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AMERICAN CLASSICS

**Hubert Klyne
HEADLEY**
California Suite
**Piano Concertos
Nos. 1 and 2**
Symphony No. 1
 Anna Bogolyubova, Piano
 Russian Philharmonic
Orchestra
 Dmitry Yablonsky

[HEADLEY: California Suite / Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 / Symphony No. 1](#)

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- [ClassicsToday.com, February 2009](#)
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Artistic Quality **9/8** *Sound Quality*

David Hurwitz

[ClassicsToday.com](#), February 2009


This is really fun. Hubert Headley (1906–95) is a composer in the tradition of Gershwin, Still, Gillis, and Moross — that is, stylish, pop-influenced ('30s and '40s), and well-crafted. Howard Hanson and Pierre Monteux had nice things to say about the colorful and extremely enjoyable *California Suite*, and during the 1940s it enjoyed a measure of popularity. Similarly, the concertos are brilliantly scored and full of good ideas. Both are single-movement works lasting a mere 11 and 15 minutes, respectively. The First Symphony (1946) requires just 13 minutes, and it's likewise colorful and cogent. Certainly there is no reason why this music should not become popular again; likely it faded from view because Headley essentially gave up symphonic composition after the 1940s in favor of large-scale choral music, but then so much good tonal music vanished after the "serial interruption" that began in the 1950s. The performances here are consistently exciting, with Anna Bogolyubova a confident soloist in the two concertos, and Dmitry Yablonsky leading an orchestra that sounds like it's having a remarkably good time. You will too.

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David Denton

[David's Review Corner](#), October 2007

Hubert Klyne Headley was born in West Virginia in 1906, but moved with his family to live in California while still a child. Educated at the University of the Pacific and Eastman School of Music, Headley enjoyed a mixed career as a concert-pianist, conductor, composer and teacher, becoming equally successful in each sector. Working almost exclusively in North America, a concert tour of Europe in 1947, when he conducted his own music, opened up an international vista. His earliest work on the disc, and his most prestigious commission, is the three movement California Suite for the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco. It sets out the style of melodic writing that was to characterise his whole output, the easy-going tunefulness and colourful orchestration perfectly creating the sights and sounds of local scenes ending with a fiesta. The two piano concertos - both in one movement - offer a virtuoso display, while the French radio's commission for an orchestral work resulted in the one movement Symphony for Radio, a work that compacts many moods into a small time-frame. Headley was among many American composers who rejected atonality and the uncompromising modernity that was sweeping Europe at the heart of the 20th century. That, however, left many finding a new challenge in establishing a personal voice, though with the premiere of each new work they received much acclamation. The disappearance of Headley's music from the repertoire is the fate that has befallen many that followed that musical path, and maybe these very dedicated and exceptionally well played performance will jolt a reassessment of his output. It is certainly one the finest things we have had from the Russian Philharmonic both in terms of playing and recording.

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John Sunier


[Audiophile Audition](#)



This CD - ironically recorded at the Russian State TV & Radio Company in Moscow - brings collectors and music lovers four major works from an American composer who was internationally known in the 1940s but whose music had dropped into obscurity. Headley, who lived until 1995, was not only a composer but also a concert pianist and conductor. Howard Hanson called his *California Suite* "a brilliant score." At the age of ten he was introduced to Maurice Ravel, whose music has a strong effect on him. He studied at the Eastman School of Music, won a MacDowell Fellowship in Composition and was pianist and conductor of his own works thruout Europe.

Headley's *California Suite* was commissioned by Standard Oil of California for the opening of the 1939 Golden Gate Exposition in San Francisco. The three descriptive movements are titled *Golden Gate*, *Yosemite*, and *Fiesta*. *Golden Gate* depicts sights and sounds of San Francisco, including the foghorns, and *Yosemite* evokes the impressive vistas of that national park. The two short piano concertos are greatly contrasted and interesting works that should be part of today concert repertory. No. 1 strangely doesn't communicate any audible elements of Argentine music or tango, but is a dramatic work with a virtuoso piano part and colorful orchestration. The orchestra often takes a rather dissonant turn while the piano part remains more diatonic and simple.

The second concerto shows a more personal style, with dedication to the suffering and triumphs of oppressed peoples. The brass section has a strong role here, as it does in much of Headley's music. A strong theme in its center portion sounds almost Russian. The "for Radio" in the title of the short First Symphony dates it accurately to the 40s (and the 30s in Europe), when a number of composers were commissioned by radio stations or networks to write music to be premiered on the air. The chamber symphony involves spotlighting many of the solo instruments of the orchestra. Headley's music deserves to be resurrected due not only to its accessibility but to its suggestions of more depth than found in several of the lesser American composers of this period.

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[Headley, Hubert Klyne](#)

Conductor(s):
[Yablonsky, Dmitry](#)

Orchestra(s):
[Russian Philharmonic Orchestra](#)

Artist(s):
[Bogolyubova, Anna](#)

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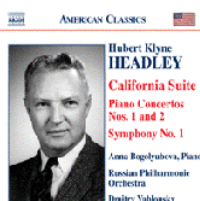
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HEADLEY: California Suite / Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2 / Symphony No. 1

During the 1940s Hubert Klyne Headley became internationally known as a composer, concert pianist, and conductor. Given the former popularity of Headley's music – Howard Hanson described the *California Suite* as a "brilliant score" – and its immediate emotional accessibility, its disappearance from the concert hall is to be greatly regretted. Throughout all of Headley's compositions one can sense beneath the veneer of romantic impressionism an undercurrent of greater depths that leads the listener to, as Headley himself put it, "The way I have always felt inside." A fitting tribute to a uniquely talented American composer, this recording of four major works brings Headley's music back from undeserved obscurity.

[Headley, Hubert Klyne](#)

- California Suite
 1. **I. Golden Gate** 00:07:36
 2. **II. Yosemite** 00:11:24
 3. **III. Fiesta** 00:06:05
- Piano Concerto No. 1, "Argentango"
 4. **Piano Concerto No. 1, "Argentango"** 00:10:52
- Piano Concerto No. 2
 5. **Piano Concerto No. 2** 00:14:41
- Symphony No. 1 for Radio
 6. **Symphony No. 1 for Radio** 00:13:25

Total Playing Time: 01:04:03