

Otto LUENING: No Jerusalem But This; Divertimento for Brass Quintet; The Goodman Chamber Choir, The Music Project Chamber Orchestra, Kathleen Sullivan, soprano; Philip Wilder, countertenor; Stephen Rosser, tenor; Mark Moliterno, baritone; Paul Sperry, narrator; Andrea Goodman, conductor; The Meridian Arts Ensemble, John Nelson and Richard Kelley, trumpets; Daniel Grabois, horn; Benjamin Herrington, trombone; Raymond Stewart, tuba. CRI CD 600

In his opening remarks at a ninety-fifth birthday celebration for Otto Luening at the Century Club, Ralph Jackson, director of concert music for BMI, noted that in the five years since Otto's 90th birthday, he had registered 20 new works. If Otto's first piece was written at the age of five (as Otto claimed), and he was as productive in middle age as he was later, then however you do the arithmetic Otto left the world a lot of music to play, hear, and remember. This CD, then, contains the merest glimpse of Otto Luening's musical universe; for those familiar with his work, these pieces will produce a smile of recognition; for those unfamiliar, they are a fine introduction.

Both works were recorded in conjunction with ninetieth birthday celebrations in 1990. **No Jerusalem But This**, a 46 minute cantata for chorus, soloists, and fifteen players, was recorded live at a Merkin Hall concert on June 6, 1990. Originally written in 1982 for the Gregg Smith singers, the performance here by the Goodman Chamber Choir and members of the Music Project, under the direction of Andrea Goodman is impressive indeed (how many live performances requiring these resources are good enough to be pressed directly onto disk?) The piece encapsulates much of what Otto Luening's music is about: above all, his love for the voice, his affinity for small repetitive structures, and an absolute clarity of instrumental line.

The **Divertimento** for Brass Quintet dates from 1988, and was commissioned by the Catskill Chamber Players. The recording followed a ninetieth-birthday celebration concert for the composer on October 15, 1990 sponsored by the Music Division of the New York Public Library at Lincoln Center. The piece is a set of six studies, from under a

minute to three minutes in length. Again, Otto's attraction to perfection in miniature is evident here (as in the Menashe poems he sets in No Jerusalem But This); these are studies in the Romantic sense: terse, compact contrasts in color, exquisitely played by the Meridian Arts Ensemble.