

Samuel Barber and David Diamond.”

“And Fauré!” Claus said. “People who have been neglected forever and ever. And new composers know now that they cannot go on like that, speaking a language that no one understands.

“Now I’m thinking in very big terms. *Grossenwahn* is the right German word, which means the total overestimation of your own abilities.

“German, like all languages, is ultimately untranslatable. My German dictionary defines *grossenwahn* as meaning megalomania, and in popular usage, swelled head. *Grossen*, obviously, relates to large, gross. *Wahn* means illusion, hallucination, delusion, madness, or folly.

“I think Wagner had that. He thought he was the greatest.

“But then, I tell you what, if I don’t think I’m good, who else will believe anything? I have to believe ‘I’ first. If you think you’re just able, just middle of the class, you don’t do great things. I have to think, since I’m my own factory, that this factory is fantastic. Whether other people will believe in it later, that’s another thing. At least the producer has to believe it’s special.”

I said, “The artist has enough self-doubt as it is. If you dwell on it, it will kill you.”

*Symphonic Dances* was composed in 1971 and premiered that year by the Stuttgart Radio Orchestra. In June, 1980, Claus recorded this three-movement piece with the London Symphony Orchestra. It is not a jazz work, yet Claus’s experience with jazz results in certain subtle touches. For example, there is a low string figure in the second movement (marked *molto tranquillo*) that is drawn from the blues. It is a gorgeous piece of music.

Claus composed his *Concerto Lirico* for violin in 1986, and recorded it with the National Philharmonic Orchestra (Koch). The soloist was Aaron Rosand, who earlier had premiered the Samuel Barber violin concerto with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic.

His *Lyric Suite* was composed in 1952, a full seven years before Claus made his first trip to the United States. He was thirty-two at the time. The suite was recorded by the London Symphony Orchestra and released in an album titled *Claus Ogerman: Lyrical Works* (EMI Classics) in 1997. His *Symphonic Dances* and ballet music *Some Times* were recorded in 1973 and released on the Bay Cities label.

*Elegia* was first recorded by Claus and Bill Evans in the *Bill Evans with Symphony Orchestra* album of 1965. He recorded it again, with his *Preludio and Chant*, with the London Symphony Orchestra in June 1988 (Helios). And most of his work with Jobim will be found on Verve or Warner Brothers.

A final point Claus has a prodigious knowledge of the other arts, including painting and literature, and there are often references to them in his music.

Tommy LiPuma said:

“The thing about this guy — it finally came to me — he’s steeped in the classics, but then there is all the popular song he loves. He’s brilliant. And his command of the orchestra is wonderful. He knows how to get the dynamics. Everything is balanced in the studio, you don’t have to fix it later. When I’m mixing, I never feel like I’m fighting the orchestra. Everything seems to sit in the right places.”

Tommy is awed by the way Claus writes unison string lines that are somehow perfect. It sounds like a simple thing — after all the violins are playing the same lines. But there is always something eerily beautiful about those lines.

“One thing about his unison lines,” Tommy said, “they never get in the way of the singer or the instrumental soloist. Sometimes he’ll just lay back and let eight, sixteen bars go by with only the rhythm section. And then when the orchestra comes back in it’s always perfect, and it’s wonderful.”

“If Claus were an architect,” Creed Taylor said, “and someone said he wanted a Frank Lloyd Wright house, he could do it. Or a cottage from *Better Homes and Gardens*, he could do that too. He can do anything.

“And there’s that unison string sound. I have never asked him how he does it, and I don’t know, but it’s beautiful. It’s nothing less than magical.”

A footnote. Some time in the late 1970s, Claus was due to visit Los Angeles. Knowing that the revered German-American film composer Hugo Friedhofer was my dear friend, Claus asked if it might be possible to meet him. I set up a lunch for the three of us.

When I wanted Hugo to hear a piece of music, I would play a tape of it in the car, wherever we might be going. Now Hugo, you must know, then nearing eighty, managed to sustain a remarkably somber view of life despite great successes and the admiration of musicians around the world. He was not familiar with Claus’s writing, and so on our way to that luncheon, I played him some of Claus’s music.

He listened closely for a time, made some perceptive analysis of the music, then said in his sepulchral voice, “That kraut friend of yours has a melancholy streak.”

I said, “That kraut friend of mine? What about *this* kraut friend of mine?”