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Bang on an Ear: An Interview with David Lang

MARK ALBURGER

Post-minimalist composer David Lang (b. Los Angeles) is one of the founders of the *Bang on a Can Marathon* and the Bang on a Can All-Stars. His *Modern Painters* was premiered at Santa Fe Opera in 1995. He has received commissions from the Boston Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the American Composers Orchestra.

I met with David Lang, directly after having interviewed Christian Wolfe and hours before an interview with Jacob ter Veldhuis (a marathon day which will not likely be surpassed by this writer), on March 17 in San Francisco, the day after the performance of six of his *memory pieces* by pianist Aki Takahashi at the sixth *Other Minds Festival*.

ALBURGER: Unlike some of the other *Other Minds* participants, you can perhaps relax now.

LANG: Well, yes. But Paul Drescher's doing a piece in the *Opus415 Marathon* this Sunday [March 19]. It's called *Follow*. It's a nice piece -- not very long. It's kinky.

ALBURGER: The *memory pieces* that we heard were wonderful, but also not very long. There are two more that weren't played.

LANG: One is called "wiggle," which is in memory of Frank Wigglesworth. He was a great American composer, very funny and human person, a real wonderful spirit in the New York music scene, instrumental in all sorts of generous projects. He was on the Virgil Thomson board, on the CRI board; he was involved in all sorts of "money give-aways." He was a really good guy who lived around the corner from me in the West Village. I used to see him all the time. And the last piece is called "beach," in memory of David Huntley. He was the promotion person for Boosey & Hawkes for many years. He was the same person to whom John Adams dedicated his *Violin Concerto*. He was an unbelievably sweet and knowledgeable person -- very smart, very interested in all sorts of music. He would call me and tell me about music that he thought we should program at *Bang on a Can* that had nothing to do with Boosey & Hawkes. He would hear something that he liked and he'd say, "There's this piece, it's published by *Universal*! And you should get it!" He was a tremendously interesting person who had dedicated his life to new music. He was really one of the old-guard new-music people who knew everything.

ALBURGER: How is "cage" notated? As a series of tremolos?

LANG: It's just tremolos, yes.

ALBURGER: And it's notated staff to staff?

LANG: Some are normal, some are *8va*, some are *15 basso*.

ALBURGER: But there are always just two notes?

LANG: It's just two notes, which alternate in every measure.

ALBURGER: And change in every subsequent measure.

LANG: Yes. It's basically just a bunch of scales. The next note of the scale up goes to the right-hand side, the next note of the scale down goes to the left-hand side, until it reaches a certain barrier. The piece is a kind of a mathematical rule, in reference to where the barriers are. When the top note hits the upper barrier, it just reflects down an octave until it reaches the left-hand barrier, and then it reflects back up. The piece is just a series of demonstrations as to how those two notes change. It's the same scale. How those two notes change depends on the barriers. It's really how all the set of piano pieces work. There are seven mathematical frameworks.

ALBURGER: I had a sense of that, particularly in the arpeggio canon piece "spartan arcs," which begins in the right hand and continues in the left. The right hand started alone, and when the left hand finished alone, I said, "Yes!"

LANG: It's actually two canons. A double canon where the accidentals get changed in certain weird ways. Every one has a weird problem. This is one of my personal favorites. It's a bunch of six-note arpeggios --

ALBURGER: -- descending --

LANG: -- where gradually the next arpeggio starts before the first one finishes. The net result sounds like fairly complex chords, but they're really the first three notes of the new chord superimposed over the last three notes of the old one that hasn't finished yet.

ALBURGER: And rhythmically it's complex, with asymmetrical rhythms.

LANG: Yes, there are asymmetrical rhythms.

ALBURGER: Time signature changes?

LANG: Yes, time signature changes in every measure

ALBURGER: 6/8 becomes 5/8, and so on.

LANG: 6/16, 5/16, 4/16, 3/16, then back up to 6/16 in a very complicated process, that guarantees all sorts of asymmetries.

ALBURGER: It guarantees that the interest is maintained throughout.

LANG: That's very generous! It guarantees the unpredictability.

ALBURGER: How do the tremolos and scale barriers of "cage" reflect John Cage?

LANG: It's a really good question. It's sort of about a conversation I had with him about different rules applied to the same material. He was an incredible person, as everyone knows. You would run into him on the street and at concerts. And unlike many other people, he was always approachable. I had a former girlfriend who became friends with him, without knowing he was John Cage, simply because she would see him at concerts and would smile at him, and he would smile back. So gradually she would go up to talk to him, and after talking to him for a couple of times after a couple of different concerts she realized, "Oh, I've been talking to *John Cage!*"

ALBURGER: He was that kind of guy.

LANG: He was that kind of guy. He was unbelievably friendly. You could have a conversation with him about anything. I would see him at *Bang on a Can*, and concerts of his music, and other concerts. You could talk about whatever you wanted. We got into this one incredible conversation about what you could learn about *Bang on a Can* from looking at all the garbage that had been left on the floor. We encouraged people to bring food and we sold alcohol.

ALBURGER: Which our *Opus415* friends have picked up on.

LANG: They're our spiritual descendents. Just like we're the spiritual descendents of Cage, I think. I had a conversation with him once about how different rules would apply to the same material: what the results of applying the *I Ching* to certain material would be, as opposed to astrology, or mathematics. And just we got into this hilarious conversation; it was not serious!

ALBURGER: But there it becomes the inspiration.

LANG: The *memory pieces* are things that I have done so that I can remember a funny conversation that I had with each of these people, or an incident, or something that's powerful about them which I hope I never forget.

ALBURGER: I'm wondering, if I may be so bold, what was the conversation with Jacob Druckman that inspired the fours-against-fives in "grind"? Was Jacob one of your teachers?

LANG: Jacob was my principal teacher.

ALBURGER: Was this the grind of academia?

LANG: I don't know what that is! I don't read much into that! What's interesting for me is that all these pieces also exist as little factors for different pieces. So that I work out these ideas, and I apply them to something bigger. For example, the "grind" piece became a piece that I wrote for the San Francisco Symphony called *Grind to a Halt*, which is an 11-minute long version of that same thing. The four-against-five of "grind" becomes two-against-three-against-four-against-five, and that becomes the "relaxing" moment of a piece whose intense moment becomes two-against-three-against-four-against-six, and alternates between those two types of music. So I experimented with that kind of static polyrhythm in "grind," and I really enjoyed it. I thought, "Now that I have the opportunity to write this new orchestral piece, I'll take what I've learned here and 'blow it up' and make it bigger." I've tried to do similar things with most of these little piano pieces. "cage" doesn't have a larger manifestation. That's not to say it wouldn't be interesting. "spartan arcs" I've stolen from myself many times, in terms of rhythmic games and note-changing games. "wed" became a string quartet for the Kronos Quartet. "diet coke" [dedicated to Betty Snapp] I haven't stolen yet. "cello" became a string trio. "grind" became an orchestral piece. "wiggle" I haven't figured out what to do with yet, mostly because it is the most impossible piece; it's very, very difficult. "beach" has a beautiful melody which I've stolen many times.

ALBURGER: Did Betty Snapp like Diet Coke?

LANG: Betty Snapp was a Diet Coke addict. There is a place to write memorial pieces that are very dark and serious. I actually wrote a big piece to memorialize Betty. Of all the people on this list of pieces, Betty Snapp was my best friend. She promoted the catalogue of my original publisher, Novello. That's how I met her. Then she became the public relations director. For a time, I talked to her virtually every day of my life. There is one way in which it is important to write a serious piece, which really represents the tragedy. I wrote a piece last year in memory of her called *The Passing Measures* for the City of Birmingham Orchestra, scored for bass clarinet and women's chorus, all-amplified orchestra -- 45 minutes long, and it is much darker than this piano piece. But in the little piece I want to remember the light side that I liked about her. Everyone who went in to visit her in the hospital always commented on the fact that she would be on her death bed with all these tubes in her, and next to her there was this *giant* container of Diet Coke. And everyone would always joke with her, "What if these tubes are connected to that?!" She never went anywhere without a Diet Coke. She would show up with ice cubes in her purse and a thermos of Diet Coke.

ALBURGER: Your work ranges from the serious to the lighthearted. The *Bang on a Can Marathon* has serious and light sides, too.

LANG: I actually think all of my work has a serious intent. I think that so much of what we are taught in music is the great man and the great deep thoughts. In some areas of classical music, we're only encouraged to write the great masterpieces that take on the great subjects, and only are about life and death. There's nothing wrong with that; I think that probably people can still write music that's pretty good that way. But I think there's something anticlimactic about it, if you go to a concert, and there's a piece which proclaims itself a masterpiece and says it's about dark, serious issues, and it's going to make you cry. And then at the end of the piece, so you're in the audience crying. But what a letdown. You're just getting what was promised! It's as if the composer is standing there smugly at the end saying, "Oh, I'm proud of myself. See, I told you that you would cry." To me, I think it's very important to have the experience that's unexpected. I think I'm more affected by things in which I have to uncover the serious intent, than when the serious intent is presented for me on a platter. Music in our lives is incredibly manipulative. Most of the music that we hear is music that is supposed to make us feel something specific, and we know exactly how we're supposed to feel. Buy this kind of cereal or car, or feel this emotion in this movie or TV show. We know what those emotions are; there's no room for subtlety. Classical music has a nobility now. It is the only musical experience where you can have the unexpected emotion -- where you're free to decide for yourself. I think for me, that realization has made me make my music more abstract.

ALBURGER: You're not interested in the easy manipulation -- the easy answer.

LANG: Well... Just for myself, I'm not interested in it. I recognize its value. I recognize when it's in other people's music, that that might be perfectly valid. But for me, I want to have the non-television, non-commercial experience.

ALBURGER: It becomes an interesting challenge, I imagine, because, if you take a large scale work like your *Modern Painters* -- an opera, a music drama -- there's a certain expectation that you're going to take the audience from point A to point B. How do you factor that in?

LANG: It's the frustrating thing! I learned a lot of things doing that opera, because it was my first grand opera (I had done smaller things before). This was a traditional opera, from a traditional commissioner, for a traditional opera house, working with very traditional singers. Normally in my life, I don't work with singers with big vibratos. But I was interested in figuring out what my relation with the tradition was, because I am, in many ways, kind of a traditional composer, I think.

ALBURGER: You put your notes down on paper.

LANG: I put my notes down on paper, and I believe in those musical worlds. I have a problem with them, but I believe in them. I believe in the orchestral world. I don't like orchestras and the way orchestra works are being written now, and I have a tremendous problem with the whole environment, but, theoretically, I don't believe that everything in that world has been said. I believe that there are certain social things about that world and the way that world is set up which make it difficult to say anything other than what is being said at present. I basically think that's a big shame. I don't think that means that...

ALBURGER: ...you need to give up.

LANG: Well, it doesn't mean for me to give up. Whether or not that world has given up on me is another question. I'm in an interesting place in relation to the orchestral world and the opera world, too, because I'm interested in sort of being an experimental traditionalist. I sort of figured out what I do recently. It sounds really silly to even put a label on it. I was watching something on television where somebody was riding a bicycle off a cliff, or whatever. I just realized I do Extreme Classical Music. In *The Passing Measures*, why not have this beautiful sound last for 45 minutes and change very little? Why not take something which is given -- that the orchestra can make a beautiful sound -- and put it under a microscope, and blow it out of proportion, and make something that's ridiculous and anti-classical music about it? But the basic world that the idea comes from is the classical music world.

ALBURGER: And perhaps, in order to "get the music" in some sense, one needs to have some sort of connection to that world.

LANG: Yes. Well, that's an interesting problem for me, because that's what I'm interested in. But what that means is that the establishment that knows enough to appreciate what I'm doing is also exactly the audience that is not interested in the work! But that's the world I've chosen to live in!

ALBURGER: Again Schoenberg's line to Cage about "banging your head against the wall."

LANG: Yes. So, back to the opera. It is a very traditional opera, but I tried to do some things that I considered subversive. It's about the life of John Ruskin.

ALBURGER: Right.

LANG: All the emotional things that make a good opera character didn't happen to him. He was this kind of strange cipher, who married a woman but never had sex with her, never slept with her. There are a lot of things that happen in this opera: there's passion, intrigue, sex, death, madness, craziness, but it doesn't really happen to the main character. This opera world spins around this guy. But this guy has this problem that he is so bold and logical and formulaic, that he really imagines that it's possible for him to live in those formulas. Part of the story about his life is that when he married his wife, Effie -- on their wedding night, she took her clothes off, he looked at her and said, "I've seen naked women in classical drawings and sculpture, and you are not a naked woman. This is not a beautiful naked woman." The idea that there was something more powerful about the rules of observing the world which existed from his knowledge of art -- the rules that he had abstracted from art -- was more important than his relationship with the world.

ALBURGER: How did you become such an Extreme Classical Composer?

LANG: It's come from all my different influences. I was never interested in classical music, but I was interested in being a composer. I learned about being a composer first, before I knew anything about music. My family was tremendously unartistic. I was not allowed to have music lessons when I was a kid, because my older sister had music lessons, and it had been a horrible failure.

ALBURGER: And you grew up in L.A.

LANG: I grew up in Los Angeles.

ALBURGER: Strike two!

LANG: That's right, yes! In a way... So I got interested in being a composer, and I got interested in contemporary music first.

ALBURGER: That was actually kind of me, too.

LANG: I think a number of composers are this way! So anything that was happening at that moment, I was interested in. And as the music got further and further away, back in history, I became less and less interested. So I started writing music and I tried to learn every instrument that I could.

ALBURGER: You didn't have lessons; you had this idea that you wanted to be a composer

LANG: I saw a Leonard Bernstein *Young Person's Concert* movie on a rainy day in my elementary school.

ALBURGER: An influential series!

LANG: It was really great. It was about Shostakovich's first symphony and Bernstein said, "Shostakovich wrote this when he was 19." I was 9 years old and I thought, "I could do this. I could learn how to do this. That's really cool."

ALBURGER: Did you write a first symphony at 19?

LANG: I didn't write a symphony, but I had boxes and boxes and boxes of orchestra music and songs and string quartets and songs when I was 14.

ALBURGER: But at 9 you had nothing.

LANG: At 9 I had nothing.

ALBURGER: Did you start an instrument at that time?

LANG: I borrowed a trumpet from a neighbor and I borrowed a trombone from another neighbor. The first piece I actually tried to write down was a piece for myself to play trombone along with a recording of David Oistrakh and Sviatoslav Richter playing a Beethoven violin sonata.

ALBURGER: A trombone obbligato!

LANG: Yes! So I wrote myself a trombone part. And not knowing how to write music, I wrote with symbols of squiggles.

ALBURGER: You were avant-garde already!

LANG: I didn't know how to do anything else.

ALBURGER: So often people say that in order to understand new music you have to understand old music... Yet here you were already developing symbolic notation....

LANG: I think it's the opposite, actually. I think in order to understand new music, you have to hear new music. It's harder to understand older music. As great a composer as Beethoven is, there is a whole grammar you have to familiarize yourself with in order to figure out what his music is about.

ALBURGER: Which maybe you don't quite need to know right away if you start with Cage.

LANG: In pop music, we're used to hearing music by live people, we're used to having the music available on records, we're used to being able to listen to things "thousands" of times, we're used to having the people tour, having albums played "live," having the music supported. We're used to having the music replaced by whatever's next. We don't want the next record to be the same as the first record; we want it to be better than the first record; we want to forget about the first record. That's basically how most people listen to music -- with those rules. And classical music has to have these rules. These days it's almost "not natural" to assume that people are going to play by any other rules.

ALBURGER: What music you had, aside from the Bernstein/Shostakovich and Beethoven, would have been what was on the radio.

LANG: The first thing I did was borrow instruments from my neighbors. Very soon I borrowed an electric guitar and I played in rock bands all the way through college. And I played jazz guitar all the way through graduate school.

ALBURGER: Electric guitar and trombone.

LANG: Other influences came in at once. But, because I was interested in contemporary music first, I got very interested in experimental composers, even though I don't consider myself to be an experimental composer...

ALBURGER: Interesting! Because I do!

LANG: Really? You consider *me* to be an experimental composer? I have too much respect for those guys to consider myself one...

ALBURGER: Yet some experimentalists led to the minimalists. The cutting edge of that latter style became Young, Riley, Reich, Glass, Adams.. Bang on a Can. I look at you guys and think, "What's next?"

LANG: We look at it that way, too. But I think there's a time when progressive composers are experimentalists and rebels and mavericks. I look at us as sort of community synthesizers. There's something about the experimental tradition spirit that is very powerful for us. But I think that the experimental composers were rebels in a way in which we are not rebels. We're too social for that. Our people are incredibly social. I think what we're trying to do is about addressing a need for a community of like-minded musicians. I don't think that the real experimental people did that. I think the real experimental people... Harry Partch did as much as he could, wherever he was, doing whatever he wanted to do.

ALBURGER: Yet he had eventually some sort of community of performers. And just sitting down with Christian Wolfe, I get a sense of community in his experimental tradition with Cage, Feldman, and Brown. If nothing else, just a "safety in numbers."

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: But maybe I'm not thinking about an experimental tradition, but simply a tradition of "what's coming next?" Perhaps in that minimalist lineage, it doesn't necessarily mean that each person is on an equal par of radicalness but simply has an equal quality of "what's next?"

LANG: I think the reason that we can follow up in that tradition, is that we're still all interested in questioning what we've been hearing.

ALBURGER: So that is radical!

LANG: No, I'm just a troublemaker! My job is to do all the things I was told not to do.

ALBURGER: That's radical!

LANG: No, it's not being radical, it's just being a troublemaker! If someone tells me, if something in my education suggests, that one kind of music is possible, I'll do something else.

ALBURGER: That's the [whispers] experimental tradition! It's a different kind of experimental.

LANG: It's a different kind of experimental. I feel like those people are too exalted. I mean look at Ives, and I just think... I look at Nancarrow and Partch and Cage -- they are really free spirits. I'm not a free spirit. I'm not. Basically, I'm like a tinkerer. The problems which I am uncovering are little problems. The problems that Cage uncovered are big problems. Cage blasted down walls. I'm sticking my eye through a little crack.

ALBURGER: Well, how did this troublemaker, then, with his electric guitar and trumpet and trombone start making trouble? You eventually learned to read notation.

LANG: Eventually. I started studying with Henri Lazarof, who was the head music teacher at UCLA for a number of years. When I was 13, my mother took me to UCLA with a big box full of all the music that I had written --

ALBURGER: So eventually your parents did become supportive.

LANG: Yes. -- to find out whether I should be encouraged. So Lazarof looked at my stuff and took me on as a student. I studied with him until I went off to college. It was a tremendous education for me, incredibly in depth, which was wonderful. A lot of it was familiarizing myself with European Ugly Music from the 60's!

ALBURGER: Which was cool!

LANG: Which was great! I was tremendously interested in it. I studied with him for so long, for two days a week over three years. We went through every instrument in the orchestra, looking for a month, for example, of examples of solo flute music by Berio, Petrassi, Varèse, and Lazarof's music himself. Music by Europeans. It was a very specialized education.

ALBURGER: But I'm sure very valuable.

LANG: But very valuable. We looked at music from all sorts of ways. We analyzed. I wrote papers. I wrote a paper on a piece by Petrassi, then Lazarof sent it to Petrassi for comments. Then I went to Stanford and Iowa and Yale. So gradually I got a pretty good education. Which is another reason I don't consider myself an experimentalist, because I'm way over educated! I mean, I feel like I know too much.

ALBURGER: Like one of those old spies. "He knows too much."

LANG: Yes, that's right!

ALBURGER: Did the troublemaker encounter trouble?

LANG: At every moment. I was trouble from the very beginning. So I started a music group at Stanford which basically did Fluxus pieces, because the contemporary music ensemble there... The idea of 20th-century music was pretty bizarre.

ALBURGER: I think of them on the computer-music side these days. Was there a heavy dose of that?

LANG: Yes, I worked on the computer for a couple of years. When I first got there it was very interesting, because my first year there was the last year for Martin Bresnick, who then became my doctoral advisor at Yale.

ALBURGER: Did you know the *Opus415* folks at Yale? Were you all there together?

LANG: I wasn't there with them, but I knew them afterwards. I knew them in New York, I knew them through Martin, and I knew them through various different connections.

ALBURGER: And Iowa in there, too?

LANG: I went to Iowa College for my masters. Stanford was very interesting when Martin was there. Actually, my teacher my first semester there was Lou Harrison, who was a tremendous eye-opener for me. I had never encountered strange tuning before.

ALBURGER: I didn't know Lou taught there

LANG: He taught there for one semester, and that was it, in 1974.

ALBURGER: That was a nice overlap.

LANG: It was wonderful. Then after that, and after Martin left, the program became incredibly conservative, and so I started an ensemble with some friends that did... We fed the piano a bale of hay.

ALBURGER: That's one of the La Monte Young *David Tudor* pieces.

LANG: Yes. We did all this incredible music for ensemble. It was really fun; we had a really good time. So I was getting into trouble all of the time. I was never not getting into trouble. I was thrown out of the composition seminar in Stanford.

ALBURGER: Really!

LANG: I was!

ALBURGER: That's cool! By whom?

LANG: By Leland Smith, the head of the department, because their policy was that only graduate students could write music, and undergraduates would do exercises.

ALBURGER: Did Berkeley have a similar policy at the time?

LANG: I don't know... It wouldn't surprise me! So I just said, "I'm a composer, and I refuse to do exercises." I had been writing since I was 9. I had "thousands" of pieces. "I should be at least allowed to study composition."

ALBURGER: How did the two most famous schools in Northern California go through relatively conservative periods with regard to composition?

LANG: How many composers have come out of such schools? Are they really good music schools? I really don't know!

ALBURGER: Well, with regard to Berkeley, La Monte Young has stories, Terry Riley has stories, Paul Dresher has stories. But perhaps you are correct in characterizing yourself as not a true revolutionary, because while you caused trouble the whole time, you still got your Ph.D.

LANG: I did.

ALBURGER: That's still working within the system.

LANG: I still graduated with honors. I didn't blow up the school, I didn't drop out, I stuck it out.

ALBURGER: So Stanford became boring after Martin was gone.

LANG: Oh, there were some good teachers there. I learned things.

ALBURGER: Then you were in the middle of the country, which must of been --

LANG: -- a shock. I was just passing through doing my masters.

ALBURGER: Yale was a brighter light for you with Martin again.

LANG: Yale was great because it was very professional. It was full of people who were very ambitious. Sometimes that is terrible and sometimes that is wonderful, and Yale had both of that. Yale could be irritating. The students were so intense; they planned on taking over the world. On the other hand, it was a pretty good class.

ALBURGER: High-powered inspiration.

LANG: It was led by the teachers. It was led by Martin -- who was an incredible teacher and composer, and very dedicated and knowledgeable -- and his counterpart, Jacob Druckman, who was so focussed on his career and so huge. He was not anti-intellectual, but academic concerns were not what he thought music was about.

ALBURGER: Really?

LANG: He didn't mind intellectual factors, but music was about certain other things to him. Music was about making a well-made piece; it was about making sure that every orchestrational detail was actually necessary and musically valuable. A piece had to suit all sorts of other requirements. It had to be music that musicians could play, it had to sound good, it had to be something that was not too difficult to put together so that it could be rehearsed. There were all sorts of practical considerations!

ALBURGER: That's interesting, because there was at least one of his big commissions that did not come to fruition because of practicality.

LANG: That was for the Metropolitan Opera.

ALBURGER: Right.

LANG: It was just a missed deadline. It wasn't practicality...

ALBURGER: Well, a certain practicality of getting it done in time!

LANG: Yes! But that was a really good combination, because Jacob really was about the musician active in the community. Martin was really about the composer-thinker and Jacob was really about the composer-doer.

ALBURGER: A good yin-yang combination.

LANG: And it worked very well for us. You'd go to a lesson with Jacob and the lesson would be undirected because Jacob would get calls from five different orchestras in Europe, about different problems about performing his pieces. And the next week, the lesson would be cancelled because he was at some big performance with the Chicago Symphony or something. We used to joke about it, because that was where a lot of his attention was. On the other hand, we loved it, because it was a sign that there was hope -- that composers are supposed to get their music played. I remember at the time actually talking to someone who was going to Princeton at the time I was going to Yale, and who was making fun of me for going to Yale. She was saying, "Well, you know, we're all super-smart at Princeton, and we're all getting super-educated, and we're all going to get really good jobs. What are you doing at Yale? You're just learning to get your music played." And I thought, "Wait a second, we're all composers here. What are we supposed to be doing?" That was a really wonderful thing. Jacob was a huge inspiration for me: that idea that you are actually supposed to be in the world, that your music is actually supposed to be in some sort of connection with the larger public. That's something that a lot of schools don't give their students: that idea that if you're going to do an opera, it should be performed by an opera company; if you're going to do an orchestra piece, it should be performed by every orchestra in the world. There are some schools where you go and the lesson is, "Well, you should learn very well how to write a string quartet." And Yale is not that school.

ALBURGER: Yale taught you some ambition.

LANG: And my fellow students. I was there with Aaron Kernis and Michael Daugherty and I met Michael Gordon there.

ALBURGER: Have the Yalies taken over?

LANG: No.

ALBURGER: Nevertheless, a high-powered group.

LANG: We've all done well. It's a tribute to our teachers.

ALBURGER: And the mutual student inspiration.

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: So you met Michael Gordon then?

LANG: Michael and I met at the Aspen Music Festival, actually, and we re-met at Yale. We actually were the troublemakers at the back of the class --

ALBURGER: Surprise.

LANG: -- harassing every guest composer who came to our seminar. We had incredibly boring seminars, because visiting composers would come through...

ALBURGER: Who showed up? Whom did you harass?

LANG: Oh, I can't answer that question! Believe me, those wounds are still open! 20 years later, those fights are not forgotten. But we actually just did have a policy, Michael and I, that no guest would come through without one hard question being asked of them, which made for some very interesting seminars.

ALBURGER: Could you give me an example of a hard question that was asked.

LANG: Well, a composer came through who was a composer of ugly music, and had seen the error of his ways and started writing music which was more romantic. It was part of the era; people were doing that.

ALBURGER: Who was it off the record?

[Nixonian secretarial gap in tape]

ALBURGER: I was just curious.

LANG: I thought it was important to find out why this composer disavowed the previous music, and what the composer actually felt about it. And why was it necessary to say something bad about what he had done, and why not just do something else. Why not just accept?

ALBURGER: Has he really disavowed that music?

LANG: I have no idea what he's doing anymore. It was a really silly conversation.

ALBURGER: But it was a hard question at the time, and it stirred things up.

LANG: It stirred up a fight and got kind of ugly. Because of course we didn't ask it in the most polite sort of way! But that's where Michael and I really got tight.

ALBURGER: It's a good bond, right there: two class troublemakers.

LANG: Right.

ALBURGER: And you moved down to New York afterwards?

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: How soon after?

LANG: Well, Michael was already living in New York when he went to Yale. And I essentially moved to New York the first year I was Yale, because I didn't like my roommates.

ALBURGER: So you were both commuting?

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: That's a fairly stiff commute, isn't it?

LANG: Oh, it's like an hour and a half. It's not too bad. I taught at Yale for two years and actually commuted up.

ALBURGER: So when did you guys start the Bang on a Can stuff?

LANG: Well, we got out of Yale (Michael got out in '82 and I got out in '83) and then we would just hang around in New York every day. Michael met Julia [Wolfe] in '83 (and Julia went to Yale). So we would just hang out all the time. We would just go [imitating a teenage slacker] "Life is really terrible."

ALBURGER: That was your California accent!

LANG: [slacker speak continues] "How come nobody plays music well? How come composers always get treated so poorly? How come all the pieces that are really important for our sensibility from an experimental tradition never get played [sidebar: Aha! "Our experimental tradition" -- what a giveaway!]? How come Philip Glass doesn't play his early music anymore?" Just some basic questions that we would talk about all the time! We just thought, "Well, if you really want these things to happen, if you really want to make the world the perfect place for the kind of music that you write, you really should do it yourself." And that's what we did. So then we thought, O.K. just as a joke, we're going to create this weird-sounding festival.

ALBURGER: The name was just drawn out of a hat?

LANG: Well, I had gotten a grant from the state of New York to do a concert of my music. I just thought, "I'm going to invite Michael and Julia and a couple of other people, because then it will be like a city, instead of being a glorification of me."

ALBURGER: The community aspect again.

LANG: Yes. Also, it's fun. It's nice. So we were sitting around trying to think about what sentence advertisement should get put in the paper. And I wanted to say, [deliberately] "Many Happy Experiences with Some Composers of the Future." But Julia wanted to say, "Some Composers Sit Around and Bang on a Can," which we all thought was very funny. So when Michael and Julia and I, the year later, started talking about this festival, and we were trying to think about what to call it, then we remembered, "Oh, Julia, remember you said that really funny thing last year? Maybe we should call it Bang on a Can." Because it's very primitive. It represents a certain musical aesthetic which I'm in tune with.

ALBURGER: It's also the primitive and the downtown urban, because it's a can, not a stone.

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: It's a cast-off.

LANG: It's not a primitive culture. It's a primitive urban culture.

ALBURGER: Urban primitive. So that's where it came from?

LANG: That's where it came from. And we did it as a joke. We did this 12-hour festival, and we called it, as a joke, the "First-Annual" *Bang on a Can Marathon*.

ALBURGER: This journal was sort of founded as a joke. It's still kind of a joke!...

LANG: It works!

ALBURGER: And *Bang on a Can* started in...

LANG: ...'86, and the first marathon was in the spring of '87, and for the first three years it was just the marathon.

ALBURGER: Which is a great idea.

LANG: We thought, "You can't be a curmudgeon if you hear 30 pieces." It's like going to the circus.

ALBURGER: You've got to like something!

LANG: Yes! That was the idea. The point was to say, "Here is the best of the people who are trying to be experimental -- or be innovative -- in the academic world. Here is the best of the people who are trying to be innovative in the improvisation world... or in the downtown world... or in the minimal world." The whole point was to re-categorize music, not by ideology, not by whether or not something was made with a tone-row or with a minimal process, but just to say, "The composers who are innovative, wherever they are, in whatever aspect of the music world -- those are the composers we're interested in. If someone attempts to do something fresh, in any way, that qualifies them to be on this festival." We thought that that way -- instead of seeing people who have figured out how to solve a problem, and that was the only way to solve the problem, and that was the experience you were going to get -- you would go to this concert, and you would get nothing but raw optimism. You would get all of these people who thought, "Hey, I thought of something new!" And if it was, "I thought of something new by figuring out how to have my rhythms generate my pitches or vice versa" or "I thought of something new by figuring out how to do overtone singing into a coffee can." All those things are valid.

ALBURGER: Yes. But the second one would be Sing in a Can.

LANG: We all had brushes in school with people who had theoretically uncovered the only right way to write music. And whatever way someone claims is the right way to write music is the wrong way to write music.

ALBURGER: Sure.

LANG: I think really the greatest thing about writing music now is that nobody knows what to do. And the greatest composer in the world -- I don't care who you identify as the greatest composer -- has only found a personal solution. So you listen to Ligeti, you go, "That music is great, but it's Ligeti's solution." You listen to Andriessen, you listen to Steve Reich, Philip Glass, Elliott Carter -- these people have only found idiosyncratic solutions.

ALBURGER: There is nothing like, "I have found the way to insure the supremacy of German music for the next hundred years" now. There's no ultimate solution.

LANG: But, you know, that is one of the ways I was taught: that serial music is the thousand-year reich.

ALBURGER: And I fall into that, too. I talked about a lineage just a few minutes ago... Indeed, styles are not like that. The world is pluralistic.

LANG: But something we get from the American experimental tradition, as much as one can call a tradition of independence a tradition.

ALBURGER: That's what it is.

LANG: That's what it is. There's this thing we have to offer in America, which is the idea of the inspired nut who goes off and does something ridiculous, and thereby changes the world.

ALBURGER: The post-romantic holy fool.

LANG: That's exactly right. That's what we've got. That's our strength in the world. It's certainly not because we can act like Northern Europeans. It's not like we can inherit anything from Darmstadt and improve on it.

ALBURGER:: The tradition of the trickster. It's a good role.

LANG: It's a good role.

ALBURGER: I'm wondering about a couple of strands of these different traditions and how they come into *Bang on a Can* and your work: minimalism and rock-and-roll.

LANG: Well, most of us hear pop music first. Most people do. Sometimes you meet people -- like Aaron Kernis, for example -- who heard classical music before pop music. But most people are not like that. Usually when you see someone for whom that is true, you look at them and go, "Well, then, you grew up in a box. You must be a freak at some level."

ALBURGER: But our own culture is a box, too. And that freak could be O.K., too, because that's part of the fool tradition.

LANG: It's fine. It's perfectly fine to be that kind of a freak. I don't know anyone, except possibly Aaron, who is that way.

ALBURGER: Well, we've just met!

LANG: Some kids' parents make tremendous efforts to distort that, which I object to strongly, actually.

ALBURGER: Distortions are ever present. Yes, things are in the air.

LANG: It's in the air.

ALBURGER: Notions of making connections between popular and classical music seem so natural, and yet the notions don't happen often enough. When the Bang on a Can All-Stars were out here two years ago, I thought, "I haven't heard anything this fresh for a while." And you think, "This is California!" A lot of what we heard in those three days was, "Of course! Why don't we hear more of this?"

LANG: Well, in defense of the Bay Area, two of the composers that we played were from the Bay Area.

ALBURGER: Pamela Z, of course

LANG: And Dan Plonsey.

ALBURGER: Two excellent composers. I was thinking more of the freshness of the Bang on a Can All-Stars. I couldn't think of an ensemble like it here -- other than the Paul Dresher Ensemble.

LANG: I think one of the interesting things about playing music in New York is that you end up having to find some way to distinguish yourself. One of the ways we have distinguished ourselves is by our repertoire. Another way is by our attitude towards the music, and our attitude towards the world, and our presentation. One of my real pet peeves was the idea that contemporary music was not worthy of being played as intensely or ferociously or as committedly as you expect from any other aspect of traditional chamber music. And so we insisted from the very beginning that our performances were going to be...

ALBURGER:absolutely rigorous.

LANG: Tight, tight, tight, tight, tight.

ALBURGER: And they are.

LANG: And these players -- the All-Stars -- are from all around the world. It's not just like "Well, we just took people who live in our own community." We made a commitment to finding people from around the world who would be willing to come to New York occasionally and rehearse and then play with us. It makes it, actually, difficult for us to do a lot of stuff, because every time we rehearse, it's three plane tickets.

ALBURGER: That ups the commitment.

LANG: Yes, but on the other hand, the payoff for that is, when you do see them play, they're tight.

ALBURGER: The best you can get.

LANG: Something that always really bothered me was that I would have an orchestra piece done and I would think, "Everybody's piece sounded the way it was supposed to sound, but my piece was under-rehearsed."

ALBURGER: Schoenberg again, this time perhaps more cogently: "My music is not modern, it's just badly played." The problems seem endemic.

LANG: Even most chamber groups can't afford to spend the time. Because we've been successful, we are able to pay people to rehearse. You see that also with the Kronos, for example. They're tight. They're tight. They pay attention to lots of really important things, and it pays off.

ALBURGER: Well, success breeds success, too.

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: What about the side of your output that clearly comes from a conceptual framework (in these little pieces and some of the larger ones) of "strip it down, make it simple, take a concept, go with it." Some of that comes from Cage, certainly. But some of it comes from minimalism.

LANG: Some of it comes from the minimalist school.

ALBURGER: What were your experiences in becoming familiar with the minimalists?

LANG: I've just always been interested in that world, I've always been drawn to it. Stripping things down has always appealed to me. I've been anti-ornament my entire life. I went to Stanford, actually, to go to medical school. I was a chemistry major undergraduate. So I feel like it's really the math and science of these pieces that is in some ways the part which interests me the most.

ALBURGER: The working out.

LANG: The working out of problems, the stripping things down, the distilling things to their mathematical principals -- it's really something that appeals to me. One of the early contradictions was that I didn't understand why the academics and the minimalists were fighting, because so obviously they were really doing fundamentally the same thing. It's just that someone had made a decision about language, about the actual notes. What were those notes supposed to sound like? It's the only difference. But nobody wanted to talk about that. Nobody wanted to talk about how music changes just because of the taste of what you wanted to sound like. Everyone was phrasing the argument in terms of how it was made. But it was really just a surface argument about taste.

ALBURGER: It really is. And it continues today.

LANG: And that's why I was drawn to the music of Andriessen, because I thought that this was music that has the simple, unornamented rhythmic simplicity of the minimalists, but it hadn't jettisoned the dissonant language from Europe. And I thought, "That's interesting. That's my alley."

ALBURGER: So that became a door for you.

LANG: Right.

ALBURGER: Were there any particular pieces that at some point you encountered and said, "Oh!" -- that were important to you on the minimalist side? Do you recall any particular first hearings? Or have you just sort of grown into this music naturally?

LANG: I've just sort of grown into the music. I heard [Steve Reich's] *Drumming*. I heard [his] *Music for Mallet Instruments [Voices, and Organ]* in 1974. I heard the Philip Glass Ensemble play in 1974.

ALBURGER: Were they playing *Music in 12 Parts*?

LANG: They played *Another Look at Harmony*.

ALBURGER: That pre-*Einstein* piece.

LANG: Pre-*Einstein*. Proto-*Einstein*.

ALBURGER: Right. *Harmony* kind of grew into *Einstein*.

LANG: I wouldn't say that those pieces were revolutionary for me, because I really think that I was thinking about such things also.

ALBURGER: More evolutionary than revolutionary.

LANG: Already by the time I got out of high school, I was really aware of such music. The only piece I remember really changing my world was when I was 15; I went to a performance of *Lilacs* by Carl Ruggles. I went to every contemporary music thing in Los Angeles that I could find.

ALBURGER: The *Monday Evening Concerts*?

LANG: Just about all of them, and every single thing I could go to. Before I could drive, I'd drag my parents to them. Whatever I could do. So, I heard a performance by some local orchestra of *Lilacs*. I thought, "O.K., well, here's a composer I've read about, but I've never heard his music. I don't know anything about this, but I have a pretty good idea of what an orchestral piece called *Lilacs* is going to sound like. It's going to sound really beautiful. It's going to sound [sing-song voice] like *flowers*."

ALBURGER: The informing word was "Ruggles" not "lilacs."

LANG: Well, I got there and I was so *shocked*! I still remember the shock. I just remember going, "This is the ugliest thing I've ever heard, there must be something here!"

ALBURGER: Ah, yes. That's a healthy open mind, too. "There's a problem, but I have to investigate this more," rather than, "There's a problem, fuggetaboutit."

LANG: Well, that's right, yes. But also "It's a problem," means that the experience that I thought was going to be easy turned out to be difficult, and that was interesting to me. And I think that may have been my first brush with that concept which has become so important to me: of having silly pieces that turn out to be very serious. The idea of getting something that you weren't looking for -- I think it really came from that. I really do remember that as being a very important experience for me.

ALBURGER: *Bang on a Can* has been going on for a number of years. And the Bang on a Can All-Stars would have come out of that a couple of years later? Did they start as the house band for the Marathon?

LANG: The Marathon always used different kinds of ensembles and soloists. We had the ROVA Saxophone Quartet from the Bay Area; we had the California E.A.R. Unit from Los Angeles. After a while we realized that we were booking the same soloists over and over again. We would have Steve Schick from San Diego, or Robert Black from Hartford, or Evan Ziporyn from Boston. We were depending on these people that were really important to us. And we had this idea that maybe it might be interesting to see what it would be like if these soloists played together.

ALBURGER: Hence the All-Stars.

LANG: And that's how the All-Stars started. It was these people who never really would have found each other without this. And people who had dedicated their lives to *not* playing in ensembles. It's an interesting kind of tension for them.

ALBURGER: Because they don't have that natural cohesion of a group that has been playing together for years.

LANG: Their goal is actually to do lots of other things. In fact, in circumstances where it has been possible that a conductor might be necessary, someone in the band always says, at one point or another, "You know, if I had wanted to play with a conductor, I'd be playing in an orchestra."

ALBURGER: So that has never washed with the group.

LANG: It's not something that makes them happy.

ALBURGER: Yes. Has a conductor been utilized occasionally?

LANG: A little bit. But also, what's really good is, when they need a conductor, they can do it themselves. Someone from the group figures out a way to play their part and conduct. A lot of times, what's interesting is that in really complicated pieces that role changes from person to person. So you really see how the control moves around, which is fine.

ALBURGER: The *Bang on a Can Marathon* started as a downtown event, and at one point moved to Lincoln Center.

LANG: We moved all over the place. We started in an art gallery. We moved to all sorts of alternative venues. When we were asked by Lincoln Center to come, it was a difficult decision for us, and very controversial -- internally and externally. Finally what we decided was that, "Living composers will not appear at Lincoln Center unless we go there." Because that's the musical map. The traditional musical world. If you want these people to actually have a chance at having life in that world, you have to be on that map. That was our philosophy, so that's why we eventually decided to accept it. We had a wonderful time there. We were there for four years.

ALBURGER: And you're where now?

LANG: This year we're actually doing our Marathon as the closing event of the *Next Wave Festival*, at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, which we're really excited about. Alice Tully Hall was 1100 seats, and we figured out how to sell out the venue with this music. Now we're going to try to figure out how to sell out the Opera House at BAM, which is 2500 seats. And that is going to be really fun.

ALBURGER: So the numbers are up.

LANG: Basically, we're volunteers -- Michael and Julia and I. Last year, we started paying ourselves a tiny, tiny, tiny pittance. An insignificant amount of money, really.

ALBURGER: Symbolic.

LANG: It really is a symbolic honorarium. Basically, we still consider ourselves to be volunteers. We still consider ourselves to be flexible enough to be able to change what interests us at a moment's notice. So we change our format every year. We try not to get stale. It's been very important for us to figure out how to invent a new project every year. and transform a project from before -- change a venue, change a size, change a focus, add a program, drop a program, tour more, tour less, do a certain kind of music, create an orchestra. Every year is a little different. I think part of that is because we still have the mentality that, "Well, we're not getting paid for this, so we might as well have some fun."

ALBURGER: It certainly takes up some time.

LANG: Right.

ALBURGER: How do the ends meet?

LANG: We actually have an office right now, and there are three or four people who work full time.

ALBURGER: So whereas you founders don't make the money, at least enough money is being made so there is a structure.

ALBURGER: Meanwhile, do you teach?

LANG: I don't teach. I make money on commissions.

ALBURGER: Whereas *Bang on a Can* is not making money for you, you're making money.

LANG: I make money composing. Scraping it by, supporting my wife and three children on my pathetic composer's pay.

ALBURGER: This is wonderful. Do you think your style has been impacted by the whole *Bang on a Can* / *Bang on a Can All-Stars* experience? Or is that a whole other strain of development.

LANG: We try to stay out of it. We're in a weird relation with them. They play our music on tour, and they play our music in New York, but it is not their primary focus. to play our music. I've actually never written a piece for the All-Stars. They've affected my style in that I can imagine what they are like. I can picture them. I now have a face. When I image what it is like to write for the electric guitar I imagine Mark with his long hair twirling in the air. I just think, "I need to write an electric guitar part that makes the guitarist look like that!" But I haven't written for the All-Stars. The piece that the All-Stars played in San Francisco on our tour before [*Cheating, Lying, and Stealing*]. I adapted for the All-Stars a choreography project with Susan Marshall.

ALBURGER: But it's kind of a different strain.

LANG: There's a place where our lives meet with the All-Stars, but my life is really someplace else, and I try to keep it that way.

ALBURGER: *Modern Painters* was a big work for you. Are there other landmark pieces that have been important in the progression of your career?

LANG: I think *The Passing Measures*, which I wrote last year. It was a commission from the new-music wing of The City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, in conjunction with a jazz festival in the city. I was supposed to write a piece which would link the classical music world and the jazz world, which I thought was a really odd project, especially for me, although I enjoyed it. I eventually hit upon writing a concerto for the jazz clarinetist, Marty Erlich, who's this incredible musician in New York whose tone is unbelievably beautiful, with very clear, simple tone. I wanted to make a piece which would be about his singing tones in both worlds. I wrote this very slow-moving, beautiful stagnant piece for solo bass clarinet, women's voices, and an orchestra without violins and woodwinds. I didn't want the woodwinds to get in the way of the bass clarinet. Everyone is amplified. Everyone is told to play as quietly as possible, so that you can hear in the amplification that they're restraining themselves. There are four percussionists who are amplified, who scrape pieces of metal for 45 minutes. Some of the instruments are deliberately mistuned, like the celli. There are two pianos and an electric bass, which play tremolo the entire chords of the piece, only very, very low -- and out of tune.

ALBURGER: And this is "out of tune," not microtonal.

LANG: No, it's not microtonal.

ALBURGER: It's just out-of-tune.

LANG: I'm actually not into microtonal.

ALBURGER: You're into out-of-tune.

LANG: I'm into out-of-tune. So that piece is very important to me. That piece came out of something that happened to me while I was writing my opera. The point of an opera really is to get everyone feeling the same thing at the same time. I began to feel kind of dirty while I was writing the opera. I felt like I was being manipulative, that that was unfair of me, that I was being dishonest. So I took a break from writing the opera, in the middle of it. I had a commission from an ensemble called Icebreaker in England. I wrote a piece for them called *Slow Movement*, which was the godfather of *The Passing Measures*. It was a very slow chord progression, very out of tune -- much more so than *The Passing Measures*. It's a beautiful chord progression, but everyone is playing so low in their registers that it is very fuzzy. The instruments are deliberately out of tune; the instruments are distorted when amplified.

ALBURGER: That's kind of a rock and roll thing. The chords are normal, but you've got your fuzz box, and so on.

LANG: It's very rock-and-roll. But the idea of it also was to make a piece which actually has no emotional purpose, it had no manipulative center. The whole point of it was to just say, "O.K. well, here you have this really interesting object, and I'm going to rotate it in front of you. You are free to have whatever relationship to it that you like." I actually find the piece to be tremendously moving, but I can't understand why. It's more powerful because it's unanticipated. Having done that piece, I immediately had the idea that I wanted to do something for orchestra. When I got the commission for *The Passing Measures*, I realized that this was my great opportunity to do this, and I did.

ALBURGER: Once again, taking the smaller pieces and expanding upon them.

LANG: Yes.

ALBURGER: Were the commissions already coming in before you left Yale?

LANG: For some reason, I was always able to support myself. I don't have a trust fund. I don't have money from my family. My family does not help me.

ALBURGER: I think of the Glasses and Reiches who had to work at non-musical professions, and then finally were able to support themselves as composers.

LANG: The other things I do are other things writing music. I had a couple of successful pieces while I was still at Yale, from which I got commissions very quickly after getting out of school. I graduated from school in '83, and in '84 I had a commission from the Cleveland Orchestra, just sort of by luck. I did have one job. I was a composer-in-residence at the New York Philharmonic for a year.

ALBURGER: That's hardly a fill-in-the-gaps job!

LANG: Yes! But the way that I make money is... Well, for example, I'm composer-in-residence with the American Conservatory Theatre here in San Francisco. I'm out here at least two or three times a year.

ALBURGER: You did a Greek drama here recently.

LANG: Yes, I did *Hecuba*. I did *Mary Stewart* here with Chanticleer, and *The Tempest* with the Kronos Quartet. A.C.T. just commissioned an opera from me with the Kronos Quartet. I've worked a lot with choreographers. So I actually do have *jobs*. It's not as if someone comes to me and says [ghostly voice] "Here is money for you to do whatever you would like to do." It's the life of the free-lance composer. That's what I do.

ALBURGER: So you're working on the Kronos Quartet opera now?

LANG: We've finished that.

ALBURGER: What's next on the horizon?

LANG: I'm doing a two-hour piano solo at this moment. It's probably going to be at least two hours; I'm not totally sure yet. It's a commission from a San Francisco pianist: David Arden.

ALBURGER: Big commission.

LANG: Originally it was not a whole evening, he wanted just a whole album. No, he said, "Do you have enough piano music for a record?" That was how it started. And not wishing to let anything easy slip by (because "of course I had enough piano music for a whole record!") -- for some reason, I talked him into commissioning a new piece -- which was this ridiculous project, which I had wanted to do for a very long time, which is to set the entire book of *Psalms*, in Hebrew, for an instrument. And what I am in the process of doing is singing the psalms in Hebrew and writing down the rhythms (not the notes) of the words of my pronunciation.

ALBURGER: This is your intuitive reading of the *Psalms*.

LANG: That's right. I'm writing the rhythms in my horrible pronunciations and then I take those rhythms and assign new notes for the piano to play. It's a way of converting the vocal to an instrumental melody.

ALBURGER: Have you thought of [Steve Reich's] *Tehillim* at all?

LANG: *Tehillim* is one of the most amazing pieces ever.

ALBURGER: There are four psalms there, you're doing 150 psalms!

LANG: According to some aspects of Jewish mysticism, you get the whole power of the *Psalms*, only if you recite them all at once. They're so powerful, that you get the power even if you don't understand the Hebrew, according to some. I think that was one of the reasons I was drawn to them, because my understanding of Hebrew was not very good, even though I went through Hebrew school and was bar mitzvahed. I consider myself to be someone who's trying to figure out how involved with religion I want to be. It's an important issue to me, even though I'm not a hugely religious person. But to figure out the right relationship is important to me. All the time growing as a Jewish boy in Hebrew school named "David," who was a musician... The *Psalms* played a big part of my background. In that box that I took to my teacher when I was 13 were choral settings for many of the *Psalms*. It was something that was always presented to me. My parents didn't know anything about music. But here's a musician named "David" that they knew. So I learned about this very early. But I was never able to set psalms satisfactorily to music, and I've tried many times in my life to make something out of them. When you hear a piece like *Tehillim*, which is so perfect and so exuberant --

ALBURGER: Yes.

LANG: -- it's enough to scare you away from writing any music, let alone writing music about the *Psalms*. So when I came upon this idea, I became really happy, because I thought, "This is a way to improve my Hebrew, and dealing with this issue from a place of ignorance (which I have), and also avoiding all the relationships to other musical settings of the *Psalms* which scare me." I remember when I began to set the psalm which begins *Tehillim*, it paralyzed me, because I realized I had to do something which had nothing to do with Steve's setting. So I came up with something finally which I love. And when I listen to it now, I say, "Hmm, yeah, well that's where the Steve Reich is."

ALBURGER: It's hard to ignore.

LANG: At first I thought this was a one-CD project, now it seems like it will be two.

ALBURGER: The *Psalms* have been "translated" into piano. Could it be reinterpreted by voices some day, or has it become so far removed?

LANG: It's pretty far removed; it's certainly possible that one could go through the score and definitely put a syllable under each note.

ALBURGER: It would work.

LANG: It would work. It's not vocal. The leaps are instrumental. It would be possible to go through and figure out what's happening. It's definitely translatable.

ALBURGER: How far along are you?

LANG: I'm about 40 psalms in.

ALBURGER: How to deal with matters of variety and homogeneity -- change and stasis?

LANG: It's been fun, because you have to think inventively to not bore.

ALBURGER: Are you conceiving them in 150 units?

LANG: When you read the *Psalms* in Hebrew, they're already divided into different categories and groupings. There are divisions into days and a larger division into books. There are five books. I'm trying to maintain all of the divisions. The interesting thing is that the days don't line up with the books. Day Eight does not line up where Book One changes to Book Two, and that is reflected in the music. Everything I've inherited I'm trying to do. I'm setting the descriptions.

ALBURGER: Keeping it real.

LANG: I'm trying to keep it as real as possible. I will probably have to set the prayer you say before the *Psalms* and the prayer you say after, because I just don't see how you can play the piece without that. There's going to have to be an introduction and a conclusion. But I'm going to do that last!

ALBURGER: How much longer do you expect this to go in terms of composition?

LANG: I'm anticipating that I'll be done with the entire piece sometime this summer. A big chunk is getting premiered in New York in September.

ALBURGER: What's it called?

LANG: It's called *Psalms Without Words*.

ALBURGER: A spin on the Mendelssohn *Songs Without Words*. How many projects do you have going on at the same time?

LANG: I've probably got five or six active projects, and a bunch of other stuff in various stages

ALBURGER: Do you ever have trouble with the overlapping of pieces with one another?

LANG: I like to do this. You sit in your studio, you work on something and say, "That didn't work, but I've got another place for it!" I'm working, working, working, working, and working, and what happens, as you know, is that so much of what a composer does is throw stuff away.

ALBURGER: But you can always throw something in another project's "wastebasket."

LANG: And I've done that many times. I have a very active wastebasket!

Remembering Alan Hovhaness: Making the Right Connections

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

A sacred art, a pathway of life through a living universe, merging East and West, heaven and earth, addressed not to the snobbish few but to all people as an inspiration in their journey through the universe. -- Alan Hovhaness

Alan Hovhaness was a major American composer for more than a half century, a figure forever on the professional fringe, but always doing beautiful music; and it is perhaps fitting that he celebrated his 80th birthday nine years ago with the CD release of two of his strongest pieces, *Symphony No. 2* ("*Mysterious Mountain*") and *Lousadzak*, the former recorded by Dennis Russell Davies conducting the American Composers Orchestra and the latter by the eminent pianist Keith Jarrett accompanied by Davies' orchestra.

These two pieces represent Hovhaness as his best, with long regal lines on modal scales reminiscent of Eastern music, full not only of melodic energy but emotion unique to music, which is to say his compositions seem full of feeling without being programmatic with specific sentiments. It is beautiful music that rarely becomes slick, ingratiating music that never insinuates; it can be listened to again and again. That is one reason why performers, at all levels of competence, like it. About Jarrett's playing, he told me, "I think the performance of the piano concerto marvelous -- *Lousadzak* (which he pronounces "Lou-sa-DZAK"), the dawn of light, in other words the coming of light, the coming of philosophy, the coming of a new experience. Really good jazz musicians are more aware of the Indian music and improvisational music that were always an inspiration to me."

Shortly after this release, I found Hovhaness and his wife, the soprano Hinako Fujihara, in Seattle where he had moved nearly two decades previously, having lived before in places as various as Boston, New York, and Lucerne, Switzerland. No less slender and frail-looking than he was a decade before, the last time I saw him, he greeted me at the door of his handsome ranch house not on fashionable Mercer Island, say, but banked into a hill near the airport in South Seattle. To the background sound of the main highway below his windows, while airplanes buzzed overhead, he showed me the panorama that made him purchase that house, the view that he finds so inspirational. "You can see the entire Cascade Mountains from Mount Rainer in the south to Mount Baker in the north. It's very much like Switzerland. This is a place I'm happy living in." In the open space that runs from the end of the kitchen around the bedroom was a piano, a work table, a television, an audio console, and continuous windows, which is to say everything this composer needs.

Seattle is quite distant from Somerville, Massachusetts, where he was born March 8, 1911, Alan Vaness Chakmakjian, the son of a chemistry professor who had immigrated to the United States from Adana, Turkey. The composer's mother, born Madeleine Scott, was of Scottish ancestry. When their only child was five, the Chakmakjians moved to another Boston suburb, Arlington, where young Alan attended the public schools. "When I was four years old I wanted to be an astronomer," he explained between sips of coffee. "Then I heard a good piece of music -- the songs of Schubert. That was the first time I heard something that wasn't a Baptist hymn." After graduating from high school in 1929, he went to Tufts University for two years, but then transferred to the New England Conservatory of Music, where he studied with Frederick Converse (1871-1940), a now-forgotten American composer whose most noted piece, *The Mystic Trumpeter* (1905), is an orchestral work based on Walt Whitman. Soon after his mother's death in 1931, he changed his middle name to "Hovanness" (accented on the second syllable), which is Armenian for John or Johannes, in honor of his grandfather whose first name it was. Then he decided to add another H to his middle name and completely drop his last name, thus producing his present professional name, Alan Hovhaness, which is pronounced with the accent on the last syllable (Hov-van-ESS). He has no academic degrees, other than honorary doctorates.

Unlike other American tonal composers of his generation, Hovhaness never studied in Europe. "I was more interested in Oriental music," he remembered. "Things like that were very far from Paris." His first revelation came in 1936 when he closely observed Vishnu Shiralí, the North Indian musician who had come to Boston with the dancer Ude Shankar (Ravi's older brother). During the 1930's, Hovhaness made his living playing the piano, mostly around Boston, for whomever would hire him, including social gatherings of Greeks, Arabs, and Armenians. He also worked as a jazz arranger on the Works Progress Administration and as an organist in an Armenian church, where he acquired a reputation for spectacular improvisations on ancient modes. In 1940, the young Boston composer destroyed nearly all the music he had written thus far, including an undergraduate prize-winning symphony; he wanted to start the new decade afresh.

In the early 1940's, he met the Boston painter Hyman Bloom, who not only influenced Hovhaness's growing interest in ethnic motifs but also introduced him to Yenouk Der Hagopian, a troubadour Armenian folksinger. His other important friend during this period was Hermon DiGiovanno, a "clairvoyant" painter also known as Emalaus Ionidies, who stimulated Hovhaness's continuing interest in extrasensory phenomena. From such different artistic experience would inevitably come musical compositions contrary to the common run.

Thanks to 1944 Boston concerts sponsored by Armenian organizations, Hovhaness produced several new compositions reflective of Armenian music, including *Lousadzak* (1944), the opera *Etchmiadzin* and *Armenian Rhapsody No. 1* (which incorporates a Der Hagopian melody), among others. He collaborated with an Armenian student group in co-sponsoring annual New York concerts of his music, beginning with one at Town Hall in June 1945. The composer Lou Harrison, then a music critic for the New York Herald-Tribune, came to review it. Having an extra ticket, Harrison invited his friend John Cage, also then a young composer.

As Harrison remembered it, "Here came this new name to us. We sat through the first piece and were quite startled. It was *Lousadzak*, which comes up from the cellos and then the piano comes in. It was beautifully played. We said to each other that the second one would start with an oompah, and it didn't. I think it was *Tzaikerker*. During the intermission, we went out all excited, because it was clear the music was going to go on doing this. As I remember, the hall was absolutely full."

What Harrison found in the lobby "was the closest I've ever been to one of those renowned artistic riots. The Chromaticists and the Americanists were carrying on at high decibels. What had touched it off, of course, was the fact that here came a man from Boston whose obviously beautiful and fine music had nothing to do with either camp and was, in fact, its own very wonderful thing to begin with." And it has been that way ever since.

Harrison's review was laudatory, identifying Hovhaness as "a composer of considerable interest and originality." Harrison also recalls, "There was a beautiful innocence about Alan. There always has been, but it was very pronounced in those days." Cage introduced Hovhaness around artistic New York and wrote favorably about his work in the June 1946 issue of *Modern Music*. Unable to survive financially in New York, Hovhaness returned home, where in 1948 he began three years of teaching at the Boston Conservatory of Music, the smaller music school in his home city. Aside from three years at Eastman (Rochester) summer school in the mid-1950's, that was his last regular teaching position.

Around 1953, his work received greater professional recognition. The Guggenheim Foundation awarded him the first of two successive fellowships. Martha Graham commissioned a score for her dance company, and the Louisville Orchestra another piece for its own premiere concert series. Hovhaness met the conductor Leopold Stokowski, who had been programming Hovhaness composition since 1942; and the conductor commissioned the composer's *Mysterious Mountain* (1955) for an inaugural concert with the Houston Symphony. "He asked me first to write a fanfare for brass to be played to introduce the concert, but when he saw I'd written a fanfare to a mysterious mountain, he asked me to write a big piece."

In 1959, in his own late 40's, Hovhaness began the second phase of his musical education. He received a Fulbright Research fellowship to study Karnatic music in South India. He visited Japan for the first time, giving well-received concerts of his own works, and returned in 1962-63 to study gagaku music, which he describes as "the earliest orchestral music we know; it came from China and Korea in the 700s." He learned to play Japanese instruments, such as the oboe-like hichiriki and the complex mouth organ sho, and even performed with a gagaku group. By 1965, Hovhaness could sharply distinguish himself from his contemporaries by writing that his principal musical preferences were "7th-century Armenian religious music, classic music of South India, Chinese orchestra music of the Tang Dynasty, Ah-ak music of Korea, gagaku of Japan, and the opera-oratorios of Handel."

The composer was tall and slender, with doe-like brown eyes and a broad mustache over a wide mouth. A scraggly gray beard framed his slender, essentially handsome face, and skin once mottled from acne had, amazingly, become clear. His wavy hair had turned gray, and he wore it long enough to fluff out from the back of his head. He had always looked physically frail; but when I saw him then, recovering from a broken hip, he looked no less frail than before. The last of several wives, Hinako (HEE-na-ko) Fujihara is short, slight, and dark-haired, perhaps a quarter-century younger than her husband; they have been together for 15 years. As she is also very efficient at finding papers related to his career, it is not for nothing that their personal publishing company and record label are both called Fujihara.

Even though the composer remained more reticent than most, it was hard not to ask Hovhaness how he managed to compose so much. He started with "an idea" (pronounced "idear," in the Boston way), which may have been an instrumental sound or a long melodic line. "It usually comes when I'm waking in the morning. I've been dreaming about it, and I try to get it down on paper before it vanishes. Also, while working I get tired. I suddenly have to lie down and go to sleep, a few minutes or just a few seconds. I hear the music. I wake up and write it down. I like to feel possessed, because that's the only time it's really worth it." He showed me one of the cheap notebooks he always carried with him. "I have a tremendous amount of books filled with melodies like that. I never go back to them. Usually I don't use them right away, because something else takes over." Had his music changed much in the past few decades? "No. It either is there or it isn't." As Dennis Russell Davies put it, "He is one of those few composers, Mozart must have been another, for whom composing isn't hard."

Hovhaness appeared in touch with passions not available to most people. He told me that one night during his recent hospital stay he pulled out all the tubes attached to his body, including the IV-feeder and the catheter. "I thought I'd landed some place outside the opera house somewhere. Bums were getting together and singing and performing all kinds of things. I thought I was there for a while. Then someone put me in a car, an old-fashioned car, which we may have had for a while." Then he was subdued by large orderlies and tied down at night. "He was the wildest one they ever had," his wife affirmed, complimenting her 79-year-old husband's energy. While hospitalized, he managed to write a solo viola sonata with several movements!

At another point he told me of "peak experiences," as they've been called: "When composing was interrupted by sleep, I dreamed a whole section of music. A month later, while I was working, I again went to sleep in the same place and dreamed the music again. I realized I had written the music wrong. This is the experience of *Mysterious Mountain*." While he sipped hot coffee, his wife recalled, "I can tell where it is. That passage is such a haunting mood. No way I can miss it." She paused, "He's in tears every time."

He continued, visibly choking, "It is such a cosmic experience. I can't express it. So whenever I heard that passage, I used to leave the concert hall. I was afraid people would think I was crazy. I stayed in the lobby. I got locked out one time, when the piece was over. Because the doors locked behind me, I never got to the stage." The critical question was whether Hovhaness had a more profound grasp of nature as such or with, as I think, whatever that human power is that produces music? If the latter, should we regard his work as metamusic?

"It is hard to say why I write tonal music. I write what I have to write. I'm forced to write it by a tremendous force, and it's not worth doing otherwise. Tonal music includes all the music of the Greeks, all the music of India, all the music of ancient Armenia, all the music of Japan, all the humanistic music of the world." What is humanistic? "Related to inner singing. I can't do anything I'm bored with. I have to have my spirit completely absorbed by it, or I don't want to bother with it. I can't give my time to anything that doesn't really affect me deeply. I'm not sure what words like 'tonal' mean anymore. What are the boundaries between tonal and nontonal." He paused. "Composers who write melodies are tonal composers and those who don't are not." To Davis, "His heartfelt commitment to tonality represents a philosophical statement."

Hovhaness pieces come in all sizes, from short songs to full-length operas (which he lamented are rarely performed). As a melodist, he was prepared to write for every sort of instrument. He has the richest catalogue of any contemporary composer. Because of "the authenticity of a voice that he's pursued for a lifetime," in Davis's phrase, nearly every Hovhaness work can, after a few bars, be identified as his. They are performed everywhere, by amateurs as well as professionals. His collection agency, BMI, counted over 1,000 performances during a single year (while you can be sure that many amateur performances went unnoticed). Indeed, few living composers are performed so widely. The closest semblance to a catalogue is Richard Howard's *The Works of Alan Hovhaness* (White Plains: Pro/Am Music Resources), which follows the composer's work only to 1983 and Opus 360, including 50 symphonies. At last count, there were at least 70 more pieces (including 14 additional symphonies).

As an unfashionable contemporary, Hovhaness's music rarely appears on the so-called major labels that are distributed to America's record stores. Indeed, for a while his recording situation was so unfortunate that he cofounded Poseidon Records to make his work public. Though they were slow to appear on compact discs, by now many of his very best works are on the current format. In addition to the CD mentioned before (MusicMaster NMD 60204K), the *Saint Vartan Symphony* (*Symphony No. 9*) and *Vishnu* (*Symphony No. 19*) are now available on CDs from Crystal Records (2235 Willida Lane, Sedro Wooley, WA 98284), which has issued six CD's entirely of Hovhaness's music, in addition to distributing Hovhaness pieces over CD's that include other composers' works as well. Crystal also offers the Poseidon Records mentioned before. Nonetheless, Hovhaness records continue to appear on other labels, including Fujihara (P.O. Box 88381, Seattle, 98188-2381), which has his wife as coloratura soloist in *Symphony No. 38* (*Opus 314*). One of my favorite records has the composer performing his pieces for solo piano, *Shalimar* (Fortuna, P.O. Box 32016, Tucson, AZ 85751). The principal publisher of his scores has been C. F. Peters, though many pieces have appeared under other imprints, including Fujihara.

Nothing inspires this composer as much as Nature. Which "mysterious mountain" did he have in mind, I asked? "Any mountain, the mystery of a mountain. I always found great inspiration in mountains." Other pieces are written for particular places. Whereas *Symphony No. 63* was written on commission for Loon Lake in New Hampshire, its successor, *Agiochook*, translated as "*The Abode of the Great Spirit*," is about a hill otherwise known as Mt. Washington. Reaching into the briefcase beside him, he pulled out a score. "This one I haven't copied the parts for; it is for a small string orchestra with a few wind instruments added. I think mountains should have their original Indian names," he told me. "American Indians had a religious concept of the mountains. That's why I don't like to say Mt. Rainer. Who is this guy who put his name on the mountain? Its original name was Mount Tahoma. That means the mountain that was God, which signifies it was higher and had many eruptions before we knew it." To honor it, Hovhaness wrote *Sunset on Mount Tahoma* for brass choir and organ.

"I can't write about my music; I just can't," he continued. "Music is music. I can write about things in nature I'm concerned about, especially the destruction of great trees. We had in America the most beautiful bird in the whole world. I haven't heard anything like it anywhere else. They call it the

Hermit Thrush. It's far superior to the Nightingale in Europe. It made a marvelous song that it sang in three different keys. It used to be everywhere, in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York State, but it disappeared without anybody saying anything about it."

One of his favorite pieces is *Symphony No. 50* (1983), which he introduced as "a very dramatic symphony about the eruption of Mt. St. Helens." We adjourned to living-room chairs while a tape of it was played. He turned his head to the right and closed his eyes while Hinako looked at him admiringly. After it ended he gave me the most definitive statement of purpose I've ever heard from him. "I am trying to interpret Nature through a classical point of view musically, using all the devices that I admire in the old masters like Handel and Beethoven -- using dry boring counterpoint, but making it interesting by using all I know I can put together as well as whatever emotional feeling I can put into it. I often write fugues for practice because it helps the mind to think logically, and to develop something which can be very boring but one can try to make it interesting, to try to give it some emotion that Nature has. I try to begin every day by playing an organ piece, *Hymn and Variation* by J. S. Bach, on the piano. It starts off the day for me. If I do that, I'm O.K. for the day; I've made the right connections."

Concert Reviews

Russia Goes American

IRINA IVANOVA

Musical News from a Neighboring Continent. March 9, Dom Center, Moscow, Russia.

The *Musical News from a Neighboring Continent* concert, which took place on March 9 at the Dom Center in Moscow, featured works by composers whose destinies were in different ways connected with America. The music included new works, as well as those rarely or never before heard in Russia, by such composers as Arthur Lourie, Elliott Carter, Leo Ornstein, Michael Matthews, Anton Rovner, Joseph Schillinger, and Wayne Barker.

This concert was part of an ongoing series devoted to presenting musical compositions by contemporary composers from various countries. The idea of presenting these concerts belongs to composer Anton Rovner, who first organized the New York *Bridge* series.

America in the 20th century became a point of intersection for the most diverse musical trends and styles. Special points of connection have always existed between America and Russia, which is manifested by the destinies of many artists. This particular was not merely an attempt to show new details of a wide and diverse musical scene of American music, but also presented a quest for cultural connections and international contacts. In a special way the lives of three composers were connected to both American and Russian cultures -- namely Arthur Lourie, Joseph Schillinger and Leo Ornstein.

A very unusual destiny was that of composer Arthur Lourie (1892-1966), born in Russia, who unexpectedly in the 1920's emigrated to the West, where he lived for a certain time in Paris and from where in 1941 he was forced to emigrate to the United States. His musical legacy pertains to a great degree to Russian musical culture of the beginning of the century as part of the futuristic trends of Nicolai Roslavetz, Nicolai Obouhov, and Ivan Wyschnegradsky. The piece performed by Anna Smirnova was *Sunrise* for solo flute, dating from Lourie's Parisian period and demonstrating strong lyrical qualities.

Leo Ornstein (b.1892), whose destiny was, unlike Arthur Lourie, connected to a greater degree with the United States, was born in Russia, but emigrated with his family at the age of 15. He subsequently devoted all of his time to composition, eventually turning to a solitary, secluded existence. His long life span allowed him to become a witness of many historical and musical events of the 20th century.

Nevertheless, while observing the lives of many great artists, he himself maintained a uniquely independent spirit. His multi-movement *Poems of 1917*, performed by pianist and composer Sergei Golubkov, is a musical depiction of the impressions of the year that the United States entered World War I. The composition combines in an exquisite manner episodes of languorous lyricism with harsh, menacing, dramatic episodes, and ends with depictions of a landscape after a battle and the final dance of slain soldiers.

Another Russian countryman, Joseph Schillinger (1895-1943), was an extremely multi-faceted person, who wrote an immensely large book on the theory of composition, and who was also fascinated by various new musical instruments, most notably with the famous theremin. *Melody and Moment électrique et pathétique*, performed by thereminist Lydia Kavina and pianist Alexander Reichelson, bore the nostalgic imprint of the long gone era of the 1930's.

A very moving and moderately sentimental work was Wayne Barker's *A Kiss Without Touching*, for theremin, piano, and toy piano, which was performed by the aforementioned and Sergei Golubkov. Listeners also had a chance to become acquainted with one of the latest compositions of Elliott Carter (b.1908). In performance by flutist Anna Smirnova of *Scrivo in Vento*, moods of contemplation and meditation were juxtaposed with moments of frivolity.

Another composition for piano, performed by Sergei Golubkov, was *Postlude* by Michael Matthews, whose music in recent times is becoming better known in many countries.

Among the compositions for piano, Anton Rovner's *Episodes* was performed by the author. This work combined in an organic way moments of repetitive technique with a semi-improvisatory developmental form.

Microtonal Music on Prechistenka Street

VICTORIA ANDREYEVA

Music of Friends Festival. April 19, Muradelli Music School, Moscow, Russia.

On April 19 the Moscow Muradelli Music School, on Prechistenka Street, became the venue for an extraordinary musical event. In a graceful concert hall a concert dedicated to microtonal music took place as part of the international *Music of Friends Festival*, organized by the Russian Composers' Union. Even today, not everyone is familiar with microtonal music. Likewise, for many people the name of the Russian composer Ivan Wyschnegradsky -- one of the founders of contemporary microtonal music, who spent most of his life in Paris -- remains unfamiliar.

Wyschnegradsky's music was introduced to the Russian public by an American composer "with a Russian soul in its generosity," a champion of microtonal music and a dedicated organizer of an annual New York. "I have been to the Glinka Museum and did not find there anything connected with the legacy of Wyschnegradsky. What's more, the employees of the museum have never even heard of his name," composer-bassoonist Johnny Reinhard announced during the concert. "I am happy to return to Russia the music of one of its composers," he declared with a big smile.

Two other wonderful non-commercial musicians from the U.S. were on hand: the brilliant pianist Joshua Pierce, a champion of contemporary music, including the music of John Cage; and jazz saxophonist Mike Ellis, who grew up at the crossroads of several cultures -- American, Russian, and Scottish -- and who came to Russia for the first time a few years ago "in search for the lost time."

The concert on Prechistenka Street included not only microtonal music, but generally experimental music of the most varied types of styles and trends: ranging from the tonal-romantic music of early Wyschnegradsky, to recent compositions of John Cage, Giacinto Scelsi, Johnny Reinhard, and Anton Rovner.

La Procession de la Vie, for reciter and piano, was written by Wyschnegradsky in the beginning of his career, so there are no microtones as of yet. The music comes off in a quasi-popular style of the early 20th century, combining the genres of waltz and tango. Rovner recited in a declamatory manner the humorous text by composer, which depicts life as a changing series fairy-tale episodes. The piano part, setting the text with the right hand over a steady, unchanging march accompanimental figure in the left was performed by Pierce in a subtle and delicate manner.

Ivan Wyschnegradsky's *Meditation on Two Themes from "The Day of Existence,"* originally for cello and piano, was performed by Reinhard and Pierce in Reinhard's transcription for bassoon and piano. This 1917 composition, one of the first microtonal works by the composer, has an entirely tonal and romantically expressive mien. The microtonal intervals -- quarter-tones and sixth-tones -- in the cello are used in such an organic way that they blended into the overall sound palette. The piece incorporates two themes from the composer's own symphony for large orchestra, *The Day of Existence*. The work, which features romantically vigorous and elegiac moods, was successfully interpreted by both musicians with great taste and refinement.

A Wyschnegradsky piece for prepared piano *Daughters of the Lonesome Island* had with an orchestral feeling, and was brilliantly performed by Joshua Pierce. The nails, bolts, staples and other objects, placed into the strings of the piano, gave the sound a certain similarity to Chinese hammer instruments or cymbalons. This Eastern touch was enhanced even further with strong pentatonic elements in the harmony and repetitive piano textures.

In a very expressive manner Joshua Pierce also performed Ives's *Three Page Sonata*, which as well created the effect of a brightly contrasting orchestral sound. The composition contains a chaotic type of atonal harmony with elements of diatonicism and brightly contrasting changes of moods. The textures recalled sweeping Rachmaninoff lines and sturdy march rhythms.

Generally speaking, the piano does not present the most favorable domain for microtonal music. The only purely microtonal compositions performed in the concert, were those for bassoon. On one of the most unwieldy instruments in the orchestra, Reinhard obtained rare qualities of grace and virtuosity, comparable to the violin technique of Paganini. His ability to perform any pitch in any tuning.

Giacinto Scelsi's *Maknongan* quizzed everyone with its quizzical sound and mood. The music remained for a long time as simply one note with barely audible microtonal digressions, which very explicitly demonstrated the composer's life-long mystical quest for the "third dimension in sound." Reinhard successfully brought out the mystical conception of the piece.

The premiere of Reinhard's *Ultra*, demonstrated the virtuosic qualities of the bassoon. The work has an abstract, philosophical mood. His *Zanzibar* is written in an entirely different manner. In this piece, brilliant theatrical effects are prominent, presented with great artistic qualities and a marked sense of humor. Reinhard started performing the composition by taking the bassoon apart and hitting its middle section with the palm of his hand as if it were a bamboo stick. Accompanying his music with elephant calls, he played several long passages containing tremolos and glissandi and was wildly entertaining.

In *Eye of Newt*, Reinhard depicted the Witches' Sabbath from *Macbeth*, where the crones prepare potions with recipes featuring various strange components. This piece, performed recorder, featured a simple, tonal melody in minor (with a few microtonal distortions of the intervals) and subsequently passed on to more virtuosic textures, including multiphonics for the instrument and howling sounds from the voice.

Anton Rovner's *Johnny Spielt Auf*, dedicated to Johnny Reinhard, contains several types of microtonal temperaments. The work is both abstractly athematic and yet extrovertively humorous. There are passages where the bassoonist leaves the instrument aside, and starts to sing in a dramatic and at the same time a comic voice. At the end, Reinhard took the instrument apart and then put the upper part of the bassoon to his eye, as if looking into binoculars.

A joint jazz-influenced improvisation of the three American musicians, Reinhard, Pierce, and Ellis brought out not only great lyrical and virtuosic qualities, but a masterful sense of form.

Positivissimo

JEFF DUNN

World premiere of *Rapture*, by Christopher Rouse, commissioned and performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Mariss Jansons, Music Director, dedicatee and conductor. May 5, Heinz Hall for the Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, PA. Repeated May 6.

Christopher Rouse has been described as a "New Tonalist," "...one of America's most successful composers of orchestral music," and creator of "a body of work perhaps unequalled in its emotional intensity." All of the above apply to *Rapture*, billed by Rouse as "unabashedly tonal," designed to convey "a sense of spiritual bliss, religious or otherwise."

Not that writing it was all that rapturous. "I don't enjoy writing a piece," Rouse revealed during a pre-concert question/answer session. "I imagine it's like what giving birth is for a woman." Once the baby was out, however, the audience loved it, pouring forth numerous bravos amid a partial standing ovation both nights.

The 15-minute work progresses through several sections, each taken at increasing tempo. As Rouse's mastery of orchestral variety and sure-fire sense of drama grip the audience, tinges of Sibelius, Respighi, Harris, Rautavaara, and Leifs flit by on the way to a positivissimo climax. Rouse's distinctive signature, however, permeates the music. This is a tour de force that should be picked up by other orchestras to persuade stick-in-the-mud patrons that new music can reach a mass audience.

After the ecstatic *Kabir Padavali* (performed this July at Aspen) and *Rapture*, Rouse declared "This is the end of a group of pieces. ... Next come a nasty, disagreeable clarinet concerto and a requiem." If Rouse can be as nastissimo as his positivissimo, watch out!

On the 12th Days of Kraków

MARIA ANNA HARLEY

12th Days of Kraków Composers. June 11, Kraków, Poland. Through June 18.

The cover of the program book of the *12th Days of Kraków Composers "Confiteor"* features the twin towers of the Marian Church from which the hourly Heynal is heard. The book indicates also that the Festival, one of the celebrations of Kraków as a European City of Culture, was held under the auspices of Cardinal Franciszek Macharski, the Metropolitan Bishop of the city. In the program, the festival, organized by the Kraków Section of the Polish Composers' Union, was introduced by Dr. Robert Tyrula (priest, who wrote about the spiritual significance of music) and Festival's organizer, Jerzy Stankiewicz, the president of the Kraków section of ZKP (who wrote about the purpose of this year's events, celebrating the spiritual aspects of composing and spiritual function of music as an expression of faith, both personal and communal). It is the first time that the festival had such a strong "confessional" and multi-denominational character, with numerous religious pieces on the program (including the traditions of Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Protestant branches of Christianity, and Judaism). Traditionally, however, the Festival began on Pentecost, the celebration of the Holy Spirit in May - the holiday of "inspiration" which results in musical creativity.

The program of the *12th Days* began on June 11 with a Mass in the intention of the Kraków musicians, and a compositional concert of Juliusz Luciuk, on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of his work as a composer. The day's celebrations concluded with a concert of Capella Cracoviensis performing *Katyn Epitaph* by Andrzej Panufnik (1967), *Requiem* by Roman Palester (1946-7), and Szymanowski's *Stabat Mater* (1925-26). The Festival, inaugurated by such classic masterpieces of Polish music became truly contemporary with a full program of two or three concerts per day held through the week, until June 18. The ensembles included the Jascha Lieberman Trio, Akademos Quartet, orchestras of the Academy of Music, the Polish Radio, the Tarnów Chamber Orchestra, Ensemble Les Jouers de Flute from Zurich, The Hammerhead Consort from Edmonton, Canada, the Gloria Chamber Choir from Lviv, Ukraine. Each concert was held in a different location, predominantly in the wonderful church interiors, including the Marian Basilica, churches of Franciscans, Augustinians, Dominicans, Jesuits, Carmelites, Paulines, Benedictines, as well as the Evangelical Church, the Center of Jewish Culture, the Center of Japanese Art and the Concert Hall of the Academy of Music. The Festival guests included composers Roman Berger (Bratislava, Slovakia), Ulrich Gasser (Kreuzlingen, Switzerland), Frederick Kaufman (Miami, USA), Eugeniusz Poplawski (Minsk, Byelarus), Mirosław Skoryk (Lviv, Ukraine). The honorary guest was Lady Camilla Panufnik from Britain.

This writer attended a small number of the Festival's concerts, during participation in the 58th Annual Meeting of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences of America, held at Jagiellonian University June 16-18, 2000. While the "slice" of the music heard was rather small, it was of a high quality and left a very good impression about the whole event. On June 15 the stone walls of the chamber-sized hall at the Dominican monastery resounded with the beautiful sonorities of the Akademos Quartet (female performers only), whose rendition of Zbigniew Bujarski's *Kwartet na Adwent* (1984) resulted in an ovation from the audience. The evening concert at the Carmelite Church was dedicated solely to the music of Bogusław Schaeffer. The Capella Cracoviensis (conducted by Stanisław Krawczynski, with Beata Karczmierz, soprano, Agnieszka Monasterska, mezzo-soprano, Andrzej Rzymkowski, saxophone and Andrzej Bialko, organ) performed *Stabat Mater* (1983), followed by *Psalms* for soprano, six-part choir, saxophone and orchestra, and the world premiere of *Te Deum* for eight-part choir, violin solo, saxophone solo and orchestra (1979-2000). This early work was well nigh hidden from the audiences for over 20 years, but sounded fresh and interesting, with richly contrapuntal instrumental interludes, and expressive, lyrical, or dramatic choral writing. According to Schaeffer, the piece is in five movements, each in a different mood and texture, including thick polytonal polyphony (in 12 keys at one moment!), sections composed in quartertones, and tranquil moments filling the church's interior with rich, consonant chords.

The afternoon concert on June 16 did not seem to hold much promise: one piece only, *De Profundis* by Roman Berger, a playback of a recording in the presence of the composer. Somehow, despite the monumentality of Pawel Sydor's *Credo* heard in the evening concert of the same day, Berger's quiet work, appeared to be the most profoundly "spiritual" of what was experienced in Kraków. The piece -- scored for bass voice, piano and cello -- was projected with fascinating, sparse transformation of sound (reverberation, ring modulation, echoes) by Edward Kulka. Berger's composition, composed "because of his internal need" and not in response to any commissions in 1975 and 1980, uses two somber poems by Tadeusz Rózewicz, *Lament* and *Ocalony [Saved/Survivor]* as the source of text and ideas. Rózewicz's profound reflections on the loss of faith and the cruelty of the war find an appropriately austere setting in Berger's score -- with its extensive temporal durations and sophisticated use of the voice and the instruments. After long stretches of darkness -- breathing, wailing voice, at times accompanied by repeated, pounding chords of the piano -- the brief appearance of cello cantilena has an almost angelic quality, which is again overcome by darkness at the end. The poem concludes with its first line: "I am 24 years old. I survived, while being led to slaughter." The survivor witnessed unspeakable horrors which rendered the concepts of human culture meaningless: "these names are empty and synonymous: / man and animal / love and hate / enemy and friend / darkness and light." The somber text and its exquisite musical interpretation by Berger belong among the most impressive artistic testimonies of the Holocaust.

Such subtlety and understanding were missing from Sydor's *Credo*, a huge, truly "conservative" undertaking (that makes one miss the "progressiveness" of the greatest 20th-century composers, such as Messiaen, who remained faithful to their brands of modernity), but it is too early to severely criticize a composer born only in 1970, five years before Berger's composition was conceived. In time, perhaps, this skillful manipulator of traditional chords will be able to infuse his creation with some spiritual depth and inspiration -- and this brings us back to the point of departure, i.e. the spiritual concept of the festival. Words, even the most exalted ones, may be meaningless -- perhaps music is at its most spiritual when it expresses contemplations and reflections of the most personal kind?

The Progressive Rake

ANDREW SHAPIRO

San Francisco Opera presents *The Rake's Progress*, by Igor Stravinsky (text by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman). June 29, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA.

The San Francisco Opera's presentation of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* was adequate for the first two acts and extraordinary in the third. The impressive stage design by David Hockney (created for a production in 1975) added an interesting two dimensionality of enormous and quasi homogenous muted colored patterns reminiscent of the large murals of Sol Lewitt; large zones of similar outlined structure surrounding fabulous atmospheric color schemes.

Raymond Very (tenor), as Tom Rakewell sang effortlessly and consistently relaxed. Unfortunately, this disappointed because he didn't seem to have the ability to make one feel anything of his character's new found wealth and separation from his love Anne (Rebecca Evans), as a result of his contact with Nick Shadow (Bryn Terfel), a character representing the devil. Evans was wonderful. In her aria in the third scene of Act I she sang entrancingly about missing her love and whether she should go to London to find Tom. Her voice had the sweet ability to spring into the upper register of her voice with a great softness and refinement. Terfel, bass-baritone, proved to be wonderfully in character throughout; with humorous mannerisms, he sang strongly as he enacted his plans to lure Tom to his eventual downfall. The chorus was remarkably focused and pure, particularly the female voices. At the end of Act II, Scene II in front of a marvelously lined and colored backdrop of the facade of Tom's house in London, the ensemble greets Tom and his new wife, Baba the Turk (Zheng Cao) with a glowing display of exuberant singing.

Act III began with a stunning stage design (rather resembling a huge black and white TV) accompanied by the chorus engaged in an auction in which Tom's possessions are being sold as a result of his inevitable financial ruin (after all, the devil is his business advisor). This was a fun ensemble piece with the occasional splash of color as the auctioneer, Anne and Baba are all trying to find out how to make the best of the craziness that seems to have descended into Tom's living room.

One issue with the performance of the orchestra: The "neo" of Stravinsky's neo-classicism is strikingly evident in the handful of occasions when Stravinsky adds an oddly contoured solo brass line to an orchestral texture of a voice over a light accompaniment (the orchestra, sans brass, behaving like a huge lightly strummed guitar) it seemed as though the brass were too loud and not integrated smoothly enough into the texture. Barring that, the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, as would be expected, was precise, balanced and refined under the baton of conductor Markus Stanz.

Very began to excel as Tom's character became more developed at the end of Act III, Scene II. Tom and Nick are engaged in a protracted bargaining session in which Tom gambles for his life in a game of cards. Over a solo harpsichord playing a musically demented accompaniment (the type of material that Andrew Lloyd Webber copies in *Phantom of the Opera*), Tom defeats Nick, Nick's last act before he returns to the underworld is to render Tom insane.

As Tom recognized the dreadful state of his finances, love life and mental health, Very smoothly embraced the higher register of his voice, singing expressively over the orchestra's cold and dissonant woodwind textures.

In the final scene, Tom is confined with other lunatics (the chorus, wearing black gowns and oddly shaped masks) in an asylum. He believes himself to be Adonis waiting for his Venus (Anne) to come and visit him. She does, singing sweetly about all that is lost between them over a typical late Stravinskyism: long winded rising and cold passages in the upper woodwinds. Alternating with Anne is the chorus, accompanied by the stunning orchestral texture of a pizzicato walking bass line framing a lush orchestral accompaniment in the strings creating what was easily the most dramatic moment of the entire opera, leaving the listener wanting so much more. This flow of musical events was performed seamlessly by the orchestra, which seemed to fully embrace Stravinsky's use of a symphonically conceived large form of material that brings us to the drama's conclusion. In the end, we are left to examine the broken pieces of the character's lives, a task that we're moved to do because the singers finally delivered as the increasingly had an outlet to do so; their characters became increasingly three-dimensional as did their performances.

Outsiders in the House

MICHAEL MCDONAUGH

San Francisco Symphony *American Mavericks Festival*. June 9, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through June 20.

Musicians who play in a symphony orchestra have to contend with its top 40 mentality. And though Michael Tilson Thomas regularly conducts the masterpieces of the standard repertory, he's also interested in doing neglected parts of music history, especially our own. The symphony's 11-concert *American Mavericks Festival* this June offered a broad yet highly select view of American concert music. We heard modernist masters and a few loose cannons too.

The second concert of the series featured works by five composers. And though you can say that music is always about time, these Americans examined it in highly divergent ways. Carl Ruggles' 1931 *Sun-Treader* wrestled it into submission. His obsessive approach--angular tunes, thick textures--magnified this impression. But Davies's acoustics made the massed passages painful. Ruggles is your archetypal modernist, hell-bent on imparting his message whether you like it or not. And, though he's undoubtedly unique, the symphony would have served him better if they'd done either *Men and Mountains* or *Evocations*.

Lukas Foss's 1960 *Time Cycle*, which uses texts by Auden, Housman, Kafka and Nietzsche, milked every ounce of drama from them. It also used the 6-8 beat lines of Auden's *We're Late* as a unifying device and subjected them to serial syncopations. The settings themselves had the anxiety quotient so common to the German Expressionist style, and though effective enough, none but the Nietzsche really stood out. Soprano Lauren Flanigan, however, sang with acute sensitivity and theatrical flair.

Ruth Crawford Seeger's 1938 *Andante for Strings*, originally the slow movement in her 1931 quartet, is a deep meditation on time, and its keening lines -- with subtle temporal lapses between violas and cellos -- add to its expressive intensity. This piece also points to the future -- its textural expansions sound like Ligeti's 30 years later.

Meredith Monk's choruses from her 1991 opera *Atlas* are firmly anchored in the present, with modish combinations of medieval, Native American, and Eastern melodic/harmonic sources. Her regular singers were joined by members of the symphony's chorus who sang purely -- they even barked at several points -- and one guesses affectingly; the audience, at any rate, loved it.

Charles Ives's *Symphony No. 4* was the most radical expression of time on this program, what with the steady march of percussion located beneath the stage, the positioning of several players above it, and the colossal effects both spatial and stylistic the composer drew from opposing musics which sounded at times like several big bands having it out. Ives's sonic montage got juicy contributions from keyboardists Michael Linville, Marc Shapiro, Peter Grunberg, Angela Isono, Alexander Frey and Riely Francis (on theremin).

The symphony's belated tribute to Duke Ellington was conducted by Jon Faddis of the Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, and featured his regular pianist Renee Rosnes in *New World A Comin'* (1943) and *Harlem* (1951). The musicians, though not versed in jazz techniques, played gamely but with no real sense of swing. That was left to the post-intermission group of *Sacred Concerts* excerpts sung by soloists Patricia Baskerville, Queen Esther Marrow, Milt Grayson, and the chorus, with the Maverick Jazz Band. Mary Fetting on reeds was especially outstanding.

Lou Harrison is such a famous figure that it's easy to take him for granted, and, since only a handful of his pieces tend to be performed by orchestras, the three-work tribute June 15 was a welcome atonement for that relative neglect. His *Symphony No. 3* (1937-1982) is the most outgoing of his four, and its spirit is like that of the Brahms *Symphony No. 2*. Yet Thomas failed to make a convincing case for it -- the first movement *allegro moderato* was taken too fast and the tempos throughout were metronomically regular. The orchestra seems to resist this piece; it certainly resisted Dennis Russell Davies when he premiered it here. Things improved with the *Suite for Violin with American Gamelan* (1972) which Harrison co-composed with Richard Dee. This is a contained and seductive piece which showcases the composer's gift for long-breathed melodies (the Chinese parts were probably by Dee). Young Korean violinist Chee-Yun gave an engaged yet poised performance, ably supported by the contributions of eight percussionists. The 1972 *Concerto for Organ with Percussion Orchestra*, which Thomas led several seasons ago with the Symphony, emerged the pick of the litter, with wide color contrasts, and whacking and thwacking galore (the drum boxes were painted Tiffany blue), and who's ever heard a spiky horror movie interlude and a celeste doing tone clusters in the same piece? Harrison proved that music can be entertaining and deep, and not many composers can manage both.

The June 20 program showed off Thomas's training orchestra, The New World Symphony. And though it didn't make much sense on paper, each piece made its points. The NWS was also acutely sensitive to matters of style. Earle Brown's 1975 *Cross Sections with Color Fields* is an extraordinary piece which should be heard more often, and a workable compromise between open form, which he invented, and the closed form we're used to. Unfortunately the open form parts, which can be done in any order or juxtaposed, didn't arrive from his publisher -- only the 10 events of section H were included. Thomas solved this problem by adjusting attacks and dynamics throughout. This conveyed the score's essential mystery -- the sounds well up and disappear just as unexpectedly as they do in Takemitsu or Dutilleux, and there are fierce, primitive sections which sound as unconsciously bidden as the refined ones.

Steve Mackey's 2000 *Tuck and Roll* for electric guitar and orchestra couldn't be more different. Brightly colored, crowd-pleasing, with glitzy Gershwin string writing and patches which sound like music for a yet-to-be-made Tim Burton movie.

The Ives *Symphony No. 2* (1901) is as compact and contrapuntal as the Mackey was diffuse and self-conscious. Ives' textbook facility blends Dvorak, Mahler, and Wagner-style writing with American hymn tunes and popular songs, and there are moments where 5ths sound an archaic note in all this polyphony. But Ives makes it all sound perfectly natural, even logical. He was as isolated in America as Haydn was at Esterhazy. That forced him to be original, and it's still making our best composers original too. But what about Virgil Thomson, Henry Brant, Roy Harris, and Philip Glass? Aren't they mavericks too? Perhaps Thomas will include them in further installments of this festival. We'll just have to wait and see.

Goat's Voices

ROBERT WEISS

Fresh Voices. Anne Doherty's *Dan (Destiny)*, John Partridge's *The Soldiers Who Tried to Kill Death*, Mark Alburger's *Sidewalks of New York: Henry Miller in Brooklyn* (libretto by Mel Clay), Valarie Morris's *Amsterdam and Paris with a Side of Eggs*, and Mary Watkin's *Queen Clara: Fields of Glory, Rivers of Blood* (libretto by Lawrence Belville). June 17, Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Repeated June 18.

Goat Hall Opera presented on June 17 *Fresh Voices*, a five-star performance of excerpts from new works by San Francisco Bay Area composers and librettists, and an affirmation that new music is alive and well. Scenes from five new operas were presented, ranging in style from Valarie Morris's light comedy, *Amsterdam and Paris with a Side of Eggs*, to Lawrence Belville and Mary Watkin's *Queen Clara [Barton]: Fields of Glory, Rivers of Blood*, a dramatic oratorio-like array of exquisite solos with rich choral back-up. The opening excerpt from Anne Doherty's *Dan (Destiny)* was a politically oriented fantasy sprinkled with parodies of well-known American patriotic songs. The cast of John Partridge's *The Soldiers Who Tried to Kill Death*, consisted of three outstanding male voices (John Adams, Douglas Mandell, and Aurelio Viscarra) in solos and magnificent trios. In Mel Clay and Mark Alburger's *The Sidewalks of New York: Henry Miller in Brooklyn*, sex and creativity are presented in an intricate package -- sometimes with abandon. It appears that Goat Hall productions has earned its place as one of the Bay Area's most inventive and imaginative musical groups.

Leading the Oregon Cheer for New Music

JANOS GEREBEN

Oregon Bach Festival Composers Symposium. June 23, Beall Hall, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR. Through July 9.

If all music professors were like Robert Kyr, the world would sing in perfect harmony (minus the Disney image). He brings dedication, enthusiasm, just plain unconditional love to one of the most difficult of human endeavors: to produce the next generation of classical-music composers.

It was amazing to watch the chair of the University of Oregon's composition program ("50 students, the largest in the West!") in Eugene's venerable Beall Hall last week, acting as director of the Composers Symposium. In an unfortunately typical situation, pushing new music at a poorly attended concert of mixed values, Kyr was having the time of his life, supporting, encouraging, applauding young composers. This little-noticed portion of the Oregon Bach Festival was making a statement for the future, while Helmuth Rilling served the past gloriously, in the company of soloists on the order of Juliana Banse (look for her Sophie in next fall's San Francisco Opera *Rosenkavalier*), Thomas Quasthoff (who keeps getting better, although he is already perfect), the festival's superb chorus and orchestra who come to Eugene from all over the world.

Kyr's cheerleading was badly needed in a situation where there are few people in the audience -- including 40 symposium participants and the rest almost all students and faculty -- but he was twirling that symbolic baton in a dazzling way, making us all believe that we are witnessing a most marvelous event. The evening concert -- the second half of a doubleheader -- was better attended, and with works such as Rafael Hernandez's *Invocation and Dance* and Micah Hayes's *Adam's March*, of higher quality.

How do you get people into the concert hall to hear new works? With great difficulty. It can be done, but it needs time, lasting value in the works ("I want to hear that again!"), and loving, outstanding performances. How much time from breaking ground to filling a hall? Would you believe a century? That's how long it took before Ives, Cowell, and company, with Michael Tilson Thomas's missionary zeal, were able to pack Davies Hall in San Francisco for the *American Mavericks* concerts. Perhaps not that long, but the Oregon Mavericks still have a bit of time before producing that kind of music, and then gaining audiences en masse.

All day long, Kyr had the advantage of co-chairing the grandiosely designated *New Millennium* concerts with the remarkable, one-of-a-kind/they-broke-the-mold Lou Harrison, the most charming of grand old composers. Harrison's *Songs in the Forest* and, especially, his 1990 Piano Trio were the highlights of the two concerts, the latter given a heroic performance by Third Angle musicians Paloma Griffin (violin), Nancy Ives (cello), and Mika Sunago (piano). Those three also shined -- along with GeorgeAnne Ries (flute and piccolo) and Chris Inguanti (clarinets) -- in the performance of music by their contemporaries. Substituting on a short notice for the Third Angle music director, Joan Landry did a commendable job conducting at both concerts.

At a well-attended noon *On the House* event in the Silva lobby, Kyr and Harrison played tag-team with a dazzling topic-of-second duet about and from Harrison; news came of Dennis Russell Davies recording all seven of his symphonies.

Among works by the young symposium participants, there was a uniform level of competence and willingness to reach out to the audience: a relatively new phenomenon. There was, of course, the always-present temptation to be carried away by the tricks of the trade ("although the piece opens with a near 12-tone row, only B-flat is repeated, the work as a whole is not a serial composition..."), and an occasional throwback to computer programming by way of trying to squeeze music out of bits and bytes.

Karim Al-Zand, from Harvard, introduced an instantly likable, entertaining work, *Parizade and the Singing Tree*, narrated excellently by another composer, Jeff Defty. Scott Unrein's Matisse-inspired *Cut-Outs* for violin and piano (Griffin and Sunago again) represented the "locals" with a brief, pleasant work, which ended up going nowhere. Perhaps the rarest thing in new music is a work that has something to say, says it, and stops. Besides the obvious great ones -- Harrison, John Adams, some of Philip Glass, etc. -- I found that quality only among a handful of composers at the hundreds of new-music concerts I attended with eager anticipation of the next "great one" -- most notably in the works of one young Canadian composer, Kelly-Marie Murphy: look for her work!

But no matter what happened in Beall Hall, Kyr was cheering his young charges on. Good for him. Good for them.

Who Wants to Be the Owner of a Money Tree?

MARK ALBURGER

David Garner's *The Money Tree*. June 30, University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA. Repeated July 1.

Money may not grow on trees, but music is produced in a seemingly effortless and natural analogous method by San Francisco composer David Garner.

Garner's one-act opera *The Money Tree*, is an agreeable work for four singers that, while in some ways reflects musical comedy and popular styles, remains solidly in the world of traditional contemporary opera along the lines of Menotti and Barber. Garner has a tunefulness and practical regard for the voice, and his setting of Dan Linden Cohen's libretto always allows the words to shine.

Bill Saver, the punningly unlikely hero of this work, is sung competently by the librettist, opposite Megan-Star Levitt's wonderfully clear tones as Lucy Saver. Alexandra is featured winningly in the pants role of Michael Charmaine, and Wendy Hillhouse proved hugely entertaining as the larger-than-life Aunt Agatha. Music direction was provided by the composer, and the accompaniment was under the able fingers of duo pianists Lessa Dahl and Darryl Cooper. The premiere of *The Money Tree* was directed by Ross Halper and presented by the Bay Area Summer Opera Theater Institute (BASOTI), at the University of San Francisco's Gill Theater, on June 30 and July 1.

"The King is Dead! Long Live the King!"

MARK PETERSEN

American Guild of Organists 2000 National Convention. Hatsumi Miura, Carole Terry and Marie-Bernadette Dufourcet-Hakim, organists; and the Seattle Symphony, Gerard Schwarz, music director; in Robert Sirota's *In the fullness of time* (1999), Copland's *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra* (1924), Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani* (1938), and *Seattle Concerto for Organ and Orchestra* (1998) by Naji Hakim. July 6, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA.

What a conundrum! At a time in history when those in ecclesial and academic circles consistently lament the dearth of qualified organists, the minuscule number of college musicians studying the instrument, and the possibility that hundreds of years of tradition, pedagogy and literature might be relegated to museum status; the Seattle Symphony builds and dedicates a monumental (5 divisions, 83 stops, 4490 pipes) new instrument...

The unveiling of the new organ, called the Watjen Concert Organ after benefactors Craig and Joan Watjen; was precisely timed to coincide with the American Guild of Organists' (AGO) biennial convention which suspiciously just happened to be in town. The instrument amalgamates the old and the new -- utilizing mechanical, tracker-style key action and electronic access to stops, couplers, and presets. The facade was in place for Benaroya Hall's celebrated opening in 1998. Since then, the builders, C.B. Fisk, Inc. of Gloucester, MA; have spent more than 50,000 hours in construction, assembly and voicing to prepare for its July 2000 debut. The first performance of the instrument occurred on July 1, and featured music by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Franck, Guilmant, and the world premiere of David Diamond's *Symphony No. 10*, which uses organ in the third and fourth movements.

The July 6 concert, all works written in the last 100 years (including two world premieres), was the AGO Convention's culminating event. The works by Sirota and Hakim were commissioned by the Seattle chapter of the AGO specifically for this Convention performance.

In the fullness of time, Sirota's piece for organ and orchestra was performed by Tokyo organist, Hatsumi Miura. Unfortunately, it didn't show off much of the organ or the organist's skills. In fact, the composition was very much like the large number of short, cinematic, fanfare-type pieces which American composers are being asked to contribute to the repertoire for concert openers. Sirota did exhibit a nice command of color within his orchestral palette and a certain Ivesian wizardry as he juxtaposed the chorale "Es ist genug" with complex rhythmic and polymetric materials.

A most pleasant surprise came in the form of Copland's *Symphony for Organ and Orchestra*, written for Nadia Boulanger, who premiered the work with Walter Damrosch and the New York Symphony in January 1925. From the elegiac "Prelude," through the rhythmic fascination and drama in the "Scherzo," to the mysterious, tension-filled "Finale" the entire piece was a delightful un-Copland-like musical experience -- definitely worthy of many future listening. Seattle Symphony resident organist, Carole Terry, was the soloist for this memorable performance.

In contrast to the first two pieces on the program which treated the organ as color within the ensemble, Poulenc's *Concerto for Organ, Strings, and Timpani* allowed much greater opportunity to demonstrate the abilities of organ and organist (Miura). The single-movement composition is a tuneful fantasy which includes rollicking organ passages recalling Baroque toccatas, poignant strings, powerful silences, and several big moments where the Watjen organ could really show off. Some of the registrations invoked memories of the mighty Wurlitzer; and a couple of the 32' stops had walls, seats and listeners mildly vibrating like movies in sensurround.

A big occasion deserves a big finale; and Hakim's *Seattle Concerto* was just the ticket. The three-movement rhapsody, impressively delivered by the composer's wife at the organ; literally pulled out all the stops for organ AND orchestra. Amusement park grins were everywhere, watching Maestro Schwarz literally toss his cues to organ and orchestra (augmented with nine percussionists). The first movement, "Allegro risoluto," dives right in with lots of percussion, rapidly changing meters and big *Rite of Spring* colors and chords. The "Adagio," an ethereal, pastoral reverie, segues immediately into the power-packed "Allegro con Spirito." This third and final movement is a Gershwin-esque tone poem, *A Frenchman in Seattle*, if you will, which recalls the boisterous first movement; and prodigiously ended concerto, concert, and convention.

Long Live the King of Instruments!

Show Us Your Warebrook

DAVID CLEARY

Warebrook Contemporary Music Festival. July 14, Irasburg, Newport, and Derby Line, VT. Through July 16.

The weather at the 10th annual *Warebrook Festival* in northern Vermont uncharacteristically saw its share of overcast and damp periods. But fair and sunny conditions prevailed inside the performance venues, as festival director Sara Doncaster presided over a fine weekend of lectures and concerts.

June 14's performance was loaded with excellent recent works. Special guest composer Bernard Rands had the first of three entities given here; his flute/viola/harp trio "...*sans voix parmi les voix...*" is wonderfully irresistible, obsessive in its way, yet sinuous and supple -- rather like seeing a blue-ribbon tabby fascinated by the sight of a whirling mobile. Yoko Nakatani's substantial flute/percussion duo *Garasha* deftly balances East and West, nicely combining oriental ostinati and ritualistic spare textures with occidental drive and concert-hall specialties like fluttersong. *Spring Song* for cello by Augusta Read Thomas sports fetchingly turned melodic figures and a strong formal sense, imparting solid underpinnings to its soulful, rhapsodic surface. Doncaster's *Incarnations* for soprano and string quartet is also a riveting entity--restless, intense, sturdy stuff that masterfully mirrors its Yeats poems. *Tombeau* for wind quintet by and large finds its composer, Laurie San Martin, in a dark, contemplative mood, thanks in part to substitution of English horn for oboe. Occasional aggressive interpolations intrude on the prevailing pensive approach, helping delineate the piece's nicely balanced arch format. Only Thomas Turner's *Fantasy for Violin and Piano* failed to please; an ambitious, wildly disjunct essay, it needs less fantasy and more focus.

June 15's midday lecture-demonstration centered on Rands's *Memo 4*, a sleek, luscious flute piece that perfectly stitches together its vast patchwork of snippets into a perfectly balanced whole. The following vocal/piano recital featured older works by Barber, Britten, Copland, and Shifrin and a recent song cycle by Elena Ruehr. She, like many of the composers featured this weekend, is East Coast based; surprisingly, her *Lullabies and Spring Songs* updates literature from the Barber/Bernstein/Rorem tradition. But no trace of flabbiness or toadying can be found here -- these vital selections possess a vivid sense of character that perfectly underscores the poetry. The evening concert was sheer joy, featuring five excellent compositions. Rands's *Concertino* for oboe and seven players is splendid, a puckish, clever, wonderfully crafted number full of jittery hiccuping gestures leavened with more expressive moments. Nervous, swirling, and loaded with fire in its belly, *Cloud Collar*, a mixed septet by Allan Anderson, is an exciting listen. Marjorie Merryman's violin/piano duo *Companion Pieces* is light, warm, and lyric--very audience-friendly, but equally strong in structural underpinning and subtle, personable vigor. The excellent *Piano Quintet* by Edward Cohen is substantial and intense, exhibiting clear-cut forms and an almost Brahmsian earnestness -- a truly solid citizen. Tonal figures à la Mahler infuse Charles Fussell's fine soprano and chamber ensemble selection *Goethe Lieder*. Wholesomely emotive and nostalgic, this magical piece is everything a new tonalist selection should be.

June 16's concert was given over to choral music, with many recent works scattered among traditional American shape-note numbers and pieces from Balkan and Georgian folk idioms. Zeke Hecker's *Turtle Sings an Egg Song* and *Grandpa Bear's Lullaby* are eerie cradle tunes, harmonically sophisticated and most effective. *Four Shakespeare Songs*, by Paul Brust, tellingly explores a wide variety of moods, ranging from bouncy to warm, joyous to deliberate -- and all are splendidly written for its singers. Doncaster's fine *Irish Hymn* setting is like the proverbial swimming swan: one notes the smoothly sailing exterior, not the crafty mechanism that drives it. Fussell's two pieces from his *Pioneer Songbook* are sensitive, heartfelt entities that go down like finely aged scotch. And Donald Martino's early "The Lion. The Tiger" from the *Bad Child's Book of Beasts* presents its charmingly ironic poem perfectly, indulging in a stretto-like combination of its two primary ideas at work's end.

Performances were nearly all first-rate. From the rich trove of efforts here, one can cite Jacqueline LeClair's stunning oboe playing (featuring a huge tone and sparkling technique) in the *Concertino*, Susan Hampton's, and Robert Schultz's riveting presentation of *Garasha*, Marshall Urban's huge and splendid baritone voice in the Ruehr and Barber's *Despite and Still*, cellist Darry Dolezal's thoughtful yet passionate playing in the Thomas, Julie Hanson Geist's sensitive soprano singing in *Incarnations* and *Goethe Lieder*, Matthew Doherty's durable and flexible fluting in *Memo 4*, Sandra Hebert's marvelously understated pianism (quite different from her usual outsized playing style) in Copland's *Three Piano Excerpts from "Our Town,"* and the Arcadian Winds' bouncy, effervescent rendition of György Ligeti's *Six Bagatelles*. David Hoose's conducting on *Cloud Collar*, *Concertino*, and *Goethe Lieder* was terrific, ideally balancing tightness and sensitivity. Village Harmony, a Vermont-based, adolescent-aged choral group (whose members also dance and play instruments), was marvelous. Led by Larry Gordon, this well-drilled ensemble boasts a big, hearty sound; poised and polished, they're capable of much warmth and sensitivity but effectively impart an authentic and appealing rawness to the more rustic folk numbers.

The Aspen Festival's Progress

JEFF DUNN

Aspen Opera Theater Center presents Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress*, with Michael Slattery (Tom), Kerri Marcinko (Anne), Eric Lodal (Nick), and Judith Ann Metzger (Baba), directed by Edward Berkeley, conducted by Alan Gilbert. July 13, Wheeler Opera House, Aspen, CO.

The chamber qualities of Stravinsky's last major neoclassic work, *The Rake's Progress*, perfectly suit the moderate intimacy of the Wheeler Opera House, beautifully restored in what is by some measures America's most affluent community. Like the modest-appearing, multi-million-dollar pseudo-, neo- and amplified-restored Victorian homes that dot the tree-lined grid of Aspen's West End, the opera is in its place: careful, orderly, presentable, piquant, retrograde and not without some charm. But alive? Yes! -- thanks be to the infusion of the youthful talent and energy of the imported Aspen Music Festival personnel who altogether exceeded the achievement of the San Francisco Opera's revival in June.

Of the principal characters, only Eric Lodal's Nick paled by comparison to his San Francisco counterpart, superstar Bryn Terfel. Michael Slattery's Tom, on the other hand, greatly surpassed Raymond Very's fine performance in San Francisco, especially in his ability to characterize effortless, wide-eyed indolence. If Slattery's voice hadn't been so endearing, this reviewer would have been fooled into shouting "Stop smirking; get off your duff, and get a JOB!"

Costumes were done in contemporary style, with Tom's clothes appropriately becoming darker as his sins accumulated. The demonic Nick Shadow wore a wonderful suit with iridescent, flame-red highlights. Sets, while not up to David Hockney's conceit of magnified engravings, were serviceable and effective, helping to put focus on the human actions in the morality play rather than stealing the show at the characters' expense, as Hockney's seemed to do. As an in-joke for the present economy, the bread-making machine in the Aspen production was depicted by a PC, with a floppy as an input rather than a stone. Does this imply that the IPO craze in Silicon Valley is in for hard times?

In short, a commendable effort!

Record Reviews

Four-Hands from Three

DAVID CLEARY

Works for Piano Four-Hands: Arthur Berger, Harold Shapero, Virgil Thomson. David Kopp and Rodney Lister, piano. New World Records.

Copious amounts of piano four-hands music appeared during the Classical and Romantic eras. Schubert, Mozart, and Weber all contributed masterworks to the genre, and arrangements of orchestral pieces for this medium commonly graced the music racks of amateur players of the time. The 20th century saw a notable falloff in the number of such pieces written, but as *Works for Piano Four-Hand* demonstrates, composers allied with the American neoclassic school produced some choice examples that are well worth performing.

Without doubt, one of the most underrated of all such composers in this style is Harold Shapero. A precocious talent, whose splendid works received both awards and lavish praise during the 1940's, his *oeuvre* is practically unknown today. The very occasional revival of his *Symphony for Classical Orchestra* reveals the hand of a composer possessing a vibrant scoring touch, a keen sense of architectural proportion, and fluid, eloquent technique. The *Four-Hand Sonata for Piano*, written during his Harvard undergraduate days, is another piece that deserves rescue from its current state of obscurity. While possessing a polished and delightful surface sheen, this selection also shows significant depth, exhibiting a subtlety of form and rhythmic structure rarely encountered in composers at any stage of development. It's a fine listen.

Arthur Berger's mature work traces a pathway from neoclassicism to more dissonant idioms, and his excellent four-hand keyboard compositions hail from both career phases. His *Suite for Piano Four-Hands* nicely fleshes out its older formats with music whose harmonies owe a good bit to middle-period Stravinsky but whose gestural organization and formal delineation exhibit a blend of strength and sophistication that is Berger's alone. Both *Perspectives III* (originally the third movement of his *Chamber Concerto*) and *Composition for Piano Four-Hands* belong to the composer's later period, but contain a rhythmic liveliness characteristic of Berger's neoclassic days. Despite what their titles suggest, these are in fact collections of brief, contrasting movements rather than monolithic entities. But they are not willy-nilly assemblages -- both selections employ unifying characteristics that convincingly tie the smaller sections together into cohesive wholes. *Perspectives III*, for example, makes clever use of both recurring motivic cells and persistent repeated note figures in all its movements.

While holding Virgil Thomson's prose writings and intellect in the highest esteem, this reviewer has derived little pleasure from hearing Thomson's music in the past. His *Symphony no. 1* ("*Symphony on a Hymn Tune*"), arranged here for piano four-hands by John Kirkpatrick, unfortunately has not changed this perception. Sadly, the piece comes across as shallow, square, amateurish, and dull, with an unconvincing sense of direction and careless eye for structure and balance.

Pianists David Kopp and Rodney Lister perform these pieces with taste, energy, and style, exhibiting spot-on finger technique and a full, ringing tone. A listen with score in hand to the Shapero also had this critic wishing at times for closer attention to the printed dynamics and accent markings in that selection. Sound quality is generally excellent and production is fine.

DiDomenica's Rejoicings

DAVID CLEARY

Robert DiDomenica. *Three Orchestral Works.* GM.

Sometimes we encounter people who would not be considered classically beautiful -- folks with unruly hair, pock-marked faces, or asymmetric physiques -- that somehow come off as striking and alluring, exuding a powerful appeal all their own. Certain composers' music might be said to contain an analogous quality; Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, Varèse's *Octandre*, certain of C.P.E. Bach's keyboard fantasias and Conlon Nancarrow's studies for player piano are particularly notable examples. Robert DiDomenica's compositions for orchestra, three of which appear on this CD, also fall into this category.

The music on this release may certainly be construed to have its blemishes. An unsympathetic listener may find fault with DiDomenica's predilection for abrupt endings, granitic orchestration, slow unfolding, and blocky rhythms and gestures. But this critic must demur here. Clearly, this is not the work of an unskilled composer, but rather one who chooses to explore a personal means of expression. And in many ways, he succeeds; this is tough music to pigeonhole in terms of influence. The album opener *Dream Journeys* (1984), for example, sports a harmonic language that veers from Wagner (via quotes from *Tristan and Isolde* and the *Wesendonk Lieder*) to Berg and Ruggles, yet somehow does not sound like anyone else. Most interestingly, DiDomenica does this while evoking an atmosphere of low-key, musing austerity -- not the sort of feel one would automatically associate with any of this trio of earlier composers. *Variations and Soliloquies* (1988) exhibits a broader emotional palette. The two central soliloquy movements are spare and declamatory, effectively flanked by variation sets that belong to a more demonstrative, outgoing universe. And like the Wagner borrowings in *Dream Journeys*, this composition's snitch of the waltz tune from Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* somehow sounds unique -- and right.

The most immediately engaging selection on this release is his early *Symphony* (1961). This is obviously a young man's endeavor, full of brash vigor and energy; one can sense DiDomenica's glee at spinning this work out from the proto-tone-row found in the finale of Mozart's *Symphony no. 40*. But even here, the piece's craggy contours hint at this composer's more iconoclastic mature work. And formal constructs in all cases are handled in clever and unusual ways. For example, the two themes from the *Symphony's* opening sonata-form movement contrast strongly not only in melodic construction but also in tempo; the driving force of this movement consists not so much of the harmonic progression of these themes, but rather their gradual exchange of tempi. It's a fascinating take on this old format.

Sound quality and production are fine. Performances, by the Radio Philharmonic of Hanover conducted by Gunther Schuller, are excellent -- very strong and sympathetic. This disc is an unusual, but worthy listen.

Ms. Green's Keen

MARK ALBURGER

Nancy Green. *Tovey and Kodaly: Two Sonatas for Solo Cello* [Donald Francis Tovey. *Sonata in D for Solo Cello*, op. 30 (1913). Zoltán Kodály. *Sonata for Solo Cello*, op. 8 (1915). Nancy Green, Cello. JRI Recordings.

Nancy Green and Frederick Moyer. *Schumann, Mendelssohn, Debussy, Britten* [Claude Debussy. *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1915). Benjamin Britten. *Sonata in C*, op. 65 (1961)]. Nancy Green, cello; Frederick Moyer, piano. JRI Recordings.

A theme of cellist Nancy Green's two fine JRI Recordings could almost be the second decade of the 20th century, discounting Benjamin Britten's work, which, if inverted could read 1916 instead of 1961. Nevertheless, Green, aptly paired with pianist Frederick Moyer in two of the tour selections discussed here, offers three intriguing works that date within roughly a span of three years in relation one another.

But what contrasts! Donald Francis Tovey's *Sonata in D for Solo Cello*, op. 3, could hardly be different from Zoltán Kodály's *Sonata for Solo Cello*, op. 8 (1915) and still be for the same unaccompanied instrument. Tovey takes his cues from Bach and Brahms, and though these inspirations are admirably updated, maintains his reputation as primarily a writer on music, rather than an composer of first rank. His three-movement sonata is replete with virtuosity, all carried off in a first-rate fashion by Green, but it remains more an interesting homage, right through the finale "Passacaglia" than an arresting burst of creativity. The same cannot be said of the Kodály.

Unquestionably, the virtuosity is still here, but the passion and earthiness are completely unlike the previous. Green captures the excitement of the music. And while Kodály is no less than Tovey inspired by previous models -- in this case, of course, Hungarian folk music -- the results are strikingly original and engaging.

Claude Debussy's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, dating from the exact year of the Kodály, is again in marked contrast. Again there is virtuosity, but instead of Hungarian folkishness we have French refinement. Instead of Tovey's baroque and romantic allusions, we find Debussy's antique and contemporary enthusiasms. A certain austerity and anger mix into the beauty in this musical response to German political aggression. Debussy called it "Pierrot angry at the moon" -- *Pierrot Colère Lunaire*? Benjamin Britten, here with touches of Bartók and Shostakovich fits smoothly into this repertory. One has always suspected that, aside from a few obligatory modern touches, this composer would have been as happy writing in 1916 and 61 anyway. The English composer crafts his impressively striking and rhapsodic *Sonata in C* in five movements, and Green carries off her role as expertly as the music's dedicatee, Mstislav Rostropovich. Moyer is similarly up to the challenges throughout.

A Georgian's Testimony: Proclamations of Grandeur

SCOTT UNREIN

Giya Kancheli. *Trauerfarbenes Land*. Radio
Symphonieorchester Wien, conducted by Dennis Russell
Davies. ECM New Series 1646

As one who has held a long affection for the intensely felt music that has come from Russia and her now new satellites, I always suspected (or at least hoped) that this region had not seen the end of its output with the genius of Stravinsky. My recent introduction to the Georgian émigré Giya Kancheli has assuaged my fears.

Gaining popularity in the Autumn of his career, it is a pleasure to see that while this composer is able to live comfortably in the shadow of Russian music, he retains a stature of self-expression that will one day add to this impressive monolith. An attentive listening to the two large-scale works on this disc will recall daydreams of climbing Mt. Fuji and a resurrection of the architectural whimsy of Frank Lloyd Wright. It is art on a grand scale, music that fills an unfelt void in the soul. Yet for all of its proclamations of grandeur it remains some of the most delicate music I have encountered.

This disc is easy to listen to because there are two choices, track one or track two, and they are both incredible works of quiet genius. The first ...à la *Duduki* is a fantasia on repose and action, recollection and impetus. One has the sense that Kancheli is unapologetically composing his thought process down as music.

To be sure, *Duduki* is theatrical and the amateur listener would be quick to say, 'Hey, this would be great in a movie!', but that is facile and Kancheli is aiming at something much more profound. This is music that seems to have a natural connection to the geography and culture. With his suspended sound environment, catching us up in his haunting maze of ninth chords, we hear the soul of the great continent singing through. Just as we are lulled into his tranquil world, he jerks us straight up out of the dream with great bombastic blasts from the tutti ensemble. It is in that moment that I find myself totally embraced by this music. One cannot help but feel the suffering that these people have known throughout the ages.

The second piece on the disc is the title track *Trauerfarbenes Land* (*Land that Wears Mourning*). This work is a meditation on Kancheli's reaction toward the turmoil that was created for his people in the Georgian civil war; even as he distanced himself from his homeland. The first track while profound indeed, almost seems a prelude to the pain expressed in this second piece. *Trauerfarbenes Land* is a profoundly sad musical poem that tears at the heart right from the opening proclamation of inevitable pain and death by the low brass. Nothing is lost on the listener that bleak reality is knocking that the door for these poor people. This is not a work of allusions to the condition of a people. This is expressionistic fervor splayed out on the canvas of an orchestra. Very appropriately, the program notes contain a running narrative, which align the structure of the work to excerpts from Camus's *The Stranger*. The most appropriate quote I found are the opening lines of the novel:

Mother died today. Or, maybe yesterday. I can't be sure. The telegram says: 'Your mother passed away. Funeral tomorrow. Deep sympathy.' Which leaves the matter doubtful; it could have been yesterday.

Trauerfarbenes Land is structured similarly to *Duduki* with its suspended sonic landscapes that are punctuated with periodic insistent outbursts from the full ensemble. This is one of the recognizable hallmarks of Kancheli's work and while it could become obvious or overused and gratuitous, he manages to walk the tightrope of artistic license that allows him to pull it off beautifully.

Entrancing are the great black and white photographs on the CD packaging. Given the often-sad state of 'classical' packaging, these bleak pictures of the countryside are eerily wonderful at matching the tapestry of sound coming out of my speakers. The bleak and wintry world that Kancheli is a product of could not be made clearer with this presentation. ECM's design team should be proud of this effort.

Commendable are the forces that were brought together on this project. The conducting by Dennis Russell Davies is as ruthlessly passionate as something Bernstein might have come up with, but is as controlled as a gemcutter and the conductor never allows the orchestra out of his reigns. It is evident that Davies truly has an understanding of what this music is about and the performance has a focus that makes it evident. Also a tip of the hat to the Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra; I have found that these workhorse orchestras are often underrated and lately have impressed me with the quality of their recordings.

One is left in a lurch with this entire disc and it commands your attention when listening. There is a danger in listening to this kind of music without a receptive state of mind. The seventy minutes can easily wash over you and leave you unaffected and likely unimpressed by what has occurred. This music is epic so make your listening of it an epic experience. If you are adventurous, turn off the heat in the room, set a hard straight backed chair in the middle and close your eyes as you are transported to a lowly cottage in Eastern Europe. Clear out plenty of time to get a few full listenings in. Now also may be the time to upgrade your speakers and amplifier; we are talking about Russians after all!

Glory, Lauten, and Honor

MARK ALBURGER

Elodie Lauten. *The Deux Ex Machina Cycle*. Andrew Bolotowsky, flutes; Meredith Borden, soprano; Thomas Buckner, baritone; David Cerruti, viola d'amore; Elaine Comparone, harpsichord; Mary Hurlbut, soprano. 4 Tay.

Elodie Lauten's *The Deux Ex Machina Cycle* (4 Tay) has been playing for two days in the office. It is a grand work that we are likely to return to again and again, combining post-minimal and pre-classical musics into a unified, spiritual whole, all colored by the use of the 18th-century Velotti temperament. The composition is in two large sections -- *Agartha or the Realm of Emotion and Experience* and *Akasha or the Realm of the Unknowable*. The first begins in "The Living Temple" with a haunting rising vocal modal melody doubled in flute. The patterned accompaniments are much in the Philip Glass stasis vein as are the chromatically related chant-like series of duo vocals (if Stravinsky wrote "Igorian Chant" at times, here we have the Philipian variety), and indeed throughout Lauten takes cues from the composer of *Akhmaten* rather more than from Steve Reich. Unquestionably Lauten's own is this fascinating combination of baroque and earlier musics with contemporary concerns. "Answer" has pulsations that could come from Adams's *The Death of Klinghoffer* brought together with little instrumental call-and-response lines that would not be out of place in a little updated J.S. Bach work. Here and elsewhere Lauten finds smooth and intriguing concordances of the new and old. The rising scales, chords, and cadences of "Verlaine Variations" sound timelessly beautiful. Andrew Bolotowsky's baroque flauting in "Orange" seems positively medieval or otherworldly. "Fear" has the pompousness of a French overture and the ecstasy of an ostinatic ritual. Texts are drawn from writings of Carnahan, Hall, Karas, Pascal, Rilke, Verlaine, and the composer, in addition to vocal phonemes common to many languages. Lauten turns all to gold. The two-CD set was recorded live at Merkin Hall on October 30, 1997. The performances are well-nigh miraculous (from such bright lights as baritone Thomas Buckner and sopranos Meredith Borden and Mary Hurlbut) with only one shrill high vocal and several glitchy instrumental passages over the space of about an hour and a half.

Peyton's Places

DAVID CLEARY

Malcolm Peyton. *Vocal Music*. Centaur.

Malcolm Peyton. *String Quartet. Songs from Walt Whitman*. Centaur.

The music of Malcolm Peyton, who for many years has been chair of the composition department at the New England Conservatory, unfortunately remains a well-kept secret in the new music community. The release of these two CD's a few years ago finally gave listeners a chance to experience a good sampling of this worthy musician's portfolio. His style is unusual for an East Coast composer of advanced age: dissonant but not serially organized, based on scale constructs but not triadic or pandiatonic in sound. Hints of Bartók, Stravinsky, Ives, Carter, and free-atonal Schoenberg can be detected, but Peyton transcends these influences to create a strongly personal sound world.

The composer's predilection for writing song cycles is brought to the fore in the earlier of these two releases. What strikes this reviewer is the music's expressive variety, able to effectively mirror the divergent feel of each poet's world yet still remain stylistically consistent. T. Sturge Moore's lush verse belongs to the late Romantic school of Gerard Manley Hopkins and Thomas Hardy. Peyton's colorful *Songs from T. Sturge Moore* (scored for soprano and seven players) evokes a sagacious, verdant, sometimes world-weary quality, not the nightmare distress sometimes associated with music in this more dissonant style. *Sonnets from John Donne* is vivid, dynamic, by turns angry and despairing, wonderfully bolstering that author's intensely personal religious-based poetry and assisted in no small measure by the piece's unusual instrumentation of baritone voice, low brass, and deep strings.

Stravinsky's shadow can be felt in the album closer *Four Songs from William Shakespeare*, but Peyton's music (for soprano, strings, and clarinets) belongs to a warmer, less detached universe.

The newer CD shows links to its voice-dominated predecessor with *Songs from Walt Whitman*. It's his most Ivesian selection, containing spiky yet thoroughly American-sounding piano textures and scored for soprano and piano with a late-appearing violin part in best *Concord Sonata* tradition. But there the similarities end; Peyton's music expresses an urbane and polished, yet ardent warmth rarely encountered in the older master's writing. The purely instrumental selections here co-opt traditional formats, but use them as a basis for its composer's imagination, not as rigid molds. His *String Quartet* runs the gamut from the finale's variegated fantasia, which artfully fuses elements of rondo, variations, and fugue, to the first movement's personal wrinkle on sonata form. It's a highly spirited piece, hale and energetic.

Conversely, *Suite Nocturnale* for solo viola is a contemplative entity exhibiting a dusky, otherworldly quality. And rather than drawing on traditional allemandes and gigues, this suite consists of an elegy, march, fantasy, and lullaby -- genre pieces that do not present ossified structures with potential to hamstring the imagination -- and Peyton's versions clearly revel in this freedom.

Performances are first-class on both discs, featuring stellar efforts from the Dinosaur Annex Ensemble, Borromeo String Quartet, violist Jonathan Bagg, baritone David Ripley, and sopranos Jennifer Ayers, D'Anna Fortunato, and Barbara Winchester. Sound quality and editing are professional all the way. One hopes that the release of these two fine CD's will help pull Peyton's music from its undeserved state of obscurity.

Schwartz Solstice

DAVID CLEARY

Elliott Schwartz. *Equinox*. New World Records.

A colleague of this critic once said that what new music needs most is an analogue to Brahms -- someone able to gather up the widely scattered tendrils of a highly fractured 100 years and create a personal style from them. If this CD is any indication, Elliott Schwartz is making a most persuasive bid to be that Brahms.

This excellent release is distinguished by music that effortlessly includes a plethora of approaches, styles, and techniques into one polished and ingenious sound world. The piano trio *Tapestry*, for example, contains everything from triadic quotes and aleatoric techniques to densely dissonant textures and crystalline polytonal writing. But this wild mix sounds wonderfully whole when played; Schwartz's special gift is his discovery of a convincing way to incorporate and juxtapose these elements—something that seems to elude many other composers who try the same thing. Formal delineation is loose and unusual, yet persuasive. And best of all, the music exudes a powerful and memorable personality; many pieces have been written that attempt to portray the multifaceted emotions that surround the Holocaust (this critic has reviewed one and heard others), and few can match the flawless mix of warmth, passion, forcefulness, and soul of this splendid work.

Other pieces explore different worlds. *Rows Garden*, for wind quintet, bases its pitch material on twelve-tone sets from various works of Schoenberg and his students, employing them in a more frankly melodic manner. The effect is anything but leaden, however. Schwartz's piece remembers that these past Viennese masters were about sound and music—not numbers and textbooks—while forging a sonic milieu audibly different from theirs. The mixed trio *Vienna Dreams* is expertly stitched together from snatches of Brahms, Mozart, and Schubert, a worthy rival to the third movement of Luciano Berio's *Sinfonia*, the finale of Donald Martino's *From the Other Side*, and similar works in this vein. The concept of *soggetto cavato* (deriving melodic material from a word or name) is nicely updated in the bassoon/piano duo *Phoenix*. And the orchestral title track perfectly incorporates the burnished scoring of early 20th-century opulent-era scores (and their film soundtrack cousins) into more progressive compositional techniques.

Performances are excellent; the JeugdOrkest Nederland (Roland Kieft, conductor), Prometheus Chamber Players, Fibonacci Sequence, *Tapestry's* trio (Renee Jolles, Brent Samuel, and Blair McMillen), bassoonist Charles Kaufmann, and the composer at the piano all acquit themselves handsomely. Production is excellent. *Phoenix* comes off sounding rather dry, but otherwise sound quality is fine. This is a superb release, among the strongest this critic has heard this year, and an essential listen.

The Taking of the World by Sturm

MARK ALBURGER

Hans Sturm. *Fireflight: Sun Suite* [*Sun Suite. Smoke and Fire*]. Mimmi Fulmer, soprano; Elizabeth Falconer, koto and bass koto; Hans Sturm, double bass; Dane Richeson, percussion. Innova.

Bassist-composer Hans Sturm stirs up a torrent of creative virtuosity in his recent Innova release *Fireflight: Sun Suite*. The jazz/new-music crossover album is permeated by the haunting sounds of Elizabeth Falconer's traditional and progressive koto playing, which is well-nigh in the same league as Miya Masaoka's (in one stretch Falconer sounds remarkably like an oud). Mimmi Fulmer is the glowing and smoky soprano, and she sings wonderfully in consort with the composer and innovative drummer Dane Richeson, who is comfortable with all manner of percussion East and West. The final two cuts, *Smoke and Fire*, add the versatility of tenor saxophonist and bass clarinetist Les Thimming to the mix.

Book Reviews

America's "Royal" College of Music

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

Andrea Olmstead. *Juilliard: A History*. Urbana: University of Illinois, 1999. 368 pp, \$37.50

For everyone who needs to know, Juilliard has been for the past century the most successful arts college in any art in America. One convenient measure of its success is the number of distinguished alumni in various areas, including in music alone: Richard Rodgers, Van Cliburn, Billy Strayhorn, Philip Glass, James Levine, Miles Davis, Tito Puente, Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Paul Zukofsky, Peter Schickele, and Midori, which is to say classical composers along with jazz and Broadway greats, avant-garde instrumentalists along with concert-hall superstars and comic geniuses. This is a "Royal College" in the British tradition, however created and sustained in the American way without the imprimatur of any monarch.

Not only is Juilliard's cumulative success uniquely impressive, but it has also been remarkably continuous. Art colleges tend to be more volatile than liberal arts universities, as the departure or arrival of a few key people can drastically change educational effect. For instance, the graduate art school at Yale in the early 1960s produced many prominent painters and sculptors but fewer before or since. One of the great American arts incubators, Black Mountain, simply disappeared in 1957, after only 25 years. At later points in its history, Juilliard added a dance school and then a drama school which benefited from the music school's reputation but have never been so pre-eminent. Incidentally, Juilliard is pronounced Jewlie-yard and spelled with I's on both sides of the double L. I wish I had a penny for every time it appears in print as "Julliard" (which would, of course, be pronounced jul-e-ard).

Why has Juilliard been so continuously fortunate? That should be the question answered by Andrea Olmstead's new book. Wanting to write an institutional history, rather than an art history, she addresses the question only peripherally. Focussing mostly upon administrators and trustees, she misses much of the real action in an arts college--what occurs between teacher and students and among students. Compare Juilliard on this count with Mary Emma Harris's *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (1987), which by focusing upon teachers and students more successfully accounts for how innovation and excellence happened. Indicatively, Olmstead interviewed remarkably few sometime students and rarely quotes from their experience. Instead, she includes previously published anecdotes by Miles Davis and the choreographer Paul Taylor that suggested, at least to me, another Juilliard book that might have been livelier.

As at Ivy League universities, many Juilliard students were brighter than the teachers. So stronger ones sometimes taught one another. In a memoir initially published in my book *Writings on Glass* (1997), the composer Philip Glass recalls how in the late 1950s he and the aspiring opera singer Shirley Verrett separately hired another student, Albert Fine, only slightly older, to give them private lessons. As the most adept composition student in Glass's years, Peter Schickele, later noted for "discovering" P.D.Q. Bach, was invited to teach his colleagues in a course that Glass remembers among his best. A decade later, Juilliard reinforced its faculty with some of the brainiest and most influential composers/teachers in America -- Roger Sessions, Milton Babbitt, and, less frequently, Elliott Carter.

One factor accounting for the school's success was its location in Manhattan; but as the city housed other music schools, some of them more conveniently located near midtown performance venues, why has Juilliard remained so preeminent? Was it simply that Juilliard's reputation as the best music school made it attractive to successive generations of the most ambitious teenage musicians from around the world? Olmstead says in passing that the school never gave faculty tenure or imposed mandatory retirement upon them without acknowledging the possible significance of those administrative departures.

Some teachers had power in lieu of influence. Glass recalls how his professors often sat on secret juries meeting in New York, such as those selecting Fulbright scholars to go abroad, and could thus advise him with authority on applying, accepting, and postponing fellowships. More importantly perhaps, the aspiring composers could get equally ambitious instrumentalists to play their freshest scores, so that, as Glass remembers, many years would pass before he would hear his own compositions as often.

This tradition of eager excellence continues. As an avid New York concertgoer, I see this quality less in student composers than in Juilliard instrumentalists. For those of us who prefer high modern music to slick classical or "postmodern." Juilliard concerts rank among the best in New York City; and for reasons that I think have something to do with union rules and the stipulations of beneficence, these performances are deliciously free -- that's FREE. (And also under-advertised and thus rarely reviewed.) Programming devoid of commercial needs can also be delightfully free of transient "political" considerations that corrupt so much cultural activity in America today.

The annual Juilliard *Focus* series a few years ago was devoted exclusively to the most severe serial composer, Anton Webern, whose works are rarely heard elsewhere. For several concerts on nearly successive nights in late January, I experienced this Viennese master's short, spare, difficult pieces, mostly for small ensembles, that I'd not heard live before or since. Groups of brilliantly proficient students appeared one after another to play for a few minutes at a time, with slight repetition of personnel. So rich is the Juilliard program in training so many superior instrumentalists that the cumulative effect was awesome. In sum, these Juilliard Webern concerts rank in my memory about the great musical experiences of the past decade. No other institution could have done it; no other will. Among the regulars in the audience were, indicatively, the composers Babbitt and Carter.

This past season, Bruce Brubaker who currently directs the Juilliard piano department, sponsored *Piano Century*, which was his collective name for eleven concerts from September to April. Selecting over 100 pieces to distribute to his 110 piano students, he chose for soloists many modern classics rarely heard live, not only because many professional recitalists find them difficult, but because producers would advise against programming them: Alban Berg's *Sonata* (1908), Sofia Gubaidulina's *Chaconne* (1962), Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück X* (1956), Pierre Boulez's *Sonata No. 1* (1946), Carl Ruggles's *Evocation No. 1* (1937), Roger Sessions' *Sonata No. 3* (1964), Stefan Wolpe's *Passacaglia* (1936), Arnold Schoenberg's *Klavierstücke*, op. 23 (1920/1923), and Charles Ives' *Sonata No. 1* (1902/1909).

The general quality of the many individual performances reflected the diligent effort by ambitious students who knew they had to spend the time and effort necessary to give the best performance possible in a situation where every other pianist on that stage was also trying to be as good as he or she could be. This is big league "spring training" of a sort rarely found in American academia and incidentally one of those elements, ignored by Olmstead, that continue to make Juilliard so good. You can imagine how the impression of such concerts upon yet younger musicians must be at once chilling and challenging, as only those who imagine themselves performing at this level would want to come to Juilliard--dilettantes need not apply.

As a Juilliard alumna married to a Juilliard alum, the composer Larry Bell, Andrea Olmstead probably knows at first hand more about Juilliard's ways than she tells here. Initially a violinist and then a musicologist-without-doctorate, whose previous books were about Roger Sessions, she writes here, curiously, less about musicians and composers than administrators. The charm of her book, which will be popular initially with Juilliard alumni, is explaining how the mountain was built. Because of the concentration on apparatus, she is less sure at accounting for why it stays so high.

Composers Writing in a Great American Tradition

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

Arcana: Musicians on Music. Ed. John Zorn. New York: Granary Books/Hips Road. 379 pp., \$24.95.

Musicians have always been more predisposed than visual artists, say, to write about their purposes with honesty and clarity. In this respect, John Zorn's *Arcana* falls into a distinguished line that includes Henry Cowell's *American Composers on American Music: A Symposium* (1933), Gilbert Chase's *The American Composer Speaks* (1966), and Elliott Schwartz and Barney Childs' *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (1967), all of which are important and influential anthologies.

The first rule of *Arcana* is that none of its contributors appeared in those earlier books, for this is, indeed, a younger generation speaking--a generation that is, like its editor, mostly approaching fifty. Among the better-known contributors are Scott Johnson, Frances-Marie Uitti, Bill Frissel, Fred Frith, Lois V. Vierk, Peter Garland, and George E. Lewis.

The hidden theme of this book, barely acknowledged, is that the decades-old distinctions of academic vs. independent, uptown vs. downtown, remain valid, all prattle to the contrary notwithstanding. Only three of the contributors are identified as academics in biographical notes that are more elaborate than most. (And neither of these two teaches in New York.)

Second, the *Arcana* composers produce a music that has little to do with serialism and tonality, among other principles still taught in the schools.

Third, the tradition of good composers' writing, in an attractive variety of prose styles, continues in America. Books like *Arcana*, as well as the earlier anthologies, are important not only in establishing critical issues but in introducing readers to unfamiliar acoustic experience.

From the scholarly perspective, the most valuable essay here is John Schott's appreciation of complexity in John Coltrane. After acknowledging the jazzman's intensive study of Nicolas Slonimsky's *Thesaurus of Musical Scales and Patterns*, Schott reprints an extraordinary chart purportedly drawn by Coltrane in 1960 and given to Yusef Lateef, who later reprinted it.

In Schott's interpretation, "The diagram juxtaposes the two whole-tone collections five times around the perimeters of a circle. Lines are drawn connecting each tone to its tritone across the circle, bisecting the circle 30 times. Every fifth tone is enclosed in a box to show the circle of fifths. Each member of the circle of fifths is also enclosed with its upper and lower neighbors in two ovals," etc. While acknowledging the metaphysical implications of the diagram's configuration, Schott's theme is that Coltrane wanted to realize within an improvisatory context the intensity of overlapping interconnections typical of serial composition.

As always with anthologies of living artists, a skeptical reader wonders why some people were not included here. I can think of several others similarly situated whose thoughts I would like to read. Since Zorn as a performing musician and record producer not known for catholic enthusiasm, I could imagine a sequel with a different group of composers, likewise middle-aged, not to mention a third anthology from those a generation younger.

Arcana also benefits from thoughtful design. For one index, consider that footnotes are put not at the end of the book or at the bottom of the book's page, as is customary, but directly adjacent to the reference, in indented white-space. Instead of looking to the bottom of the page or, worse, flipping to the back of the book, the reader wanting a reference merely follows his or her eyes across the page. Why is it that this design innovation for academic crediting should appear in a book published not by a university press but an art-book dealer?

In several ways, *Arcana* is richly thoughtful and mostly readable.

Calendar

September 7

Acustica International SF 2000. Bill Fontana. Refusalon, San Francisco, CA. Festival through September 30.

September 9

Tan Dun's *Water Passion after St. Matthew*. Stuttgart, Germany.

September 10

Ellington Society presents a program on Duke Ellington's *The River*. Ft. Mason Center, San Francisco, CA.

Benefit Concert with Carolyn Hawley. Saturday Afternoon Club, Ukiah, CA.

Flutist Fenwick Smith. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

September 12

Composer Spotlight. Lynette Westendorf. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

September 15

Discovering the Future by Viewing the Past: Remembering Stefan Wolpe and Eduard Steuermann. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

September 18

New Music Connoisseur Awards, honoring Cheryl Seltzer, Joel Sachs, Leighton Kerner, Otto Luening, and Laurie Hudicek, with Jack Beeson and Stephen Perillo. Frederick Loewe Theater, New York University, New York, NY.

September 21

Thomson's *Four Saints in Three Acts*. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA. Through September 24.

September 22

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Waxman's *Carmen Fantasy* and Ravel's *Bolero*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Repeated September 23.

September 23

Acustica International SF 2000. Intermedia Program. Sani's *Water Memories*, Riessler's *Fever*, Curran's *Erat Verbum John* (dedicated to John Cage), and Cage's *Roaratorio: An Irish Circus on Finnegans Wake*. Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA

Acustica International SF 2000. Tom Marioni and John Cage. Beer Drinking Sonata (with percussion) for 13 players, and 4'33". Hawthorne Lane Bar, San Francisco, CA

Moore's *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA.

Zoom: Composers Close Up. David Lang's *Psalms Without Words*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

September 24

Acustica International SF 2000. Audio-Vision Program, including Thom's *Ear Circus Number One* and the Henry/Ruttman *La Ville / Die Stadt. Metropolis Paris - Berlin*. Dolby Laboratories, San Francisco, CA

Acustica International SF 2000. Sounds of All Kinds from DADA to NOW, including the Tzara / Huelsenbeck / Janko *L'admiral cherche une maison à louer*, Kandisky's *Klänge / Sounds*, and Amirkhanian's *Son of Metropolis San Francisco*. San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA

Cellist Alexei Romanenko. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

September 25

104th anniversary of the birth of Roberto Gerhard.

94th anniversary of the birth of Dmitri Shostakovich. Russia.

Two Generations of the Avant-Garde. Wolff's *Trio for Violin, Piano, and Percussion* and Zorn's *Music for Children and Le Momo*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

September 26

Flutist Paula Robison. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

September 27

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 4* and Copland's *Symphony No. 3*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through September 30.

American Composers Forum: Collaborations, with Lisa Bielawa. The Kitchen, New York, NY. Repeated September 28.

Chronicle

July 1

American Composers Forum Meeting, with Jennifer Higdon. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

July 3

Composer Spotlight: Musical Languages, with Chen Yi and Robert Sirota. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

July 4

Premiere of Higdon's *Freedom Dreams*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

July 7

89th birthday of Gian Carlo Menotti.

Weisgall's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (after Pirandello). McCarter Theater Center for the Performing Arts, Princeton, NJ. "Pirandello's remarkable 1921 play shatters the boundaries between illusion and reality by boldly manipulating the play-within-a-play convention. A company of actors is rehearsing *Mixing It Up*, a new play that none of them like, by this pretentious modern playwright named Pirandello. . . . In creating an operatic version of Pirandello's play, Weisgall and his librettist, Denis Johnston, an Irish playwright, turned the actors into singers who were rehearsing an overly complex new opera, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, by Hugo Weisgall. . . . Weisgall's score is brilliant and haunting. Born in Bohemia, the son of a cantor, he immigrated as a child to the United States, where he received his musical education. Yet his works are imbued with Central European Expressionism. Weisgall ably fashioned the pungent atonal and thickly chromatic elements of his harmonic language into music of gritty power and affecting lyricism. Though not conventionally tuneful, the score is richly melodic" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 7/11/00].

Summargarden. New Juilliard Ensemble. Sculpture Garden, Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY.

July 8

Centenary of the birth of George Antheil.

July 9

85th birthday of David Diamond.

July 11

U.S. premiere of Louis Andriessen's *Writing to Vermeer* (libretto by Peter Greenaway). New York State Theater, New York, NY. Through July 15. "[The] music . . . is very beautiful. There is a sense of song in Mr. Andriessen's writing that for post-tonal composers has become both anachronism and anathema. The lines are long, sinuous and gracefully balanced. The composer has also transformed the sound and the style of early instruments. The songs and dances of Sweelinck take on the Day-Glo of electronic treatment or become warped and out of tune through the twist of a dial. History is accented by synthesized explosions or sharp thrusts" [Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*, 7/13/00].

Bang on a Can, with music by Steve Reich, including *New York Counterpoint*, *Four Organs*, and *Clapping Music*. National Design Museum, New York, NY.

Messiaen Celebration. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "[U]nlike Mahler's [music], [Messiaen's] represents withdrawal from this world" [James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*, 7/13/00].

Paul Taub and Jeffrey Gilliam in Schulhoff's *Sonata for Flute and Piano*. PONCHO Concert Hall, Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, WA.

July 12

Louis Andriessen and Peter Greenaway discuss *Writing to Vermeer*. Lincoln Center, New York, NY.

Asko/Schoenberg Ensembles and Vox Vocal Ensemble in Messiaen's *Trois petites liturgies de la Presence Divine*, Varèse's *Deserts*, and the U.S. premiere of Ford's *Salome Fast*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Osiris Trio in music of Frank Martin. Frick Collection, New York, NY.

July 13

49th anniversary of the death of Arnold Schoenberg.

San Francisco Symphony and Chorus in Orff's *Carmina Burana*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Repeated July 16.

Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir*, the first all-electronic performance of Riley's *In C*, Crumb's *Black Angels*, and the world premiere of S. Johnson's *Worth Having*, with Robert Moog, Donald Buchla, and Pauline Oliveros. New York Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY. "Like people on a bus, some of the musicians [in *In C*] stood out because they were louder or more brightly dressed, in terms of sound, while others were part of the background, contributing to the often dense, rich harmonies and the playtime atmosphere" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 7/15/00].

July 14

Sarah Cahill performs Antheil's *Jazz Sonata* and Ornstein's *Suicide in an Airplane, Impressions of the Thames, Solitude, A Morning in the Woods*, and *Rendezvous at the Lake*. Old First Church, San Francisco, CA.

St. Lawrence String Quartet in R. Murray Schafer's *String Quartet No. 6*. Campbell Recital Hall, Braun Music Center, Stanford University, CA.

Varèse's *Poème électronique* (1958), Stockhausen's *Gesänge der Junglinge* (1959), Xenakis's *Bohór* (1962), Smalley's *Vortex*, Barrière's *Chreod*, and Lansky's *Night Traffic*. Columbia University, New York, NY. "[T]hough Varèse's work can in no way be called a 12-tone composition, its montage of sounds assiduously avoids tonal references and even regular pulse. What gives it shape is Varèse's sense of aural architecture. Also, unlike so many works that came in its wake, long episodes of *Poème Électronique* are strikingly quiet, restrained and gentle. . . . [W]hen a faint, intact snippet of a sung melodic line comes through the rustling collage of sounds [of *Gesänge der Junglinge*] the effect is deeply touching. Paul Lansky's *Night Traffic* (1990) could not have been more different. Mr. Lansky relishes tonality and consonance. So here the recorded sound of whooshing cars passing by on highways is presented against a backdrop of sustained, sweetly angelic tonal chords. Though pretty, it sounds like some tape of New Age music for a group meditation. . . . [T]he fascinating sources [Xenakis] drew from [in *Bohór*] to create this sound montage included a Laotian mouth organ, Iraqi bell-trimmed jewelry and Hindu chant. Somehow the waves of sound that flow by, crackling with static and buzz, seem organic" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 7/17/00].

July 15

Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 5*, the premiere of Mesina's *String Quartet for 4 Turntables*, the X-Ecutioners' *Deconstructing the Blues on Four Turntables*, and Kolabz's *William Tell Overture*. New York Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY. "It may be an overstatement to say, as the program notes . . . do, that electronic music has been marginalized in the world of art music. As the festival itself is demonstrating . . . a substantial body of electronic works have attained classic status [Composers'] work is no more marginal than most other currents of contemporary concert music, and composers like Steve Reich have had considerable success with electronic pieces. That said, electronic music has thrived better in pop, probably because pop is electronic [these days] by nature. . . . [Pop recordings] have been electronic music productions in the truest sense since at least the 1950's. . . . [Turntable art] is a way of making music from music already made, and detractors might regard that as cannibalistic. But watching the performers . . . particularly the X-Ecutioners, one developed a respect for the musicality, imagination and sheer hand-ear coordination involved. Yet one thing the program showed was that there is nothing new under the sun. The curtain raiser was John Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 5*, a 1952 work to be performed with samples 'from any 42 phonograph records.' George Steel conducted an ensemble of four D.J.'s . . . in three versions of the piece, one using jazz recordings (as Cage did), one using classic electronic music recordings and one using hip-hop rhythms. Curiously the most 'authentic' reading, the one using jazz discs, was the least effective. As a novelty offering, Sugarcuts and Fifth Platoon . . . presented a nominally recognizable version of Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, prefaced by an amusing rhythmic jam. And there was an ambitious hybrid of conventional composition and turntablism, Raz Mesina's *String Quartet for Four Turntables*. The string instruments were recorded and the recordings (on LP) were manipulated. . . . The backbone of [*Deconstructing*], created for the festival, was an ensemble section full of complex crossrhythms. But its heart was a string of virtuosic and often choreographed solo turns" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 7/18/00].

Pamela Z. Zeum, San Francisco, CA.

July 16

Villa-Lobos Chamber Orchestra. Old First Church, San Francisco, CA.

July 18

What Is It Like to be a Bat?, with Kitty Brazelton. Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, New York, NY.

Meredith Monk's *Songs from the Hill* and *Music for Voice and Piano*, with the composer and Nurit Tilles. New York Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY. "Monk everywhere impressed with her versatility and imagination" [James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*, 8/20/00].

4-D: A Concert of Digital Music and Video. Meany Theater, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

July 19

Electronic Evolution. Music From the Ether: A Celebration of the Theremin, including Shore's *Ed Wood Suite* and Rosza's *Spellbound*. Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY.

July 20

Goodyear's *Variations on "Eleanor Rigby."* Katonah, NY.

U.S. premiere of Branca's *Symphony No. 12*. The Anchorage, New York, NY.

July 21

Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*. Lincoln Center, New York, NY. "If the rhythm's weird, it must be Messiaen. There is no stopping Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony* . . . One moment the solo pianist is playing a slow, sultry rising arpeggio, so that you think you must just have missed a song by Frank Sinatra, and then all of a sudden a group of percussionists is pattering out arcane rhythms. No sooner has the score's electronic instrument, an ondes martenot, lent its weird voice to processional music with an Asian twist than trumpets and full orchestral strings come rampaging in with one of the work's exultant, yelping love themes. The mix is absurd, impossible and bang on. It works" [Paul Griffiths, The New York Times, 7/24/00].

Meredith Monk's *Atlas* (selections), *Quarry*, *American Archeology*, and *Facing North*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "Her sounds range from deep-set bogeyman chest tones to chirping falsetto high notes. She can bend notes and inflect a phrase with the raspy poignancy of a great blues singer . . . And like a Tibetan Buddhist chanter, she can sustain a steady low tone while shaping a floating counter melody in soft, eerie high harmonics. [Physical] movements . . . are as much a part of the music as sound. A member of her vocal ensemble, Theo Bleckmann, joined her for three short, fanciful songs from *Facing North*. Here the two singers literally faced off, trading pitches and singing in parallel intervals, sometimes sputtering syllables like slapstick comics. This is music that celebrates acting ridiculous, that turns slapping your knees and singing 'Hey, hey, ha, ha, ho, ho' into contemporary art. . . . The vocal writing [in *Atlas*] is often complex and intriguing, with astringently dissonant sustained harmonies and busy contrapuntal writing" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 7/24/00].

John Zorn and Masada. Meany Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

July 22

CCRMA presents *Concert Under the Stars*. Knoll Courtyard, Stanford University, CA.

July 23

Meredith Monk's *Our Lady of Late*, *Turtle Dreams*, and *Dolmen Music*. LaGuardia Concert Hall, New York, NY.

July 24

Absolute Ensemble in Reich's *Clapping Music*, Daugherty's *Dead Elvis*, and Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat*. Joe's Pub, New York, NY. "[Th]e sounds of rhythmic clapping could be heard from the lobby. IT was the members of the ensemble as they waked in performing Steve Reich's *Clapping Music*, a mesmerizing wave of complex, pulsating rhythmic patterns Daugherty's *Dead Elvis* [is] a joyously raucous piece that mixes tidbits of Presley tunes, event the pop standards he sang like 'It's Now or Never,' together with the funereal *Dies Irae* chant motif, scored for screeching brass and winds, rock drums and an earthy acoustic bass. The King himself is represented by a wailing solo bassoon, here performed by David Rozenblatt as an Elvis impersonator prancing about the pub floor in glittery Las Vegas duds. . . . [T]he ensemble made its one miscalculation . . . performing the 'Petit Chorale' . . . in an arrangement that included pummeling rock drumming. Performed straight, this poignant work would have provided a welcome moment of repose. Stravinsky can hold his own in any new-music evening. Later, the tango, waltz, and ragtime dances . . . were performed essentially as written, and in this context the music seemed more bold and dangerous than ever" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 7/28/00].

July 25

Aspen Percussion Ensemble in Ginastera's *Cantata para América mágica*, Byrne's *Ava* from *The Forest*, Glass's *Train to Sao Paolo* from *Powaqqatsi*, Sejourne's *Martian Tribes*, De May's *Table Music*, Christopher Rouse's *Bonham*, and Fitkin's *Hook*. Harris Concert Hall, Aspen, CO.

July 28

Pantar. Society for Ethical Culture, New York, NY. "The Indo-Caribbeans of Trinidad, descendants of indentured workers brought from India from 1838 to 1917, have had a fairly occluded history; even those who don't speak Hindi have to a great degree maintained and protected their own Indian culture within the island. . . . [The] band Pantar . . . [is] an example of rather proactive world-musicking - a will imposed on two cultures to grow closer. Starting in the late 70's, [Mungal] Patasar . . . got involved in creating a style called Indo-Calypso-Jazz. It's a slight misnomer, for the greatest fusion going on here is between sitar and steel-pan drums; the jazzlike chords of an electronic keyboard are more the property of pop music. . . . The sitar and the steel pan sounded amazingly comfortable together; they both make thin, trebly music" [Ben Ratliff, The New York Times, 8/1/00].

July 29

San Francisco Tape Music Center presents *microFestival (musique Acousmatique [Rendered on Tape])*. 557 Howard Street, San Francisco, CA.

Communication

Dear Editor,

I received the spanking new copy of the Journal today -- the Christian Wolff interview was especially fascinating.

Ever Best,

Michael Scribe
San Francisco, CA

Dear Editor,

Pleased to see interviewer Mark Alburger get so much out of Christian Wolff, whom I've always regarded as reticent.

Bests,

Roger Costas
New York, NY

Hi Editor,

I enjoyed reading the Journal, especially the testy review of Michael Tilson Thomas's performance of the Scelsi, in which I sang. I got a large chuckle from the line, "When you have something to say, the use of Assyrian seems especially expeditious."

Thanks and best,

Diana Landau
San Francisco, CA

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for listing the Almeida Opera Festival performances of *Earth and the Great Weather* in the Chronicle section of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. Things went very well in London. Sung by the group Synergy, the new vocal music turned out to be everything I'd hoped it would be. After ten years, *Earth* finally feels complete, and it may even be something like an opera. We had nice advance feature in *Time Out*, followed by a warm review in the *Times* -- where we received as much ink as Tina Turner's farewell concert. I hope all is well with you and your work.

Warm wishes,

John Luther Adams
Fairbanks, AK

Dear Editor,

Your journal helps me research music for Duo 46.

Bob Schneider
GUITAR PLUS RECORDS
Cincinnati, OH

Hi Editor,

I am delighted to announce that I just received *The Burton Award 2000* from Radio Station WOMR-92.1 FM in Provincetown, MA for airings of *Julia's Song* for violin and piano. This piece is on the CD *2 X 3-Music by Women Composers*. The audience and staff of the station picked it *Julia's Song* as one of their all-time favorites and I, along with about 9 others from around the world, received this honor for specific compositions that the audience and staff voted upon. It looks as though about five of us are Americans and the rest appear to be from Europe -- especially Eastern Europe. The particular radio show is all contemporary music and is entitled *The Latest Score*.

All the best,

Nancy Bloomer Deussen
Palo Alto, CA

Dear Editor,

Many thanks for your great publication. I look forward to each issue and read them cover to cover. Always new information. Always useful information.

Richard Nunemaker,
Executive Director
HOUSTON COMPOSERS ALLIANCE
2009 Whitney St.
Houston, TX 77006

Dear Editor,

Your coverage of the Boston area is excellent.

Ron Dorfman
Seattle, WA

Recordings

Lara Downes. *Invitation to the Dance*. [Ginastera. *Danzas Argentinas*. Ravel. *La Valse*. Barber. *Souvenirs*]. Lara Downes, piano. Postcards / Arkadia Entertainment Corp.

Music from Bohemia [Tomas Svoboda. *Sonatine. Theme and Variations*. Josef Myslivecek. *Trio*. Jan Malek. *The Winter Solstice*. Jaroslav Krcek. *Four Renaissance Miniatures*]. Trio Spektrum. North Pacific Music.

Round Top 1999 Season Highlights. Festival-Institute at Round Top.

Society of Composers. *Inner Visions*. [Allen Strange. *Velocity Studies IV: Flutter*. Martin Rokeach. *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. James Paul Sain. *Dystopia*. Hi Kyung Kim. *Unknown Lives*. Capstone.

Spectra: A Concert of Music by Connecticut Composers, Inc [William Penn. *Chamber Music II*. Stephen Gryc. *Five American Portraits for Five Wind Instruments*. Ken Steen. *While Conscience Slept*. Robert Dix. *Lyric Quartet for Clarinet and Strings*. Arthur Welwood. *The Breath Inside the Breath*]. Capstone.

David Starobin. *Newdance* [Stephen Jaffe. *Spinoff*. Jorge Morel. *Reflexiones Latinas*. Elliott Carter. *Shard*. Mario Lavista. *Natarayah*. William Bland. *Rag Nouveau*. Bent Sorensen. *Angelus Waltz*. John Anthony Lennon. *Gigolo*. Steve Mackey. *San Francisco Shuffle*. Richard Wernick. *Da'ase*. Apostolos Paraskevas. *Chase Dance*. John Duarte. *Valse en Roundeau*. Milton Babbitt. *Danci*. Michael Starobin. *The Snoid Trucks Up Broadway*. Jonathan Harvey. *Suft Dance*. Per Norgard. *Serenita*. Poul Ruders. *Chaconne*. Paul Lansky. *Crooked Courante*. Bryan Johanson. *Open Up Your Ears*]. David Starobin, guitar. Bridge.

Robert Starer. *Samson Agonistes. Concerto for Two Pianos*. William Thomas McKinley. *Lightning (An Overture)*. *Adagio for Strings*. Czech Radio Symphony Orchestra. MMC

Strata [Aram Khachaturian. *Trio*. Max Bruch. *Eight Pieces*. Igor Stravinsky. *L'Histoire du Soldat*. Martin Rokeach. *can't wait*. Donald Freund. *Triomusic*]. Strata. Aurec.

Hans Sturm. *Fireflight* [Sun Suite. *Smoke and Fire*]. Innova.

Sunbursts: Solo Piano Works by Seven American Women [Ruth Schonthal. *In Homage of...24 Preludes*. Sheila Silver. *Fantasy Quasi Theme and Variation*. Diane Thome. *Pianismus*. Stefania de Kenessey. *Sunburst*. Vivian Adelberg Rudow. *Rebecca's Suite: Rebecca's Rainbow Racing Among the Stars; Rebecca's Song*. Dianne Goolkasian Rahbee. *Three Preludes*. Emma Lou Diemer. *Fantasy for Piano*]. Nanette Kaplan Solomon, piano. Leonarda.

Lois Svard. *Other Places* [Elodie Lauten. *Variations on the Orange Cycle*. Jerry Hunt. *Trapani (stream)*. Kyle Gann. *Desert Sonata*]. Lois Svard, piano. Lovely Music.

Tomas Svoboda. *Thomas Svoboda: Piano Works, Vol. 1* [Sonata No. 2. *Eulogy*. *Four Waltzes*. *Sonatina*. *Bagatelles*. *Autumn*] Tomas Svoboda, piano. North Pacific Music.

Louis Talma. *Music of Louise Talma*. [Piano Sonata No. 1. *Six Etudes*. *Three Duologues for Clarinet and Piano*. Sonata No. 2. *Alleluia in Form of a Toccata*. *Seven Episodes for Flute, Viola, and Piano*]. Theresa Bogard, piano. CRI.

That Nothing Is Known: Quartet Improvisations. Bob Marsh, Michael Zerang, Jack Wright, John Berndt. Recorded.

Threnody Ensemble. *Timbre Hollow*. Threnody Ensemble. New Albion Records.

Time Marches On: More Modern American Songs [Norman Mathews. *Songs of the Poet*. Joelle Wallach. *up into the silence*. Corey Field. *Three Yeats Songs*. Elizabeth Austin. *A Birthday Bouquet*. Stephen Wilcox. *Facing the Moon*. Paul A. Epstein. *BirdSongs*. Ronald Perera. *Songs from Sleep Now*]. Gregory Wiest, Tenor; Oresta Cybriwsky, piano. Capstone.

Tower Brass Quintet. *At Play*. [Gershwin. *Suite from "Porgy and Bess."* *Three Preludes*]. Tower Brass Quintet. Capstone.

Joan Tower. *Joan Tower Concertos*. [Violin Concerto. *Flute Concerto*. *Piano Concerto*. *Clarinet Concerto*]. Elmar Oliveira. Carlol Wincenc. Ursula Oppens. David Shifrin, The Louisville Orchestra. d'Note.

Trignition. Barre Phillips, Bertram Turetzky, Vinny Golia. 9Winds.

Twisted Tutu. *Play Nice*. O.O. Discs.

Unbalancing Act. Pat O'Keefe, Jason Stanyek, Scott Walton, Glen Whitehead. 9Winds.

Vladimir Ussachevsky. *Three Scenes from the Creation*. *Missa Brevis*. *Wireless Fantasy*. *Metamorphosis*. *Of Wood and Brass*. *Linear Contrast*. *Computer Piece No. 1*. *Two Sketches for a Computer Piece*. CRI.

David Van Vactor. *Ode from Symphony No. 2*. *Four Etudes*. *Concerto a Quattro*. *Sonatina for Flute and Piano*. *Pastoral and Dance*. *Introduction and Presto*. CRI.

Lois V Vierk. *River Beneath the River* [River Beneath the River. *Into the Brightening Air*. *Jagged Mesa*. *Red Shift*]. Tzadik.

Joseph Waters. *Joseph Waters* [Arabesque. *When the Clouds So Boldly Painted On the Sky*. *Sulphur-Crested Cockatoos*. *Drum Ride*. *Quiet Music - Early Morning*. *The Garden of Kali*. *The Populist Manifesto*]. North Pacific Music.

Writers

MARK ALBURGER began playing the oboe and composing in association with Dorothy and James Freeman, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick. He studied with Karl Kohn at Pomona College; Joan Panetti and Gerald Levinson at Swarthmore College (B.A.); Jules Langert at Dominican College (M.A.); Roland Jackson at Claremont Graduate University (Ph.D.); and Terry Riley. Alburger writes for *Commuter Times* and is published by *New Music*. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, and has interviewed numerous composers, including Charles Amirkhanian, Henry Brant, Earle Brown, Philip Glass, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich, and Frederick Rzewski. An ASCAP composer, he is currently at work on his Symphony No. 5.

VICTORIA ANDREYEVA is a literary and music critic. Her articles and reviews have been published in numerous periodicals in Russia and the United States.

DAVID CLEARY's music has been played throughout the U.S. and abroad, including performances at Tanglewood and by Alea II and Dinosaur Annex. A member of Composers in Red Sneaker, he has won many awards and grants, including the Harvey Gaul Contest, an Ella Lyman Cabot Trust Grant, and a MacDowell residence. He is a staff critic for *The New Music Connoisseur* and 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. His article on composing careers is published by Gale Research and he has contributed CD reviews to the latest *All Music Guide to Rock*. His music appears on the Centaur and Vienna Modern Masters labels, and his bio may be found in many *Who's Who* books.

JEFF DUNN is a systems analyst and freelance critic with a B.A. in music and a Ph.D. in Education. He is an avid collector of recorded performances of 20th-century music, a dedicated opera-goer, and a composer of piano and vocal music. His post-modernistic career has included stints as a ranger-naturalist, geologic explorationist, and geography professor. He now serves on the board of directors for 20th Century Forum and is a Bay Area correspondent for 20TH-CENTURY MUSIC.

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MICHAEL MCDONAGH is a San Francisco-based poet and writer on the arts who has done two poem/picture books with artist Gary Bukovnik, *Before I Forget* (1991) and *Once* (1997), the former being in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Berkeley Art Museum, and the New York Public Library. He has also published poems in journals including *Mirage*, and written two theatre pieces -- *Touch and Go*, for three performers, which was staged at Venue 9 in 1998; and *Sight Unseen*, for solo performer. His critical pieces have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Review of Books*, *3 Penny Review*, *California Printmaker*, *Antiques and Fine Art*, *The Advocate*, *High Performance*, and *In Tune*. He writes for *The Bay Area Reporter* and heads the Bay Area chapter of The Duke Ellington Society. He co-hosted nine radio shows on KUSF with Tony Gualtieri with whom he now shares a classical-music review website -- www.msu.edu/user/gualtie3.

MARK PETERSEN is a composer, pianist, singer, music director, and Seattle Correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. He has degrees in music from Weber State College (B.A.) and North Texas State University (M.M.). Five of his works are published by New Music Publications (San Rafael, CA).

ANTON ROVNER was born in Moscow, Russia, in 1970 and has lived in the United States since 1974. He studied piano at the Manhattan School of Music, Preparatory Division, then, composition at the Juilliard School, Pre-College Division, with Andrew Thomas and the Juilliard School (undergraduate and graduate programs) with Milton Babbitt, graduating in 1993 with an MM. In 1998 he received a Ph.D. degree from Rutgers University, where he studied with Charles Wuorinen. Rovner received a BMI Award in 1989 and an IREX Grant in 1989-1990. He attended the Estherwood Music Festival studying composition with Eric Ewazen. He studied music theory at Columbia University with Joseph Dubiel for two years. Since 1992 he is the artistic director of the Bridge Contemporary Music Series. His music has been performed in New York, Moscow, Paris, Kiev, Lvov, Kazan, Nizhni-Novgorod, Chisinau, and Bucharest. He has participated and his music has been performed in such music concerts and festivals as the Composers' Concordance contemporary music series in New York, the Moscow Autumn Music Festival, the Alternativa festival in Moscow, the International Forum for Young Composers in Kiev, the Nicolai Roslavetz Music Festival in Bryansk, Russia, the 3rd International Contemporary Music Festival Europe-Asia in Kazan, Russia, the Contrasts festival in Lvov, and the Moscow Forum/Dutch-Russian Music Festival in Moscow.

SCOTT UNREIN's writing appears courtesy of *The New Music Connoisseur*.

ROBERT WEISS is a San Francisco Bay Area composer whose opera *The Proposal* will be performed this fall at Dominican College.

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