

PAMIETAM by Richard Wilson

At one of the many Thanksgiving dinners we attended together, Charles Botstein attempted to help me understand the cause of the ringing I was then experiencing in my ears. After his extended and to-me impenetrable explanation, he admitted, with a wry smile, that he was now hearing the ringing in his ears too. He was a great doctor; but he could also be very funny. I met him first in the fall of 1960. I was then pretending to be a pre-medical student, a charade he saw through immediately as he quizzed me on various points of anatomy. He should not be blamed for my having gone into music, but he may be thanked for coaxing me out of medicine. During the past twenty years I have seen him regularly and with great pleasure at the many concerts and other events at Bard and in New York. He seemed to grow more and more sage--but no less formidable. He died on May 2, 1994.

Charles Botstein was a Polish-speaking Jew raised in Lodz. In his memory I have made a setting of four poems translated from the Polish by Czeslaw Milosz. Three are by Leopold Staff (1878-1957)—“Foundations”, “The Bridge”, and “Three Towns”—and the fourth is by Mieczyslaw Jastrun (1903)—“Beyond Time.” The settings are imbedded in a continuous orchestral movement. They are for mezzo-soprano soloist. The title, *Pamietam* (“I remember”) was chosen by Charles<sup>1</sup> widow, Anne, herself a distinguished physician.

--R.W.