

**KAREL HUSA****String Quartet No.2 (1953)**

- 1 Adagio - Allegro con Fuoco 6:14 2 Lento assai 5:15  
3 Adagio - Allegro con brio 6:32

**String Quartet No.3 (1968)**

*(Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Music)*

- 4 Allegro moderato 5:40 5 Lento assai 4:48  
6 Allegro Possibile 5:26 7 Adagio 4:55

**Evocations de Slovaquie (1951)**

- 8 Mountain 5:06 9 Night 4:37 10 Dance 4:41

*The Long Island Chamber Ensemble Lawrence Sobol, Artistic Director*

Total Timing: 54:03

**AAD**



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Cover: Francis Picabia "I See Again in Memory my Dear Udine"

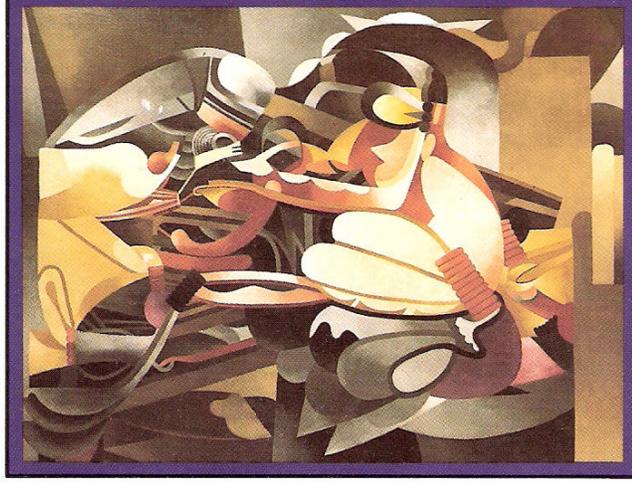
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**KAREL HUSA**

**String Quartet Nos. 2 and 3**  
*(Winner of 1969 Pulitzer Prize for Music)*  
**The Fine Arts Quartet**

**Evocations de Slovaquie**  
for Clarinet, Viola and Cello, 1951  
**The Long Island Chamber Ensemble**

Lawrence Sobol,  
Artistic Director



## THE FINE ARTS QUARTET

**Leonard Sorkin, violin • Abran Loft, violin  
Bernard Zaslav, viola • George Sopkin, cello**

The Fine Arts Quartet is one of America's foremost ensembles. For their Haydn, as for their Beethoven, Bartok, Mozart, Brahms, Carter, Schoenberg, *et. al.*, the Fine Arts foursome have been acclaimed by audience and press in the major cities of the world. Paris: "Artists by instinct and experience." Vienna: "Tender, even a trace Viennese." New York: "Distinguished itself in almost every possible way." Sydney: "No ordinary adulation seems relevant." Zurich: "Can hold their own with any master quartet of international renown." Amsterdam: "This group is unsurpassed." Paris: "Eloquence, vitality, musicality."

The Fine Arts Quartet perform on four superb examples of the violin-maker's art: the first violin is a rare and beautiful masterpiece by Guarnerius del Gesù, made in Cremona in 1731; The second violin is an outstanding specimen of Tommaso Balestrieri, made in Mantua in 1772. The viola is a handsome Carcassi, made in Florence in 1748. And the cello is a magnificent Matteo Goffriller, made in Venice in 1731.

## THE LONG ISLAND CHAMBER ENSEMBLE OF NEW YORK

**Lawrence Sobol, clarinet • Louise Schulman, viola • Timothy Eddy, cello**  
Hailed by the New York Times for "its sheet high spirit, youthful zest and technical virtuosity" after the Ensemble's debut recital in 1970, the Long Island Chamber Ensemble has continued to excite the critical world as well as audiences across the nation for their widely diversified programming. The Ensemble has been the recipient of many awards and grants through the years. Over the last five seasons the Ensemble has to its credit more than twenty premiere performances. Some of America's foremost composers have appeared in Lecture-Concerts with the Long Island Chamber Ensemble. Among these are Alan Hovhaness, Larry Austin, Karel Husa, Roy Harris, Michael Colgrass and Ezra Laderman. Since its inception, the Long Island Chamber Ensemble has been actively involved in the commissioning of new works.

Lawrence Sobol, clarinetist and Artistic Director of the Long Island Chamber Ensemble has performed extensively throughout America and Europe as soloist with orchestra and in recital. Sobol's highly acclaimed recordings, publishing series and concerts present a consummate professional whose collaboration includes: Jessye Norman, the late Judith Raskin, William Warfield, Luciano Pavarotti, and the legendary Richard Tucker. A veritable who's who of distinguished composers has rallied to Sobol's definitive performances including: Roy Harris, David Diamond, Virgil Thomson, Alan Hovhaness and Ezra Laderman.

## Husa Reflections

I still remember the telephone call from Larry Sobol some fifteen years ago; he had the music to my Evocations of Slovákia and liked the music very much. Before programming it with his Long Island Chamber Ensemble in New York he wanted to discuss some aspects with me and offered to drive to Ithaca. We met at my summer place on the shores of Cayuga Lake.

I was amazed by his technique on the clarinet, by his musicianship and enthusiasm. He asked me about certain passages and immediately played them, suggesting different possible ways, inquired about some phrasing and breathing, about some notes, etc. I told him of the premiere of this work in Paris (in 1952) and how difficult it appeared to the performers then, especially the clarinet part. I knew the music was very challenging and the clarinet writing especially.

My apologies about all these virtuosic passages did not impress Larry too much; he learned the part and programmed the Evocations with his friends. Fortunately, thanks to numerous performances including one in Carnegie Hall and a recording released on the Grenadilla label, this composition began to be known not only to his students and colleagues but to other musicians in this country.

It is often the enthusiasm and belief of one performer that helps a work to live. Similar experiences happened to me with the performance of my Second String Quartet by the Fine Arts Quartet around 1960. At the dress rehearsal the members asked me to listen and give my impression, and correct whatever necessary. Honestly, I could not say a word to change or criticize: tempi were amazingly the one I imagined and music sounded exactly as I conceived it. I was rather surprised, as this does not always happen this way. The experience repeated itself in 1968, when I came to Chicago for the premiere of the Third Quartet. During the afternoon reading before the premiere I sat in the Goodman Theatre, listening to my friends play exactly what I imagined on the paper; after all a score is not a 100% indication of composers' intentions. I guess, it must be - in addition to an impeccable musicianship and techniques - the enthusiasm for music making, probably the most important ingredient of all. And we, living composers need such wonderful enthusiasts for new works; without them our notes would look like a very interesting mosaic of dots, rounds, lines and phrases - a nice drawing - but no sounds.

*Karel Husa, December 1989*

Would it be accurate to say that one of the germinating concepts of the Third Quartet was color - a real exploitation of the sonorities of the four instruments, alone and together? "Yes," said Husa, "and virtuosity. I thought, with the Fine Arts Quartet I can write *anything*. But let me go back a little. My First Quartet, which was written in 1948 for the Smetana Quartet, was in classical form - I mean the new classical form, like Hindemith or Bartok. In 1954, with Quartet No.2, I tried to be more free, to get away from sonata form. You see, we must try today to lose the classical forms, because they were used so long and so well. They reached perfection. My Quartet No.2 was much more violent than the First, but with the players working *together*.

"With No.3, each player is a virtuoso in himself - I give everyone a chance to hate me! The first movement has much for solo viola, in the second the cello predominates, in the third, the two violins. The fourth movement is an epilogue, when all the instruments come together." The work abounds in coloristic instrumental effects, and in general fairly bristles with a sense of activity, due in part to Husa's predilection for working with very short motifs that are highly volatile.

Husa's Second Quartet was composed in Paris in 1953 and first performed there at the Festival of the Centre de documentation sur la musique in 1954 by the Parrenin Quartet. Later, in 1959, the Parrenin Quartet played this work many times on its American tour.

The Fine Arts Quartet, which performs on this recording, first played Husa's Quartet at the XVII Festival of Contemporary Arts at Cornell University in April, 1963, and later included it on their program both here and in Europe.

Notes by Shirley Fleming  
1970

"I used to think I could not write on commission, like cutting the material to order from a pattern. But then I found it was good for me. I work slowly, and it gives a push." The statement has a certain understated charm, coming as it does from Karel Husa, whose String Quartet No.3, composed on commission from the Fine Arts Quartet, won the 1969 Pulitzer Prize for music. The Pulitzer seems to have caught Mr. Husa by surprise because, like any man intent on his profession, once he finished the job he had put it behind him and turned to the matter next at hand - "It's like taking the children to school and then they're gone and you do something of your own." (As the father of four daughters, aged seventeen downwards, Mr. Husa obviously knows whereof he speaks.) But this particular child had bounced back quite unexpectedly, and to find out more about it I went for a visit with the composer in what were once euphemistically called the groves of academe - specifically, to Cornell University... I asked him... how the Fine Arts commission had come about. It turned out that his earlier Quartet No.2 had been responsible for Quartet No.3. "I wrote my Second Quartet," said Husa, in his open and pleasant way, "for another well-known ensemble, the Parrenin Quartet. They played it in this country in 1959 and George Sorkin, the cellist of the Fine Arts, heard it and liked it. So the Fine Arts played it a great deal here and abroad, and wanted me to write something else. Finally in October 1967 Leonard Sorkin (the FA's first violin) called and asked if I would write a new quartet for them by March 1968. Now it was a bit hectic, because every January and February I go abroad for about six weeks to conduct, and I was busy studying scores and this would not leave much time to compose. But I said 'certainly.' I think Leonard was a little surprised that I said it so quickly, like that. But I came back from Europe in mid-February, and wrote it in two weeks, from sketches." The work was first performed October (1968), as the opener of the Fine Arts' regular Chicago winter series, and it got an ovation.

## KAREL HUSA

Karel Husa, American citizen since 1959, was born in 1921 in Prague, Czechoslovakia. He studied at the Prague Conservatory, the Paris Conservatory and Ecole Normale. Among his teachers were Artur Honegger, Nadia Boulanger, the French conductors Andre Cluytens, Eugene Bigot, Jean Fournet, and Czech composer J. Ridky. In 1954 Husa was appointed to the Music Faculty at Cornell University as Professor of Composition. His works have been performed at such important European Festivals as Edinburgh, Salzburg, Berlin, Prague, Paris, Donaueschingen, Frankfurt and Brussels, as well as in the United States, South Africa, Japan and Australia. He received the Czech Academy and Lili Boulanger Prizes, Koussevitsky, and UNESCO commissions, among many others. He was also a member of the juries of the Paris and Fountainbleau Conservatories, has been awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and won the 1969 Pulitzer Prize in Composition for his *String Quartet No. 3*. Recently he was elected to the Belgian Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences. During the past several seasons, Husa's music has been performed by the Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, Atlanta, Baltimore Symphonies, the French National Orchestra, and the Orchestre Suisse Romande, among others. His best known work, *Music for Prague 1968*, has had a remarkable number of performances, over 6,000.

