



(LYRCD 7459)

When the Rivers Met...

A.J. Racy, MIDDLE EASTERN MUSIC

James Peterson, WESTERN ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

Middle Eastern Music and Western Orchestral Music

This album represents a collaboration between two extraordinary artists who come from different musical traditions, but who have created an exciting path for merging their respective artistic voices. A. J. Racy is a Lebanese-born composer and phenomenal virtuoso on a variety of Middle Eastern wind and string instruments. James Peterson is a highly innovative American composer and arranger, in the Western symphonic idiom. The material on the album consists of specially edited selections from two longer sound tracks that the two artists jointly composed—one for a documentary film made by Craig McCourry, titled *The Great Bazaars* (McCourry Films, 2001), and another for a feature-length television drama produced by Ramzi Rassi, *The Last Cavaliers* (2002). Racy and Peterson met in Los Angeles in the late 1990s and have subsequently worked together on a number of musical projects.

Music and Instruments

In this recording, the Western-based component presents various instrumental configurations, dynamic effects, and harmonic textures. In turn, the Middle Eastern-derived material introduces a distinctive vocabulary of timbres, embellishments, and modally inspired melodic structures. The integration of the two idioms gives the overall content its own distinctive ambiance, as well as its internal stylistic and expressive variety.

A wide array of instruments is used. The orchestral sections occasionally combine standard Western instruments with such Arab percussion instruments as the *tar* (large framedrum), *tablah* (single vase-shaped drum), and *riqq* (small tambourine). Also eight, mostly Middle Eastern, instruments, heard on the album either in ensemble contexts or in solo or solo-drone passages, are all performed by A. J. Racy. These are:

kawala—a reed-flute typical of Egyptian folk music (Tracks 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12)

nay—an Arab reed-flute (Tracks 2, 4)

bowed-tanbur—a Turkish long-necked fretted string instrument, in this case with drone strings that are occasionally bowed (Track 2)

plucked-tanbur—the same as above, but plucked instead of bowed (Track 8)

buzuq—a long-necked, fretted, plucked string instrument typical of the Eastern Arab world (Tracks 5, 7, 11)

'ud—a Middle Eastern short-necked plucked lute (Tracks 9, 12)

violin—regular Western violin, tuned and played in the Arab style (Track 7)

English horn—the standard orchestral double-reed instrument (Track 10)

Acknowledgements:

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A. J. Racy, Ph.D.

A. J. Racy is a performer, composer, and Professor of Ethnomusicology at the University of California, Los Angeles. Born in Lebanon, he comes from a well-known family of artists, scholars, and academicians. Racy is internationally recognized for his extraordinary musicianship and his numerous publications, including his award-winning book, *Making Music in the Arab World: The Culture and Artistry of Tarab* (Cambridge University Press, 2003).

A master of many traditional instruments, he has performed in major venues, such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Hollywood Bowl, the Beiteddine Festival in Lebanon, the Commonwealth Institute in London, and the Escola de Música da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. He has composed

and performed for the Kronos Quartet and the Sacramento Symphony Orchestra, as well as for feature and documentary films. His music has been released on a number of CDs, including three Lyrichord albums, *Ancient Egypt*, *Taqasim*, and *Mystical Legacies*, and on a Kronos Quartet album titled *Caravan*. Dr. Racy has received numerous tributes for his outstanding artistry and his work toward greater intercultural understanding.

James Peterson

James Peterson is a highly accomplished composer with a rich and diverse background as a musician and music educator. Born in Los Angeles, he began his musical studies at age nine, became an adept performer on the trumpet, and joined a number of prestigious Drum and Bugle Corps groups. James earned a degree in music education from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he also taught, played with local university ensembles, and studied film scoring with David Raksin and other world class composers. He has produced an impressive number of musical works, including 80 television commercials and 72 episodes of the ABC series *Ron Hazelton's House Calls*. He has also written the musical scores for numerous films and documentaries, including: *The Red Canvas*; *The Babysitter*; *Empires of Steam*; and, in collaboration with A. J. Racy, *The Great Bazaars* and *The Last Cavaliers*. James has received commissions from Southern California's South Bay Ballet for six original works, including the award winning ballet, *The Right to Bear Arms*. He has taught at the Hamilton Academy of Music and is currently on the faculty of Santa Monica College.

The Tracks:

1. Rivers (2:32)
2. Eternal Flow (4:16)
3. Silver Drops (2:42)
4. Festival of Light (3:32)
5. Fountain of Youth (2:29)
6. Meadows of Gold (4:23)
7. Valley of Hope (4:38)
8. Revitalization (1:58)
9. Good Earth (1:41)
10. Hasbani (4:15)
11. Elixir of Life (2:59)
12. Embrace of the Sea (2:34)



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