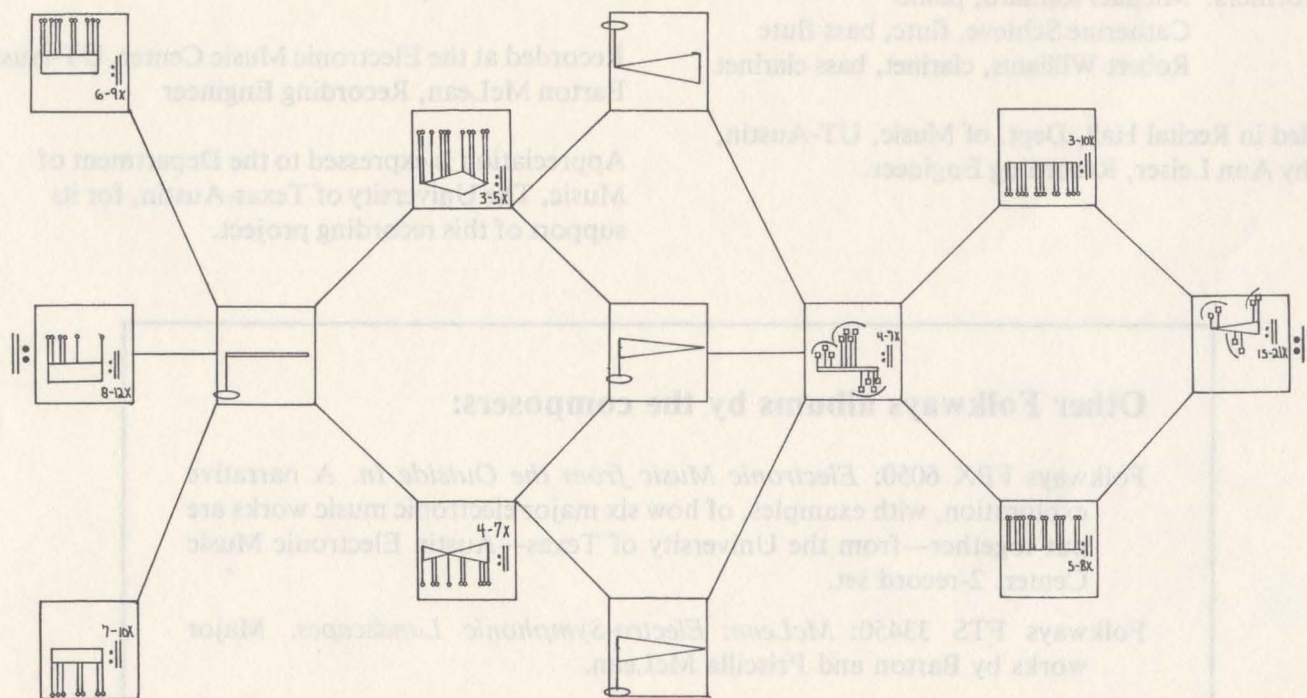
Translated, "gōryū" may be defined as "a meeting of streams" or better "a meeting place of two or more rivers becoming one". As rivers and streams flow together, so too may peoples and their cultures come together and become one. The music piece "gōryū" by Charles Gruber strives for this meeting together of musical cultures with the hope that in this case Western and Eastern musical traditions become one.

"Gōryū" incorporates several instruments from Gagaku, the traditional music of the Imperial Court of Japan. Within the piece three Gagaku instruments are used, the hichiriki (double reed pipe), the shō (mouth organ), and the ryūteki (flute). Juxtaposed to these instruments are Western instruments (both early and modern) taking the place of traditional Gagaku instruments. For example, viola da gamba and vielle replacing the biwa and koto and modern Western

percussion replacing the taiko and san-no-tsuzumi drums. Also used are Western recorders and modern flutes.

Structurally, the use of the instruments (for instance, the order of their appearances in the piece) are similar to pieces in the Gagaku tradition. However, Western concepts of musical form (for instance, an arch structure, climax and resolution etc.) used in "gōryū" interact with the Gagaku tradition through rearrangement and consolidation to form a hybrid musical style, a style which is a confluence, a flowing together of peoples and their cultures becoming one: A new whole, yet one in which these peoples and their cultures retain their identities and individual integreties.

Charles Gruber lives in Austin where he is an attorney. Gruber has studied music composition with Barton McLean, Dan Beaty, Karl Korte, and Tom Wells. He is also active in various performing groups, such as early music groups (wind instruments), The University of Texas Gagaku Ensemble (hichiriki), and Fermata, a new music ensemble (horn and piano). Besides working as a composer and attorney, Gruber is involved with Texas writers as an actor producing experimental plays and in community theaters playing traditional roles. He has also completed three novels and a novella.



© C. Gruber 1971

Complete score of Ranjo. Performers progress from left to right, keeping approximately in the same place vertically. Although general rhythmic-melodic shapes are indicated, much of the

actual material is left to the performers. That the ensemble on this recording is well-versed in the Japanese Gagaku tradition is evident from the melodic material chosen.

Gene Menger

About *Welcome Rain* in Banana Grove Menger writes:

"This work was part of the score for *Nocturn*, a dance choreographed by Dee McCandless. It was performed in the amphitheatre of Laguna Gloria Art Museum on a summer evening. This is a tropical setting, in the middle of a bird sanctuary, with a palm lined lagoon serving as backdrop. The music and the dance were designed to reflect this reality. The music was performed by the dancers."

Since 1976, Gene Menger has collaborated with choreographer Dee McCandless, creating and performing the music for dances by their company, Invisible Inc. Many of their works have been performed outdoors, and focus on the acoustic and design elements of landscapes. These activities have been extended to create music for sports; they have recently completed work on the sound track for the video documentary of the Austin 10,000 meter run.

In addition, Menger has been commissioned by the Austin Civic Ballet and the University of Texas Repertory Dance Theatre, and has created three musical scores for the American Deaf Dance Company.

Catherine Schieve

About *Serpentine* and *Mablick* Catherine Schieve writes:

"I have always been fascinated with the simultaneous simplicity and complexity of heterophony in folk music (when people are singing or playing the same tune together, but each voice is slightly different, a little bit more or less intricate than

the others and not quite synchronized). In this kind of situation, 'accidents' occur that can be more exciting and beautiful than if the music were completely written out.

"I tried to create this type of controlled freedom in *Serpentine*, a suite of six overlapping movements. The basic musical material is given to the performers, but they choose when to move from one section to the next, and at what level of complexity to play. The piece begins with a sitar-like drone that is a musical harmonics game. A melody gradually emerges and becomes more complex as it accelerates and the players have more freedom to improvise. Finally the heterophony explodes into an angular 'texture' section, then during a slowing-down cadenza the drone appears again and *Serpentine* ends as calmly as it began.

"in *Mablick* I explored the borderlines between counterpoint and sound-mass with repeated rhythmic patterns that remain the same individually but result in a constantly changing texture (as in much folk percussion music). The twelve flutes are often used as voices, "yelling" together before joining in the hubub, and the cadenza can be heard as a solo crier with a resounding crowd."

Catherine is an active composer and flutist in the University of Texas and Austin community. Along with traditional compositional activities, she has composed and directed music for theater, dance, film, and public television. Ms. Schieve performs widely in traditional as well as experimental, early music, and ethnic music ensembles. She has held fellowships at the University of Texas-Austin and the University of California at San Diego. She studied composition with Joseph Schwantner, Eugene Kurtz, Karl Korte, and Barton McLean.

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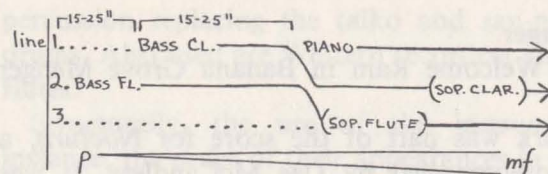


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43 WEST 61 ST STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023

II. HETEROPHONY (MELODY)

2½'-3' C Score



Cantabile ♩=72-80

Bass Flute starts at the beginning on line 2.
Bass Clarinet enters 15-25 sec. later on line 1, at the same point in the music as the flute.
Piano enters 15-25 sec. later on line 1, Bass Clarinet moves to line 2.
Bass Flute changes to Soprano Flute, reenters on line 3.
Bass Clarinet changes to Soprano Clarinet.
Always move along through the music together. Repeat the music over and over. Piano may play in octaves or in a lower or higher register. After all entrances and instrument switches have been made, play at least one more time through the melody, until you feel unified and the music wants to accelerate. Then break away, one at a time, in any order, to the next page →

In this interior section of *Serpentine*, the heterophony is clearly shown as each line is a minor variant of the others.

Producer: Barton McLean

Album cover photo: Karl Korte

Mysteries from the Ancient Nahuatl

Performers: The "McLean Mix":

Barton McLean, prepared piano,
recorder, steel rods, crowbars, wind
chimes

Priscilla McLean, narration, recorder,
bowed gong, percussion

Recording engineer: Barton McLean

Ranjō

Performers: Brad Benton, Caribbean flute
James Reid, ryuteki flute
Catherine Schieve, alto flute
Robert Williams, flute

Recorded at Electronic Music Center, UT-Austin,
Reed Holmes, Recording Engineer.

Welcome Rain in Banana Grove

Performers: Gene Menger, various chime toys, Tibetan bells, toy piano (grand)
Dee McCandless, various chime toys, Tibetan bells, toy piano (upright)
Roberta DeAngelis, various chime toys, Chinese temple bells, (copper cup gongs)
Tim Hurst, various toy chimes,
Shurdi (Indian harmonium drone)
Jeanne Baxter, various chime toys

Production: Produced by Gene Menger and Nancy Kaufman for broadcast on Texas Lively Arts via KUT Radio and The Longhorn Radio Network.
Recorded at KUT Radio Studios in Communication Center, University of Texas at Austin. Recorded June 14, 1978. Recording Engineers-Kevin Myers and Jerry Barnett.
Remixed at Electronic Music Center, UT-Austin, Reed Holmes, Recording Engineer.

Serpentine

Performers: Michael Raillard, piano
Catherine Schieve, flute, bass flute
Robert Williams, clarinet, bass clarinet

Recorded in Recital Hall, Dept. of Music, UT-Austin,
Dorothy Ann Leiser, Recording Engineer.

Mablick

Performers: (From the flute studio of John Hicks)
Patrick Gardner, conductor
John Hicks, solo flute
Barbara Michaud Austin
Patrice Crowson
Vivian Haisty
Diane Janda
Laurie Lemley
Megan Meisenbach
Margaret Moffatt
Barbara Norton
Catherine Schieve
Joan Schubert
Kathy Uroda

Recorded at the Electronic Music Center, UT-Austin,
Barton McLean, Recording Engineer

Goryu

Performers: (several from the UT Gagaku Ensemble)
Brad Benton, hichiriki, recorder
Larry Crook, bells
Charles Gruber, hichiriki, percussion
Bruce Kirk, viola de gamba
Douglas Kirk, sopranino recorder, percussion
James Reid, sho, ryuteki
Catherine Schieve, bass & alto flute, piccolo, sho

Recorded at the Electronic Music Center, UT-Austin,
Barton McLean, Recording Engineer

Appreciation is expressed to the Department of Music, The University of Texas-Austin, for its support of this recording project.

Other Folkways albums by the composers:

Folkways FPX 6050: *Electronic Music from the Outside In*. A narrative exploration, with examples, of how six major electronic music works are put together—from the University of Texas—Austin Electronic Music Center. 2-record set.

Folkways FTS 33450: *McLean: Electro-Symphonic Landscapes*. Major works by Barton and Priscilla McLean.

The McLeans are also recorded on CRI, Advance, Orion, and Louisville 1st Edition. Schieve is also recorded on Advance.