

W I L L I A M S U S M A N

COLLISION POINT

PICCOLA ACCADEMIA DEGLI SPECCHI

W I L L I A M S U S M A N
COLLISION POINT

Camille (2010)

Flute, Alto Sax, Violin, Cello and Piano 4-Hands

- | | |
|-------------------|------|
| 1. I Vitality | 3:18 |
| 2. II Tranquility | 2:26 |
| 3. III Triumph | 2:52 |

Clouds and Flames (2010)

Violin, Cello and Piano*

- | | |
|------------------------------|------|
| 4. I Riding Towards Oblivion | 2:01 |
| 5. II Floating in the Air | 2:36 |
| 6. III In a Zone | 1:48 |
| 7. IV The Alphabet of Dying | 2:00 |
| 8. V Collision Point | 2:57 |
| 9. VI Jar of Ashes | 1:39 |
| 10. VII The World Spins | 1:58 |

11. Motions of Return (1996)

Flute and Piano** 8:52

12. The Starry Dynamo (1994)

Flute, Alto Sax, Violin, Cello and Piano* 14:27

TOTAL TIME 47:01

PICCOLA ACCADEMIA DEGLI SPECCHI

Alessandra Amorino, *Flute*; Claudia Di Pietro, *Alto Sax*; Giuliano Cavaliere, *Violin*;
Rina You, *Cello*; Assunta Cavallari, *Piano**; Fabio Silvestro, *Piano***

The ringing grooves of change

(portrait of the composer as a tightrope walker)

About William Susman's chamber music

Rhythm has been at the very heart of the work of William Susman (b. 1960) since the beginning of his music career in the late 1980s. Trained as a classical pianist since the age of 7, in the following decade he quickly expanded the range of his musical interests, performing with big bands or Afro-Cuban ensembles; and, up through the 1990s, he played in jazz bands, parallel to his studies in composition.

Initially paying tribute to the European avant-garde, especially the music of Ligeti and Xenakis. These studies led to a gradual emancipation from modernism to a deeper and certainly more personal sound reflecting his roots. In 1987, *Twisted Figures*, for "Pierrot ensemble"*, marks a pivotal first turning point. His music has always featured rhythmic cells often derived from mathematical and numerical procedures; however, in this up-tempo score the Fibonacci sequence is used to generate repetitive rhythms and melodic patterns that break with chromaticism to embrace a modal direction. Earle Brown's or Iannis Xenakis's encouragement will help the young composer to find his own way; and his encounter with the music of the American minimalists will be an aesthetic shock, but even more an "ethical" one, a sort of spiritual awakening: *"The way Riley, Reich and Glass incorporated the things they liked – Indian or African influences, for example – into their music led me to think about the things I knew and admired, what I could bring to my music that others did not have. This helped me to realize that, in order to grow and find a voice of my own, I needed to draw on my personal experience, from my own life"*.

Thus, the rhythms of Cuban music, an essential part of his personal musical experience, will influence Susman's production starting from the 1990s, with the same intensity as those of the hoquet of the Ecole de Notre-Dame, or as those of jazz, or as those of the popular music that he loves as much. Rhythm, according to William Susman, is above all an art of syncopation, an art of balance, exploring ever-changing (iso)

rhythmic cells, borrowed either from the *montuño* or from the *clave* – the rhythm of African origin, which can be found in Cuban rumba, as well as in Brazilian samba, consisting of two bars of two beats each, the first of which (*tresillo* in Spanish) contains three sounds, whereas the second, two. Quiet Rhythms – a monumental piano cycle of short pieces composed between 2010 and 2013 – could be seen as the foundation, or the manifesto of this singular groove that seems to naturally summon the idea of dance, even of trance – unstable pulsations that intertwine and overlap, erecting a scaffolding of repetitive polyrhythms that could be said to walk the tightrope (constantly on the wire, always risking to stumble, and exerting on the listener a powerful effect of bewilderment).

However, it is chamber music that offers perhaps a privileged point of view in the way in which the rhythmic material works in depth within William Susman's music. On the one hand, this is because the multiplicity of timbres, the incessant back-and-forth (question/answer, hoquet) that occurs between the music stands, emphasizes even more the virtuosity of the writing (and of the performance) that is here at work. On the other hand, this is because this genre of repertoire accounts for the whole timbral and "textural" richness – for instance, let us think of *Tranquility*, the central slow movement of *Camille*, whose game of resonances and delicate tiling of sounds strengthens the hypnotic dimension – which is employed in all his other works. This is well evidenced by the four chamber music scores gathered together – for the first time, as a world premiere – on the present recording. Sweeping through nearly twenty years of activity, *Collision Point* documents in particular the close friendship between William Susman and the Rome-based ensemble Piccola Accademia degli Specchi.

The album notably features two other compositions of his for Pierrot ensemble – following *Twisted Figures: The Starry Dynamo* (1994) and *Camille* (2010), the latter commissioned by Piccola Accademia degli Specchi – where the alto saxophone substitutes for clarinet, and the piano is four-hands. The track-list also features *Motions of Return*, a fascinating chase in time and against time between piano and flute, which conjurs up something of a labyrinth as much as of a puzzle.

Or of the tightrope walking – here we come back to it. Because the heart of the program is certainly *Clouds and Flames*, a piano trio composed in 2010, one of whose movements gives its *Collision Point* name to the album. The title of this trio, like that of its seven constituting movements, derives from the novel *Let the Great World Spin*, published in 2009 by Irish writer Colum McCann (and awarded the National Book Award the same year). Inspired by certain episodes of the novel, these movements, writes William Susman, *"are a set of impressions on loss and rebirth, and a meditation on the tightrope wire walk of Philippe Petit between the World Trade Center towers on August 7, 1974."* An episode that is precisely the starting point and one of the leitmotifs of McCann's book. *"The tightrope walker looks like the novelist: he weaves the wires on which he must balance himself"*, McCann confided in an interview. This could apply also to William Susman, acrobat-architect.

"When you think you have a clear idea of a composer's purpose, suddenly you realize that something is hiding behind it, and behind it, again and again, and so on. I will keep playing William's music for a long time, as it piques my curiosity and I have so much to learn from him!" declared composer and pianist Francesco Di Fiore in 2012. Susman's chamber music is a labyrinth of rhythms, a perpetually moving trompe-l'œil that seems to echo the verse of Tennyson that inspired the title of McCann's novel: *"Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change..."*

David Sanson

Bordeaux, March 2019

(translation: Matteo Sommacal)

* English term defining an ensemble whose line-up reprises/imitates that of *Pierrot Lunaire* composed by Arnold Schönberg in 1912 (a quintet including flute, clarinet, violin, cello, piano, with the addition of voice).

Vers d'infinis changements

(portrait du compositeur en funambule)

A propos de la musique de chambre de William Susman

Présent dès les prémises de son parcours de musicien, le rythme est au cœur de l'œuvre de William Susman (né en 1960) depuis la fin des années 1980. Formé au piano classique à partir de 7 ans, il ne tarde pas à étendre sa pratique, durant la décennie suivante, au sein de big bands ou de combos de musique afro-cubaine ; et jusque dans les années 1990, il n'a cessé de jouer dans des groupes de jazz, parallèlement à son apprentissage de compositeur.

Au départ très tributaire de l'avant-garde européenne, de l'héritage de Ligeti ou Xenakis, cet apprentissage va voir la musique de Susman peu à peu s'émanciper de ces modèles, pour revenir à des racines plus profondes, en tout cas plus intimes. En 1987, *Twisted Figures*, composition pour « Pierrot ensemble »*, marque un premier point d'inflexion. Si les cellules rythmiques, dérivées le plus souvent de formules mathématiques et numériques, avaient toujours été présentes dans son travail, cette partition au tempo enlevé s'appuie sur la suite de Fibonacci pour générer des rythmes répétitifs et des motifs mélodiques qui rompent avec le chromatisme pour embrasser une orientation modale. Les encouragements d'Earle Brown ou de Iannis Xenakis aideront le jeune compositeur dans la recherche de sa propre voie ; et sa rencontre avec la musique des minimalistes américains sera un choc esthétique, mais plus encore « éthique » : « *La façon dont Riley, Reich et Glass incorporaient à leur musique les choses qu'ils aimaient – les influences indiennes ou africaines par exemple – m'a amené à réfléchir aux choses que je connaissais, que j'admirais, à ce que je pouvais apporter de particulier à ma musique que les autres n'avaient pas. Elle m'a aidé à réaliser que pour grandir et trouver mon langage, il fallait que je me développe à partir de mon expérience personnelle, de ma propre vie.* »

C'est ainsi que les rythmes de la musique cubaine, partie essentielle de son expérience musicale personnelle, vont

commencer à irriguer la production de Susman depuis les années 1990, avec la même intensité que ceux du hoquet de l'Ecole de Notre-Dame, du jazz ou des musiques populaires qu'il affectionne tout autant. Ainsi le rythme selon William Susman est-il avant tout un art de la syncope, du balancement, explorant des cellules (iso)rythmiques à la métrique perpétuellement changeante, empruntée soit au *montuño*, soit à la clave – ce rythme d'origine africaine, que l'on retrouve aussi bien dans la rumba cubaine que dans la samba brésilienne, formé de deux mesures de deux pulsations chacune dont la première (*tresillo* en espagnol) contient trois sons et la seconde, deux. De ce groove singulier qui semble appeler naturellement la danse, voire la transe – pulsations bancales qui s'enchevêtrent et se chevauchent, échafaudant une polyrythmie répétitive que l'on pourrait dire funambule (constamment sur le fil, toujours menaçant de trébucher, elle exerce sur l'auditeur un puissant effet de sidération) –, le recueil des *Quiet Rythms* – monumental cycle pour piano de 88 pièces brèves composées entre 2010 et 2013 – pourrait constituer le bréviaire, ou le manifeste.

C'est cependant la musique de chambre qui offre peut-être le point d'observation privilégié de la manière dont le matériau rythmique travaille en profondeur la musique de William Susman. D'une part, parce que la multiplicité des timbres, l'incessant jeu de va-et-vient (de question/réponse, de hoquet) qui s'opère entre les pupitres ne souligne que mieux la virtuosité du travail d'écriture (et d'interprétation) qui est ici à l'œuvre. D'autre part, parce que ce répertoire permet également de rendre compte de toute la richesse timbrale et « texturale » – on pense par exemple à *Tranquility*, mouvement lent central de *Camille*, dont le jeu des résonances et les délicats tuilages de sonorités renforce la dimension hypnotique – de cette œuvre qui s'est déployée par ailleurs dans tous les répertoires. En témoignent les quatre partitions de chambre regroupées – en première mondiale – sur le présent enregistrement. Balayant près de vingt années de production, *Collision Point* documente surtout l'étroit compagnonnage que William Susman entretient avec l'ensemble romain de la Piccola Accademia degli Specchi.

Y figurent notamment ses deux autres opus composés – à la suite à *Twisted Figures* – pour Pierrot ensemble : *The Starry*

Dynamo (1994) et *Camille* (2010), commande de la Piccola Accademia degli Specchi – dans cette dernière pièce, un saxophone alto se substitue à la clarinette, et le piano est à quatre mains. Y figure également le bien-nommé *Motions of Return*, fascinante course-poursuite en temps/contre-temps entre le piano et la flûte, qui tient du labyrinthe autant que du puzzle.

Ou de l'équilibrisme – on y revient. Car le cœur du programme – dont l'un des mouvements donne son nom à ce *Collision Point* – est certainement *Clouds and Flames*, trio avec piano composé en 2010. Son titre, comme celui des sept mouvements qui le constituent, provient du roman *Et que le vaste monde poursuive sa course folle* (*Let the Great World Spin*), publié en 2009 par l'écrivain irlandais Colum McCann (et couronné la même année par le National Book Award). Inspirés par certains épisodes du roman, ces mouvements, écrit William Susman, « *sont un ensemble d'impression sur la perte et la résurrection, et une méditation sur la traversée du funambule Philippe Petit entre les tours jumelles du World Trade Center, le 7 août 1974* ». Un épisode qui est précisément le point de départ et l'un des leitmotifs du livre de McCann. « *Il ressemble à l'écrivain, ce funambule qui tisse des fils sur lesquels il doit garder l'équilibre* », confiait celui-ci dans une interview. Il pourrait évoquer également William Susman, architecte équilibriste.

« *On croit avoir une idée claire de l'intention d'un compositeur quand soudain, on réalise que quelque chose se cache derrière elle, et encore derrière, et derrière, encore et encore, et ainsi de suite. Je continuerai longtemps à jouer la musique de William, parce qu'elle pique ma curiosité et que j'ai tant à apprendre d'elle !* », déclarait en 2012 le compositeur et pianiste Francesco Di Fiore. La musique de chambre de Susman est un labyrinthe de rythmes, un trompe-l'œil en mouvement perpétuel qui semble faire écho à ce vers de Tennyson ayant inspiré le titre du roman de McCann : « *Et que le vaste monde poursuive sa course folle vers d'infinis changements...* »

David Sanson
Bordeaux, mars 2019

Vortici d'infiniti mutamenti

(ritratto del compositore in veste di funambolo)

La musica da camera di William Susman

Il ritmo è al cuore dell'opera di William Susman (nato nel 1960) sin dagli esordi del suo percorso musicale, a partire dalla fine degli anni '80 del secolo scorso. Avviato allo studio del pianoforte classico all'età di 7 anni, non tarda ad ampliare i suoi orizzonti artistici, durante il decennio successivo, entrando a far parte di big band e gruppi di musica afro-cubana; fino a buona parte degli anni '90, non ha mai smesso di suonare in formazioni jazzistiche, parallelamente agli studi di composizione.

Inizialmente acrivibili all'avanguardia europea, nel solco di Ligeti o Xenakis, tali studi condurranno Susman ad una graduale emancipazione dai modelli originari, per giungere a radici più profonde e di certo più intime. Nel 1987, *Twisted Figures*, composizione per "Pierrot ensemble"* , segna un primo punto di flesso. Processi matematici e numerici sono da sempre stati utilizzati nella sua opera per derivare cellule ritmiche; ma in questo brioso spartito la successione di Fibonacci è utilizzata per generare ritmi ripetitivi e motivi melodici che rompono col cromatismo per abbracciare un orientamento modale. Gli incoraggiamenti di Earle Brown e Iannis Xenakis aiuteranno il giovane compositore nella ricerca di una propria voce; ed il suo incontro con la musica dei minimalisti americani sarà uno shock "etico" ancor più che estetico: *"La maniera in cui Riley, Reich and Glass incorporavano nella loro musica i propri gusti – le influenze indiane o africane, ad esempio – mi portò a riflettere sulle cose che conoscevo, che ammiravo, su ciò che potevo portare nella mia musica di unico che altri non avevano. Arrivai a capire che, per crescere e trovare un mio linguaggio, era necessario che mi sviluppassi a partire dalla mia esperienza personale, dalla mia vita"*.

E' così che i ritmi della musica cubana, parte essenziale della sua esperienza musicale personale, cominceranno ad irrigare la produzione di Susman dagli anni '90 del secolo scorso, con la stessa intensità di quelli dell'hoquetus della scuola di Notre-Dame, del jazz e delle musiche popolari altrettanto amate. In

tal modo, secondo William Susman, il ritmo diviene prima di tutto un'arte della sincope, dell'equilibrio, nell'esplorazione di cellule (iso)ritmiche dalla metrica perpetuamente mutevole, improntata al *montuño* e alla *clave* – ritmo di origine africana, che si ritrova tanto nella rumba cubana che nella samba brasiliana, formato da due battute di due pulsazioni ciascuna, di cui la prima (*tresillo*, in spagnolo) contiene tre suoni e la seconda due. Di questo "groove" singolare, che sembra evocare naturalmente la danza, fino alla trance – pulsazioni instabili che si intrecciano e si sovrappongono, erigendo l'impalcatura di una poliritmia ripetitiva che si potrebbe definire funambolica (costantemente sul filo, sempre sul punto d'inciampare, esercita sull'ascoltatore un potente effetto di disorientamento) – la raccolta dei *Quiet Rhythms* – ciclo monumentale di 88 pezzi brevi per pianoforte composti tra il 2010 ed il 2013 – potrebbe costituire il breviario o il manifesto.

Tuttavia, è forse la musica da camera ad offrire il punto di vista privilegiato sulla maniera in cui il materiale ritmico opera in profondità nella musica di William Susman. La ragione di ciò è che, da una parte, la molteplicità dei timbri, l'incessante gioco di vai-e-vieni (di domanda/risposta, di hoquetus) che si instaura tra i leggi, enfatizza ancora meglio il virtuosismo di scrittura (e d'interpretazione) che è qui all'opera; dall'altra, questo repertorio permette in egual misura di dar conto di tutta la ricchezza timbrica, di "trama" e "consistenza" – si pensi per esempio a *Tranquility*, movimento lento centrale di *Camille*, il cui gioco di risonanze e delicate tassellature di sonorità rinforza la dimensione ipnotica – che si ritrova messa in atto in tutti gli altri repertori. Ne sono prova evidente le quattro partiture cameristiche raggruppate – per la prima volta – in questa registrazione. Percorrendo quasi vent'anni d'attività, *Collision Point* documenta soprattutto la stretta amicizia tra William Susman e l'ensemble romano Piccola Accademia degli Specchi.

In particolare, vi figurano due sue altre composizioni per Pierrot ensemble, successive a *Twisted Figures: The Starry Dynamo* (1994) e *Camille* (2010), quest'ultimo commissionato dalla Piccola Accademia degli Specchi – dove il sassofono contralto si sostituisce al clarinetto ed il pianoforte è a quattro mani. Vi compare anche il noto *Motions of Return*, affascinante rincorsa nel tempo e contro il tempo tra flauto e pianoforte, che ha tanto

del labirinto quanto del puzzle.

O dell'equilibrismo – ritorniamo al punto. Poiché il cuore del programma è certamente *Clouds and Flames*, trio con pianoforte composto nel 2010, di cui uno dei movimenti presta il proprio nome di *Collision Point* all'intera raccolta. Il suo titolo, come quello dei sette movimenti che lo costituiscono, deriva dal romanzo *Questo bacio vada al mondo intero* (*Let the Great World Spin*), pubblicato nel 2009 dallo scrittore irlandese Colum McCann (ed incoronato lo stesso anno con il National Book Award). Ispirati da alcuni episodi del romanzo, questi movimenti, scrive William Susman, *"sono un insieme d'impressioni sulla perdita e la rinascita ed una meditazione sull'impresa dell'acrobata Philippe Petit, che camminò su una fune sospesa tra le torri gemelle del World Trade Centre, il 7 agosto 1974"*. Un episodio che è precisamente il punto di partenza ed uno dei leitmotiv del libro di McCann. *"Assomiglia al romanziere, questo acrobata che tesse i fili su cui deve tenersi in equilibrio"*, ha dichiarato quest'ultimo in un'intervista. Potrebbe evocare anche William Susman, architetto equilibrista.

"Credi di avere un'idea chiara delle intenzioni di un compositore, quando all'improvviso ti rendi conto che dietro vi si nasconde qualcosa, e dietro ancora qualcos'altro, ancora ed ancora e così di seguito. Continuerò a suonare la musica di William per molto tempo, perché stimola la mia curiosità e ho così tanto da imparare da lui!" dichiarava nel 2012 il compositore e pianista Francesco Di Fiore. La musica di Susman è un labirinto di ritmi, un trompe-l'œil in moto perpetuo, che sembra fare eco al verso di Tennyson che ha ispirato il titolo del romanzo di McCann: *"Lascia che il grande mondo giri in vortici d'infiniti mutamenti..."*

David Sanson

Bordeaux, marzo 2019

(translation: Matteo Sommacal)

* Termine anglosassone che designa le formazioni il cui organico riprende quello del *Pierrot Lunaire* composto da Arnold Schönberg nel 1912 (un quintetto costituito da flauto, clarinetto, violino, violoncello e pianoforte, con l'aggiunta all'occorrenza di una voce recitante).



CAMILLE (2010)

Flute, Alto Sax, Violin, Cello and Piano 4-Hands

Divided into three sections, *Camille* follows a *fast-slow-fast* form, titled *Vitality-Tranquility-Triumph*.

Each movement borrows from the Afro-Cuban rhythmic pattern called *clave*. This rhythm is often layered 3-2 in one instrument over 2-3 in another. As in the optical illusions created by M.C. Escher's illustrations, here the ear can choose to focus on a 3-2 or a 2-3 pattern somewhat like the eye focusing on a white fish or brown fish in his wood cuts. These *clave* patterns are also spread between many instruments using the medieval hocket technique. Traditionally the *clave* rhythm is performed "linearly" by one instrument, usually a woodblock.

Camille was composed for Piccola Accademia degli Specchi in 2010 and premiered November 14, 2010 at Teatro Quirino, Rome, Italy.

CLOUDS AND FLAMES (2010)

Violin, Cello and Piano*

The title *Clouds and Flames* and the names of the movements come from moments in Collum McCann's novel *Let the Great World Spin*.

The movements, inspired by events in the novel, are a set of impressions on loss, remembrance and rebirth, and a meditation on the tightrope wire walk of Philippe Petit between the World Trade Center towers on August 7, 1974.

Life must pass through difficulty to achieve any modicum of beauty.
– Collum McCann

Clouds and Flames contains seven movements.

- I. Riding Towards Oblivion
- II. Floating in the Air
- III. In a Zone
- IV. The Alphabet of Dying
- V. Collision Point
- VI. Jar of Ashes
- VII. The World Spins

MOTIONS OF RETURN (1996)

Flute and Piano**

The piece is based on cyclical material of melodies and chord progressions. The title is taken from the following quote:

We have diverse curious Clocks; And other like Motions of Return.
. . . *We have also Houses of Deceits of the Senses, where we represent all manner of Feats of Juggling, False Apparitions, Impostures, and Illusions.* . . . *These are (my sonne) the Riches of Salomon's House.*
– Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, 1627.

THE STARRY DYNAMO (1994)

Flute, Alto Sax, Violin, Cello and Piano*

The inspiration for *The Starry Dynamo* comes from the opening lines of the poem *HOWL* by Allen Ginsburg, written 1955-56 in San Francisco:

*I saw the best minds of my generation destroyed by
madness, starving hysterical naked,
dragging themselves through the negro streets at dawn
looking for an angry fix,
angelheaded hipsters burning for the ancient heavenly
connection to the starry dynamo in the machinery of night,
who poverty and tatters and hollowed-eyed and high sat
up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops
of cities contemplating jazz,
who barred their brains to Heaven under the El and
saw Mohammedan angels staggering on tenement roofs illuminated,*

The work was originally scored for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. The clarinet part was adapted for alto saxophone to fit with Piccola Accademia degli Specchi. The rhythmic motives come from Afro-Cuban music, especially the montuño, a repeated syncopated figure or ostinato. In Latin jazz bands, the montuño is typically emphasized by the pianist. In *The Starry Dynamo*, all the instrumentalists perform these montuño-like patterns. *The Starry Dynamo* was composed during the summer of 1994.

PICCOLA ACCADEMIA DEGLI SPECCHI

Alessandra Amorino **FLUTE**
Claudia Di Pietro **ALTO SAX**
Giuliano Cavaliere **VIOLIN**
Rina You **CELLO**
Assunta Cavallari **PIANO**
Fabio Silvestro **PIANO**



Piccola Accademia degli Specchi (Little Academy of Mirrors) is a Rome-based ensemble founded in 2000 that specializes in the performance of contemporary classical music. Its unique instrumentation (flute, saxophone, violin, cello and piano four-hands) has its origins in the common Pierrot ensemble. The outstanding musicianship of its members provide its singular sound and groove.

Piccola Accademia degli Specchi has been hailed as one of the eight most prominent Pierrot ensembles by C. Dromey, *The Pierrot Ensembles: Chronicle and Catalogue*. Its sound has been praised as "full-bodied and luscious" by *textura*, and its technical prowess has been deemed "excellent" by *American Record Guide*. Featured radio broadcasts include BBC radio, *New Sounds* on WNYC, *Echoes* on NPR, and *Concertzender* in The Netherlands.

After nearly 20 years of concerts, premieres, recordings and album releases, *Piccola Accademia degli Specchi* has become one of the most remarkable and active contemporary chamber music ensembles in Italy. They are currently ensemble-in-residence at Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia in Rome and perform throughout Europe.



WILLIAM SUSMAN

American composer William Susman has developed a distinctive voice in contemporary classical music, with a catalog that includes orchestral, chamber, and vocal music, as well as numerous film scores. In addition to his work as a composer, he spearheads the contemporary ensemble OCTET and Belarca Records. His music is described by AllMusic as “the next developments in the sphere (of) minimalism.” It has earned praise from The New York Times for being “vivid, turbulent, and rich-textured,” and from Gramophone as “texturally shimmering and harmonically ravishing.”

Susman’s training as a pianist in both jazz and classical traditions was influential in shaping his development as a composer. His academic training in composition grounded him in the traditions of mid-century modernism and he was particularly fascinated by the sounds and techniques of Xenakis and Ligeti. As he developed his own voice, though, he came to believe that the aesthetic of post-war modernism was too limiting, and he began to incorporate a variety of musical and cultural influences, including Afro-Cuban music, free jazz, and other non-Western folk traditions. His music uses an array of musical devices, from medieval isorhythm and hocket to Afro-Cuban clave and montuno rhythmic patterns. With this toolkit, he crafts a bold sound world both familiar and complex, with highly energetic grooves and modal-based hypnotic harmonies.

Susman’s music is uniquely suited to film, and he is widely recognized for scoring such award-winning works as *Native New Yorker* (Best Documentary Film, Tribeca Film Festival), which has been included in over 30 film festivals worldwide and was honored in 2015 as one of the best in American experimental film by the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. His film catalog includes scores for numerous documentaries such as *Oil on Ice*, awarded the Pare Lorentz award by the International Documentary Association.

First appearing on the international scene after receiving a BMI award in 1985, Susman was selected by Earle Brown to receive a commission from the Fromm Foundation. The resulting work, *Trailing Vortices* (1986), received numerous international performances, including with the Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra, and went on to win awards from the Gaudeamus Foundation and ASCAP. His orchestral and chamber music has been widely performed in the U.S., Europe, China, and Japan.

Credits

Music by William Susman

PICCOLA ACCADEMIA DEGLI SPECCHI

Flute Alessandra Amorino

Alto Sax Claudia Di Pietro

Violin Giuliano Cavaliere

Cello Rina You

Piano Assunta Cavallari

Piano Fabio Silvestro

Produced by Matteo Sommacal and William Susman

Artistic Director Matteo Sommacal

Sound Engineering Enrico Furzi

Recorded at La Strada Recording Studio

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Kilgore Sound, New York City

Mastering Engineer Alan Silverman, Arf! Mastering

New York City

Liner Notes David Sanson

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SPECIAL THANKS (In alphabetical order)

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