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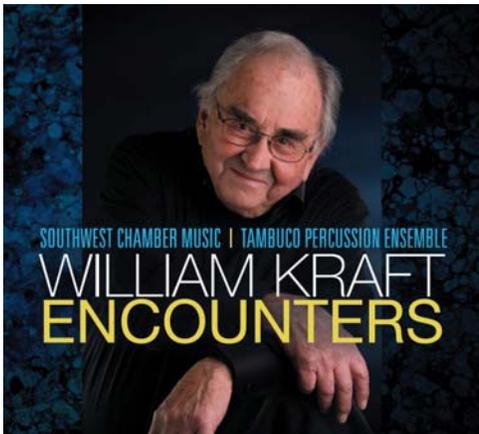
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**NEW 3-CD RELEASE OF THE “ENCOUNTERS”**

**By WILLIAM KRAFT**

*“These works serve for Kraft the way the string quartet did for Beethoven or Shostakovich, as a kind of autobiography in chamber music...a monument both to Kraft and the world of percussion” – Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times*

*“An epic body of work comparable to Berio’s Sequenzas”  
Richard Ginell, American Record Guide*



Los Angeles – Celebrating the 85<sup>th</sup> birthday of **William Kraft**, one of America’s most important composers and percussionists, GRAMMY®-winning Southwest Chamber Music, the Tambuco Percussion Ensemble of Mexico and Cambria Master Recordings are proud to announce the release of a major survey of Kraft’s *Encounters*. This new three-CD release celebrates the 25<sup>th</sup> recording of Southwest Chamber Music and fills a major gap in the recorded discography of American music. The set contains over three hours of groundbreaking music that establishes the percussionist as a formidable soloist with various other solo instruments, such as trombone, violin, and cello. The three CDs span fourteen *Encounters*, documenting a compositional journey that began in the 1960s and will certainly continue with more *Encounters* in the future. Cambria Master Recordings are distributed world wide by Naxos’ Classics Online.

Southwest Chamber Music Artist Director Jeff von der Schmidt recently observed that “our *Encounters* project, recorded over a two-year period that began in 2007, is the culmination of many dreams. One was to demonstrate a monumental new canon of work for percussion spanning over forty years of creativity that predicted the now general acceptance of the sounds of world culture, so beautifully resonant with a timbre palate infused with an endless collection of gongs, rattles, tam tams, and marimbas. It’s a veritable clock factory of global influences from Asia, Africa and Latin America. Another was to continue our ensemble’s engagement

with the brilliant musicians of Mexico's Tambuco Percussion Ensemble, which since 2004 has led to numerous and highly successful concert and recording projects in both the United States and Mexico. And finally to celebrate the *pater familias* of percussionists and their brilliant creative force, William Kraft, a friend and colleague of mine for over thirty years. I hope you enjoy this superb collection of music and the vistas of new and evolving sounds it represents as the *Encounters* chronicle the music of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the Age of Aquarius."

The *Encounters* were edited and mastered by recording engineer Mathew Snyder of MSR Recordings in Burbank, California. He has been the engineer for Southwest Chamber Music since 1993 and has worked for Cambria Master Recordings, BMG Classics, KOCH International, Orfeo, and Centaur Records, as well as mastering the catalog of Delos International. His other clients include the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival (1992 to present); La Jolla Music Society (1994 to present); Arizona Friends of Chamber Music in Tucson; the Mainly Mozart Festival in San Diego (1998 to present); and Chamber Music Northwest in Portland (2009). Speaking about the *Encounters* project, Mr. Snyder said "this is one of the most challenging projects imaginable for an engineer to record. The dynamic range is extreme at both ends of the spectrum. Each *Encounter* demanded a unique set-up, so that balancing the whole project, over three hours of music, became a rewarding challenge. It's a great follow-up to the two GRAMMY awards and six consecutive GRAMMY nominations we received for Southwest Chamber Music's four-volume cycle of the *Complete Chamber Music of Carlos Chávez*. Kraft produces such a rich range of sounds that the project was very inspiring to work on over the past few years."

The recordings and concerts prior to the sessions were supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, the Schoenberg Family Charitable Fund, the James Irvine Foundation, the Fromm Foundation at Harvard University, and the Argosy Contemporary Music Fund.

### **About composer William Kraft**

William Kraft (b. 1923) has had a long and active career as composer, conductor, percussionist, and teacher. His works have been commissioned and performed by Zubin Mehta and Esa-Pekka Salonen of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Kent Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony, Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Orchestra, and Wolfgang Sawalisch and the Philadelphia Orchestra, to name a few. He was the Los Angeles Philharmonic's Composer-in-Residence from 1981-85. During his residency, he was founder and director of the orchestra's performing ensemble for contemporary music, the Philharmonic New Music Group. Mr. Kraft had previously been a member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic for 26 years; eight years as percussionist, and the last 18 as Principal Timpanist. He was the percussion soloist under Stravinsky's direction in the recording of *Histoire du Soldat*, performed in the U.S. premiere of *Le marteau sans Maître* with Pierre Boulez and he played the timpani solo in Bernard Herrmann's score for Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest*. Kraft has received numerous awards and commissions, including two Kennedy Center Friedheim Awards and two Ford Foundation commissions.

### **About Guest Artists: Tambuco Percussion Ensemble**

GRAMMY-nominated Tambuco Percussion Ensemble was founded in 1993 by four distinguished Mexican musicians and is considered one of the most important percussion ensembles today. Tambuco has received many distinctions and prizes from cultural organizations in Mexico and abroad. They have performed in the USA (Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center), Tokyo (Ino Hall), London (Barbican Center), Paris and Montpellier (Festival de Radio France), Lisbon (Festival dos Cern Dias and Expo '98), Shanghai Festival (2006) plus concerts in Spain, Germany, Italy, Cuba, Colombia, Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, Venezuela, Canada, India, Egypt, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia, as well as practically all the concert halls of Mexico.

Tambuco recorded with the Kronos Quartet on the twice GRAMMY-nominated album *Nuevo*. Tambuco began its association with Southwest Chamber Music in October of 2004, performing and recording all the work for percussion and ensemble of Carlos Chávez. This CD was nominated for three GRAMMYS, including Best Classical Album from both mainstream and Latin GRAMMY. In May 2007, Tambuco and Southwest Chamber Music performed a five concert cycle of the complete chamber music of Chávez at the UNAM Center in Mexico City. In December 2009 they will reunite for performances at the Guadalajara FIL Festival in Jalisco, Mexico.

### **About Southwest Chamber Music**

**SOUTHWEST CHAMBER MUSIC** will celebrate a transformative season in 2009-2010 as international cultural ambassador for the United States. The U.S. State Department selected our ensemble from a highly competitive field to produce the *Ascending Dragon Festival and Cultural Exchange* from March to May 2010, the most significant musical cultural exchange between Vietnam and the United States in the history of the two nations. *Ascending Dragon* will involve six weeks of performances in Hanoi, Saigon, and Los Angeles, with performances at the Hanoi Opera House and the Vietnam National Academy of Music in Hanoi, the Ho Chi Minh City Conservatory in Saigon, the Colburn School of Performing Arts and the Armory Center for the Arts in Los Angeles and Pasadena.

In December 2009, Southwest Chamber Music will travel to Mexico, representing our country at the *Guadalajara FIL Arts Festival*, a festival produced alongside the world's largest Spanish book fair. Guadalajara invites one host country each year, which this year features arts organizations from Los Angeles representing the United States. Sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and Los Angeles Cultural Affairs Department, Southwest Chamber Music is the only classical music organization of the 16 Los Angeles arts organizations selected. We will reunite with the Tambuco Percussion Ensemble of Mexico city in a concert of American and Mexican music.

In January and February 2010 the ensemble will collaborate with the Armory Center for the Arts for its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a series of concerts of music by John Cage performed inside the Amory Gallery retrospective exhibition devoted to Robert Rauschenberg. This summer finds our GRAMMY Award-winning

group releasing its 25<sup>th</sup> CD, a monumental 3 CD set surveying the world of percussion with the *Encounters* by William Kraft.

Southwest Chamber Music's ability to energize classical music includes recent projects of international cultural significance. In December 2006, the ensemble produced cultural exchange programs with Cambodia's Royal University of Fine Arts in Phnom Penh, the 2006 World Culture Expo at the temples of Angkor Wat, and the Vietnam National Academy of Music. The 2006 tour to Southeast Asia featured the music of Grawemeyer Award-winning, Cambodian-American composer Chinary Ung. These were the first residencies by an American ensemble since the end of the Vietnam War and Khmer Rouge era in Southeast Asia. Southwest Chamber Music also performed in May 2007 at the UNAM Center in Mexico City with a cycle of five concerts of the complete chamber works of Carlos Chávez, joined by the Tambuco Percussion Ensemble.

The ensemble has also been presented by the Library of Congress in Washington D.C., Cooper Union in New York City, Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival, Getty Center, Orange County Performing Arts Center, Ojai Festival, and Luckman Fine Arts Center. Guest conductors appearing with the ensemble have included Oliver Knussen, Stephen L. Mosko, and Charles Wuorinen. In March 2003, Southwest Chamber Music became the first American ensemble to perform at the Arnold Schoenberg Center in Vienna.

As a two-time GRAMMY Award-winner, Southwest Chamber Music has one of the most impressive recorded discographies of any American chamber ensemble with the release of their 25<sup>th</sup> recording in 2009. The group has received six GRAMMY® nominations for its four volume cycle of the *Complete Chamber Works of Carlos Chávez* on Cambria Master Recordings. This recognition from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences includes 2003 and 2004 GRAMMY Awards in the Best Small Ensemble category for Volumes 1 and 2. Three further nominations for Volume 3 are shared with the Tambuco Percussion Ensemble of Mexico City, including Best Classical Album and Best Small Ensemble nominations in 2005, and a Latin GRAMMY Best Classical Album nomination in 2006. Finally, Volume 4 was honored with a 2007 Latin GRAMMY Best Classical Album nomination.

Southwest Chamber Music's *Composer Portrait Series* on Cambria Master Recordings received a 2002 ASCAP-Chamber Music America Award for a "landmark set of 12 compact discs featuring American music of our time." The ensemble has also recorded works of Prokofiev and Poulenc on Cambria, as well as the late works of Krenek for Orfeo Records in Munich. The ensemble's 25 recordings are available from Cambria Master Recordings, with world-wide distribution by Naxos (Classics Online). More information about Southwest Chamber Music is available at [www.swmusic.org](http://www.swmusic.org).

For questions or to arrange interviews and receive more material, please contact Ms. Thu-Nga Dan at 626.685.4455 or email [thunga@swmusic.org](mailto:thunga@swmusic.org).

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