

21ST CENTURY MUSIC

APRIL 2001

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21ST-CENTURY MUSIC is published monthly by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960.

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April 2001

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Bananas at Large:

A Round Table Discussion with Anthony Davis, Paul Dresher, Paul Hanson, Joan Jeanrenaud, Terry Riley, and Tracy Silverman

MARK ALBURGER

The following question-and-answer session with Anthony Davis, Paul Dresher, Paul Hanson, Joan Jeanrenaud, Terry Riley, and Tracy Silverman took place after a concert by the Paul Dresher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band on February 10, 2001, in Dinkelspiel Auditorium at Stanford University. The program included the world premieres of Dresher's *Unequal Distemperment: A Concerto for Cello and Electro-Acoustic Band*, Davis's *Blue Funk into Darkness for Cello and Ensemble*, and Riley's *Banana Humberto 2000: Concerto for Piano and Electro-Acoustic Band*, plus the third movement of Dresher's *Elapsed Time, Duo for Violin and Piano*.

QUESTION: How much improvisation was in Anthony Davis's new piece?

JEANRENAUD: Quite a bit. But the improvisation was clearly structured by Anthony for me.

DAVIS: I use improvisation a lot -- even in my operas. I want performers' input into the music. Ellington and Mingus thought improvisation was an integral part of composition. In one section of my piece, a violin part was written out, against which the cellist had to improvise, then Joan's part became completely notated against the chime sounds. The improvised passages are simply among the building blocks of how the piece exists.

QUESTION: (WILLAM SUSMAN:) I was knocked out by the bassoonist. How do you feel playing your instrument in such non-traditional ways?

HANSON: Thank you. Well...

DRESHER: I met Paul as part of an astonishing group of improvisers at Berkeley High School. I hadn't heard an improvising bassoonist come close to what he was able to do. Paul was a key player when I formed this group.

SUSMAN: Was bassoon your first instrument?

HANSON: Guitar. I moved to Berkeley and had a guitar teacher who tried to convert me to Christianity. So I stopped that and played clarinet and sax in bands. One of my favorite instrumentalists is Jimi Hendrix. I like bassoon for its low and high ends.

QUESTION: Where is music such as we've heard tonight going? What is the spirit of this music?

RILEY: I think much of the music tonight would be considered part of the non-written tradition, and such traditions will continue to be important. Oral/spiritual traditions -- from master to student -- are like a "disease!" You get "infected" by them, and the traditions then go on.

QUESTION: Part of a music "tradition" is the concept that the music is played by "the people." With regard to a certain "electro-acoustic" tradition, is such a music carried on by people in the audience?

DRESHER: Yes, particularly among young people, who are often involved with pop (but not always). It's also possible to be "infected" by recordings, which are another influence source. To be able to hear Armstrong live at his peak -- such an opportunity occurred before I was born, so I'm grateful for recordings. To hear early music performed on period instruments -- most of us don't have harpsichords and the like in our homes...

QUESTION: Was tonight's concert recorded?

DRESHER: We record *everything*...

QUESTION: Could you tell us why Terry Riley chose to name his new piece *Banana Humberto*?

RILEY: I will tell the truth. I was a little intimidated by the project. The name I chose sounded like what I was doing, if you said it real fast ["*Piano Concerto*"].

QUESTION: I am very interested in the instrumentation of the Electro-Acoustic Band, particularly in *Banana Humberto*.

DRESHER: So are we! One of our aims is to create a growing electro-acoustic repertory from composers. The group started because I wanted to work with particular performers. By now each player has a separate set-up of apparatus.

QUESTION: Can you speak a little about the electric violin in *Banana Humberto*?

SILVERMAN: It's a six-string fretted electric violin -- a "guitar fiddle." It has the four strings of a violin, plus the viola's low C and most of the cello range. The bottom is three notes above the low note of the cello. As you can see, it's banana yellow, too.

QUESTION: What were you doing with your feet?

SILVERMAN: Sort of a "soft-shoe" thing! I use foot pedal controls for reverb, distortion, wah-wah. It's a guitar processor.

DRESHER: Almost everyone was doing important things with their feet. That's part of the reason we all wear shoes!

QUESTION: The first movement of Terry's piece would have sounded spectacular on acoustic instruments as well. Why did you choose to use electro-acoustic instruments?

DRESHER: I think every composer would answer that question differently. But basically, acoustic and electric instruments have their own unique sounds. In my own playing, for instance, I sampled "invented" acoustic instruments, and natural sounds heard performed in ways that couldn't have been done "live."

DAVIS: An electro-acoustic ensemble becomes a different sort of orchestra. You're not going to replicate; the sounds are not the same. With such a group, you're often trying to create a hybrid sound, anyway. At one point in my piece, there's a harp-like sound that has bowed-string harmonics in the sustains. I could create a similar sound in an acoustic orchestra, but it would not be the same.

JEANRENAUD: I have solid-body and acoustic cellos, and again, they're not the same, even when both are similarly amplified.

QUESTION: How will new electro-acoustic pieces stand up over time? When the particular new instruments disappear in a world of continually developing technology, will the music disappear?

DAVIS: Arts always change. The electro-acoustic tradition is now constantly changing. But developing technologies usually provide us with new analogs, at least, to the defunct instruments.

RILEY: In North Indian musical tradition, much is lost. Here, we're in such a fast tradition that perhaps, in a similar way, only the spirit of our pieces will move on. I say that's all right, in the spirit of impermanence. Because sometimes in preserving the past, the present gets cancelled out. We need to make room.

[Applause]

QUESTION: Does the band have any particular challenges in rehearsing these new works?

DRESHER: We probably spend more time on balance than acoustic groups, because we have all of these amplification variables.

QUESTION: How did you go about composing for the band?

DAVIS: I first came down to their rehearsal space and listened. Paul showed me some techniques. Out of this, I used three-voice chords in his part a lot.

RILEY: I started from piano and spent a long time working on the part. In my MIDI studio, I used a particular electro-acoustic sound much of the time to give me a standard background.

QUESTION: How does the electronic drum set work, and why do you use it instead of an acoustic set-up?

DRESHER: It's partly for efficiency, and also because it makes available a range of sounds that can be completely refigured. It's also a microscope that you can put on sounds. You can make music that is very quiet and yet in the foreground. We like the classical/vernacular crossover, so to have an electric performer in the drum tradition is important to us.

Crossing Paths with a Colorful Earle Brown

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

MCDONAGH: Could you speak a little about the *December 1952* on your archive recording?

BROWN: *December 1952* for orchestral? Well, that's a graphic score of horizontal and vertical lines, it's like an early Mondrian -- plusses and minuses. The horizontal indicates duration, the vertical pitch, and size of image dynamics, so I was suggesting *only* these three parameters, and the rest was improvisation.

MCDONAGH: Pianist David Arden and everybody else I've certainly do it differently.

BROWN: That's the intention. It was a very experimental moment in my life. I had been experimenting with graphic notation in 1950 and '51, when I was teaching Schillinger technique in Denver, Colorado, and I did a lot of investigating and even painted because I was very enamored of Pollock and wanted to see what it felt like. I knew what spontaneity felt like as a jazz trumpeter, but I wanted to know what improvisation felt like with paint on the end of a stick. It was a very good experience. I didn't teach myself to paint, I just did it! I think that's the way creative artists do many things. I used to think about doing things before I could think of the particulars. I once made the statement that I wanted "to write music in the real time in which it is played" and I did that quite a few times in *Folio* and other pieces. I was experimenting with writing very rapidly before my critical faculties could take over and say "No, that's not proper." Working this fashion was like automatic writing.

MCDONAGH: In your interview with Richard Dufallo in *Trackings*, you talked about ambiguity and relativity being essential components.

BROWN: Yes, I mean Mozart is strictly notated, but, if there weren't possibilities of variations in that, we wouldn't be interested in his compositions very much, as in say, the differences between what Michael Tilson Thomas does and what Lenny Bernstein did. So even standard fixed notation has a built-in kind of flexibility to it, otherwise we wouldn't have a thing called interpretation. So what I did was extremely radical for '51 and '52, but it really struck me as an extension of medieval practice.

MCDONAGH: Neumes and mensural notation.

BROWN: Yes, and that was not precise, there was flexibility. But what I did was "proportional notation" which I call "time notation", and this is an extension of what happens in interpretations by different conductors.

MCDONAGH: So in *Cross Sections and Color Fields* (1972-75), is "c. 4 seconds" a proportional designation?

BROWN: That's a suggestion because you get different conductors -- one will be very literal and *want* that information, and another will see it and say "It says '4 seconds'," and he'll hold it for 6 seconds -- no disaster. So I've given strong suggestions in that score. And if you want to be literal, just do what I say. But it's "circa"; it's in the *area* of -- one second for this thing, three seconds, seven seconds, ten seconds, eight seconds, four seconds. And so a conductor studying the score can see the relationships I'm implying, but knows he has the liberty to modify them. He can't add or subtract notes, but I've extended the parameters of what's acceptable in interpretation. I started as a trumpet player mostly in jazz, and I respect and admire jazz players. Bob Brookmeier is a good friend, Gil Evans has influenced me a lot, and Maria Schneider -- she's terrific. As a jazz player, you learn to respect other players, and I always believed that I could trust musicians and conductors. But Edgar Varèse, when he saw one of my early scores, said, "You can't let them do that, because they'll take advantage of you," because "they" took advantage of him. But the musicians have *carte blanche* already, I don't have to say "Be free." I say, "Work with what I'm presenting, collaborate with me, be part of a musical event. I've done my creative part by inventing the notes and areas, and now you come into it and vibrate with the score. But Varèse had bad experiences and John Cage did, too. And neither believed in improvisation at all.

MCDONAGH: Cage hated the regular pulse of jazz.

BROWN: Yes, and the vibraphone, too! But I used to try to get John to listen to some of the gorgeous things that the Modern Jazz Quartet did, and he never listened. In *December 1952*, which you heard with the French Radio Orchestra, I sent Cage the score and they just played their favorite little licks which were to him all sorts of dumb things so that was his idea of interpretation, But in a certain way John was influenced by me because in about 1958 he started what he called "indeterminacy."

MCD: Were you pleased with the recent San Francisco Symphony performance of *Cross Sections*?

BROWN: Yes, despite the fact that Universal Edition Vienna didn't send the right score to Michael which was an immense problem, they put him through hell, and so he had to figure out a way to do it.

MCD: Did you have to invent conducting techniques for your pieces?

BROWN: I had to invent some, but I wanted to keep as many conventional indications as possible, because you don't want to drop weird things on an orchestra. You can't spend time in a rehearsal explaining what this kooky sign means. So a downbeat is a cut-off and a crescendo and decrescendo are exactly the way any conductor would do it. But, after meditating upon Alexander Calder's mobiles for a year I said to myself, "Why can't I make music that's a thing in itself. I've created it and it's fixed, but why can't I put the parts in motion, with the elements moving the way they do in Calder?" When you look at a Calder everyday, it's the same mobile but you'll never see the same configuration twice. So that's what inspired me. But I had to invent a way to communicate to the orchestra where I was going and how I was going to manipulate these very elements. And that necessitated some innovations in conducting techniques, especially in the left hand, or either hand, to indicate musical events. In *Available Forms I* (1961, for 18 instruments), for instance, on one page there are five separately numbered orchestral events. But even with a big orchestra, it's very clear which event to play at what time. If I flash a sign for the orchestra designating "event 1," then event 1 is going to be heard.

MCDONAGH: In the rehearsal, both Thomas and the other conductor from the New World Symphony were putting their fingers up.

BROWN: There were five events for Michael and five events for the other conductor, and they were alternating or combining in any way they felt, but Michael had to invent his way of doing it. In Miami, I went to the second rehearsal and found that Michael had a defective score with no event numbers indicated, so I was initially shocked and frustrated. *Cross Sections* has been done with Myung-Whun Chung with the New York Philharmonic and in Saarbrücken as well, and Hans Zender did it there too. Additionally, Gilbert Amy has performed it in France. The piece has had about eight or ten performances, and I've been at most of them (it's also been done in Hamburg and Venice). *Cross Sections* always been easy to do but you've got to do it the way I designed it. It's like giving a contractor plans for a building without aspects of how to put it together and you're gonna have a very funny looking one, but Michael solved the problems beautifully.

MCDONAGH: The young musicians in the New World Symphony were very attentive and excellent in performance.

BROWN: Oh yes, because they have to be attentive -- they don't know what the conductor's going to do next, and that's one of the byproducts -- you have the intensity going between the director and the musicians -- so *nobody* can sit there and read the newspaper for 35 bars.

MCDONAGH: They're always en point! One of the things that interests me about *Cross Sections* is that none of the figurations in the score are predictable. You don't know if they'll come back, like the string tremolos. A similar gesture can come back several times, but you have no idea if or when.

BROWN: Again, it's like one of the elements in Calder. An element it will be in front of you at one point, and then, the next time you look at it, it'll be in back, according to air flow. I must say that I'm pleased that I've discovered a way to realize my imagination that's successful and works easily.

MCDONAGH: Has there been any influence from Debussy -- his coloristic sense -- on your work?

BROWN: No, but I think Debussy has influenced everybody in the world! -- any composer! -- but there's no overt influence! I built the chords in a completely mathematical way. The construction of the chords, note-to-note, is very Schillinger inspired. John Adams asked me about the chords in *Cross Sections*, and said, "Let me look at that score, where did you get those chords?" The last page happens to have a Fibonacci series chord, and I told John that I built them in a certain way based on numerical relationships between each pitch. They're sort of stacked notes according to a semi-mathematical principle so it doesn't have a harmonic context like any other thing.

Remembering Iannis Xenakis

CHRISTIAN HERTZOG

Xenakis died on February 4. I'll always remember him from the *Xenakis Festival* at the University of California at San Diego, back in the early 90's. He was a surprisingly humble man, with a deep respect for classic literature (who quoted Plato and Dante) -- a man who completely downplayed the mathematics in his music, preferring to talk about the humanities instead. I remember how disappointed many of the young avant-gardistes were to find out that he was a nice, friendly person with no pronouncements to make about the future of music and the right path to take, who had long ago stopped using computer programs and stochastics to write his pieces, relying on his intuition and taste instead (notions that Paul Griffiths failed to mention in his New York Times obituary on February 5).

Some UCSD composition faculty had set up an event where student compositions were to be performed (along with a few Xenakis works), and the guest of honor was supposed to pass judgement on the student works. He refused, citing an incident in his youth where, under similar circumstances, Honegger had said something disparaging about one of Xenakis's works. Since then, Xenakis had vowed to do likewise.

I especially treasure the following exchange, a day or two after he arrived in San Diego:

HERTZOG: I'm a composer.

XENAKIS: [earnestly and enthusiastically] Do you go to the ocean here?

HERTZOG: Yes.

XENAKIS: Do you listen to the surf?

HERTZOG: Yes.

XENAKIS: Good!

It was an honor for me to play the piano part in the American premiere of his orchestral work, *Ais*. He told us (despite our, ... um, er... inaccuracies), that it was the finest performance of the work that he'd ever heard. And who of those in attendance can forget listening to *Legende d'Eer* on the cliffs of the Salk Institute (Xenakis himself at the mixer), surrounded by eight speakers, a crisp breeze coming in from the ocean and the sun slowly dropping into the sea?

How lucky San Diego was to have him in attendance for two weeks, and how sad it is that we'll have no more marvelous music from him.

Kelly-Marie Murphy

JANOS GEREBEN

Kelly-Marie Murphy is one of my favorite contemporary composers, a young woman with an impressive record of accessible and memorable chamber music, plus a few strong orchestral pieces. What I hear in her music is solid technique, a simple, unpretentious way of speaking in tonal but eminently contemporary phrases, which are connected seamlessly, taking the listener on voyage now stormy, now calm, but always prosperous -- and Mendelssohnian in other ways, although with a touch of a Canadian idiom.

When I met her at Ottawa's *Strings of the Future Festival* several years ago, I asked her (as I ask every composer I meet) if she was interested in writing an opera.

The answer was a polite "no" then, but apparently, her move from Virginia to Halifax (and the region's worst winter in 40 years) warmed her to the idea, according to a message she sent recently:

I'm toying ever so gently with the notion of writing an opera over the next four or five years. I'm particularly interested in finding out what stories have been done in the last little while -- just to make sure I don't reinvent the wheel.

When I got Mike Richter -- Mr. Online Opera and a fellow fan of Murphy's music -- into the loop, he advised the composer wisely:

Were I faced with the challenge of an opera and blessed with a tenth of the talent (to say nothing of having learned a hundredth of the technique) you bring to the project, I'd consider a more modest attack. I'd look to a song cycle as an entry point. Some are nearly operatic in scope and demands, they can be written for more than one singer, but most of all they are performable in the real world without needing the aegis of a multi-millionaire sponsor. If the cycle as a whole, or even selected songs, find favor with a 'name' singer, you will become known in the vocal field.

Murphy agreed:

Done. Two of my commissions over the next 18 months are for song cycles - one for mezzo and chamber group, the other for tenor and orchestra. With these two pieces I should be able to iron out at least some of the orchestration concerns, and questions I have. I guess it will also illustrate whether or not I have talent for voice and drama! Hard, but necessary lessons.

Further discussion revealed an artist with background, preparation, and experience -- where the first impression was only of flirting with the idea of writing an opera:

In 1997, I was invited to participate in a composer/librettist workshop cosponsored by the Canadian Opera Company and Tapestry Music Theatre in Toronto. I refer to the experience as 'opera boot camp.' At the end of the week, the assessment by the workshop people was that I was well-suited to opera. My own reaction was to run screaming! I think that part of it was due to the extraordinarily long creation time, and the bone weariness of carrying that much information around in your head! I finally came to the conclusion that if I was going to give opera even one try, I had to plan now because of the scope of the project.

Richter raised the question of writing for opera or instrumental music:

Perhaps another Mozart will come along -- are you she?

Murphy seemed less concerned about this than about the practical aspects of engaging in a huge project that opera -- of any size -- would mean:

My big fear is to spend five years on an opera only to have it coincide with three books, a movie, a play, and a couple more operas, all on the same subject! It should be possible to find out what has been done, but it's a lot more difficult to find out what is being done. It's made even trickier because you don't want to overtly suggest the subject matter and have it scooped up by a quicker composer.

It was at this point that several cats were let out of the bag, showing an idea well beyond the initial phase:

"I'll be working with a playwright and this will be her first libretto. She's really talented and could easily create a story or a setting all on her own. What I suggested to her as an absolute gold mine for an opera is.

Suffice it to say that the San Francisco Opera premiere scheduled for 2005 will be a music drama with a most potent subject, well deserving of an outstanding score from Kelly Marie Murphy.

Concert Reviews

After the Storm

MARK FRANCIS

Calliope (Elizabeth McNutt, flute, and Shannon Wettstein, piano) February 18, Bettersworth Auditorium, Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS.

Calliope's recital (two days after 100 mph winds hit Mississippi State University) was presented in two parts: mid-20th-century works and more recent works. The first part consisted of familiar works like Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir* and Prokofiev's lyrical *Sonata*, op. 94. These two bookended the less familiar *Four Miniatures* (1965) by Brian Ferneyhough. These latter vignettes are filled with constant, unpredictable changes that consistently surprise the listener.

The second half of the program began with Andrew May's *Suspensions* (1994), which included the composer on violin. The two short movements of this work hang in the air like the clouds and the sudden changes of the weather in the desert. Matthew Schlomowitz's *Remembering Thinking* (1998) and Sam Hayden's *Almost Enough* (1995) proved related brief, evocative works.

The premiere of *Discipline 5* (1998), by Mark Applebaum, revealed a highly difficult composition for solo piano, with all kinds of twists and turns to show off the skill of the pianist.

Franco Donatoni's *Fili* (1981) lives up to its title ("threads"), beginning with the piano unraveling melodic filigree. Gradually the flute takes over the main thematic line in an increasingly complex, virtuosic, and exciting manner.

Flutist Elizabeth McNutt and pianist Shannon Wettstein handled these highly difficult and often quirky works with skill and elan. Many of the selections were musics that are not easy to project to an audience, no matter where the location, but Calliope has a special skill for making the complex clear and kindly.

Totally Tartuffe

JOHN BEEMAN

West Bay Opera presents Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe* (libretto by the composer), directed by Kenneth Tigar, musical direction by David Sloss, set and costume design by Richard W. Battle, lighting Chad Bonaker, featuring Constance Howard, Rachel Michelberg, Aimée Puentes, Sylvia Eowyn Bloom, Michael Strelo-Smith, Eric Coyne, Kurt Alakulppi, James Akin, Mia Tova Lieberman, Will Beckett and Griffen Paul. February 24, Palo Alto, CA.

It is easily seen why Kirke Mechem's *Tartuffe* has received over 200 performances worldwide. Mechem knows opera well and effectively utilizes many of its devices in this clever 1980 work based on the Moliere morality play. We hear familiar quotations from opera and instrumental music including even Beethoven's infamous "fate" motif from the fifth symphony. True opera fans would surely recognize well-known opera themes. Was that from Handel? That melody sounded a lot like Gounod's *Faust*. Did we just hear the *William Tell Overture* and even a tune from *Dragnet*? Cheap shots? Maybe, but audience, singers and musicians alike all seemed to greatly enjoy Mechem's playful satire.

West Bay Opera's production, though for the most part successful, played it a little safe in the first two acts. Kenneth Tigar's direction was generally effective, but, at times, for some performers, movement and gesture were predictable. On the other hand, Aimée Puentes's Dorine (the streetwise maid) was exceptional vocally and especially adept at finding the difficult balance between silliness and reality. Kurt Alakulpi's strong, lyrical tenor (as Valere) also seemed natural in his role.

It was Mechem's crisp, energetic music perfectly aligned with his clever libretto which really kept things going in the first two acts. Alliteration and word plays seemed just the right touch for Moliere's satire. Well-crafted tonal and modal music was mostly heard, with occasional ventures into more dissonant realms. Especially intriguing was Tartuffe's pseudo-religious music in brass and strings, and also impressive was the vocal septet which ends the second act. The orchestra was aptly conducted by David Sloss. Tempi and balance seemed right except in the opening scene where singers were overpowered by the busy orchestration. Richard W. Battle's whimsical settings of beige and green worked well with just the right touch of humor, but random flashes of color in the costumes did not seem to gel with the design concept.

However, it is in the final act where production, performers, music and drama all come together. James Akin was convincing as the scheming, villainous Tartuffe, finally exposed for the scoundrel he is, even receiving good-natured boo's from the audience during bows. Rachel Michelberg's Elmire (the object of his lechery) sang in a rich mezzo and skillfully led Tartuffe to his well-deserved demise. Mechem's clever music works wonderfully all the way to the hilarious and joyful conclusion.

Upbeat French Program

MARK ALBURGER

Marin Symphony in an all-French program. February 27, Marin Veterans Auditorium, San Rafael, CA.

Guest conductor Catherine Comet led an upbeat program -- literally and figuratively -- with the Marin Symphony on February 27 at Marin Veterans Auditorium. The literal part was a conducting style that featured downbeat ricochets that were so strong that she appeared to be conducting "backwards" (at least insofar as American/British standards) for those sonically (but not visually) time-delayed listeners at the back of the hall, with the strong beats located high in the air.

And high the Marin Symphony did soar, with a demonstrative performance of Maurice Ravel's notorious *La Valse*, a high-concept piece related to his *Boléro* -- both pieces gradually building from subtlety to overstatement. The Waltz (1906-1919) is said to have been Ravel's portrait of Vienna before and through the turbulent times of World War I, and Comet and company captured the calm and chaos. Much of the audience took to their feet in response.

Music of Claude Debussy rounded out the second half of the program, beginning with the well-known *Prelude to "The Afternoon of a Faun."* Unfortunately, the program booklet mirrored the playing -- generally fine, but riddled with small errors (including the title of the work; coincidentally, some of the erring performers were those omitted in the instrumentation list). Nothing can stop this gorgeous music, however, and the spirit and transcendence came through, nonetheless. In many ways, this work may be the quintessential French fin de siècle masterpiece, flowering with vague longings and a certain je ne sais quois.

Grander and yet more diffuse is Claude's larger essay, *La Mer* ("*The Sea*"), befitting its subject as a rangy yet watery work that packs a wallop yet slips through the fingers. The third movement, "Dialogue of the Wind and the Sea," is probably the closest Debussy ever got to a crowd-pleasing finale, and it's close, indeed, as an apprehensible, canny, and rousing tidal wave.

Record Reviews

Concerning Kohs

DAVID CLEARY

American Masters: Ellis B. Kohs. CRI.

In today's "anything goes" atmosphere, a number of current composers consider the eclectic synthesis of styles and techniques to be an important part of their aesthetic approach. Ellis B. Kohs, for many years on the faculty at the University of Southern California and best known today for his textbooks on theory and form, might well be considered their patron saint. Back in the 1940's (when he wrote most of his output) many composers hunkered down into stylistic camps—but Kohs appears to have consistently bucked this trend, freely mixing elements from many schools of thought into his basic neoclassic ethos. His *Chamber Concerto for Viola and String Nonet* (1948), for example, expertly intertwines aspects of Bartók and Stravinsky without achieving an awkward result. Serial techniques are effectively employed in the *Passacaglia for Organ and Strings* (1946), lending an additional level of control to the work's tonally based language. Blues and Latin elements pervade the otherwise concert-serious *Sonatina for Violin and Piano* (1946-48). And Kohs was willing to jostle the staid pushcart of classic structural layouts in imaginative ways. In *A Short Concert for String Quartet* (1948), he surrounds a clutch of brief, informal character pieces with two weighty bookend movements, nicely combining elements of suite and sonata. And the *Toccata for Harpsichord or Piano* (1948) is not simply a mad finger race, finding room to incorporate both a fugue and a chorale along the way. Regardless of approach, the music here is always well made, nicely balanced, and idiomatically written. The fast movements are vigorous and energetic, while the slower ones are soulfully expressive. And the *Short Concert* and *Toccata* in particular demonstrate that Kohs is able to impart a delightful, often robust sense of humor to his work. If the rest of his rather modest-sized portfolio is as accomplished as the selections on this release, it very much merits a revival.

Playing here is excellent, with violist Ferenc Molnar, harpsichordist Lionel Salter, and violinist Eudice Shapiro turning in especially noteworthy efforts. As in all such entries in the American Masters series, one mainly encounters cleaned-up versions of earlier CRI vinyl-era recordings here; the *Chamber Concerto* performance originally appeared on a Columbia release from 1953. Sound and production on the *Passacaglia*, *Chamber Concerto*, and *Short Concert* are of fine quality. Some distortion and subtle channel dropouts occur in this rendition of the *Toccata* (originally taken from a radio broadcast), while the *Sonatina* suffers from very stuffy sonics and occasional distortion. This disk is a most rewarding listen.

Postcards from North/South

DAVID CLEARY

Postcards. North/South Recordings.

Multi-composer compilation CD's like North/South Recordings' *Postcards* are often akin to a child's bag of candy after Halloween rounds. Coveted treats like chocolate bars and peanut butter cups are often found intermingled with comparative undesirables such as raisins and coated licorice pieces. Fortunately, this CD has its goodly share of tasty bonbons

Jan Krzywicki's *Nocturne II* is excellent, the best work on the album. Despite being the most harmonically dissonant composition in this collection, it is also the most atmospheric and lovely. An unusual accompaniment of harp, piano, and vibraphone is used to brilliantly understated effect here, unrolling a gorgeous carpet of sound through which the leisurely soprano line floats fetchingly. Very much enjoyed.

Mary Jeanne van Appledorn's two pieces are solid, worthy listens excellently written for their instruments. Unlike many solo guitar works, *Postcards to John* is resolute and substantial, not simply decorative. Two of its movements effectively recall Japanese stylings without sacrificing Western purposefulness. *Trio Italiana* evokes little sense of its title country beyond movement headings -- in fact, its sturdy feel is more akin in some ways to Roger Sessions's music -- but is nonetheless highly enjoyable.

Sappho -- Fragments and Variations makes the stronger impact of Ira-Paul Schwarz's two entries. The vocal and piano writing is nicely done, the work unfolds cogently, and the spare scoring neatly complements the somewhat astringent harmonic language used. Coupling this same idiom with the lush strings-and-clarinet orchestration of *Chromatic Essay* proves more curious, though the work's earnest (if rather square) eloquence and economic use of material is appreciated. Its effect is not aided by the somewhat tubby, echoing recording heard here.

In this company, Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *San Andreas Suite* and *One of Nature's Majesties* seem outclassed. Deussen's works are dead-on tonal; while strongly reminiscent in sound to neoclassic Stravinsky and Americana-style Copland, they lack both the short- and long-range rhythmic interest that characterizes the best works of these two past masters. The music is mild and untroubled-sounding, bucolic at times almost in the manner of Vaughan Williams. Sad to say, it did not please.

Sound quality and production are fine except as noted above. Performances range from passable to outstanding, with most being very strong indeed.

Also Rands

DAVID CLEARY

Bernard Rands. *The Music of Bernard Rands*. Albany.

Bernard Rands, Pulitzer Prize winner and current faculty member at Harvard University, shows a vivid imagination and broad range in the three chamber orchestra pieces presented on this CD. Rands's compelling personal voice shines through the widely varied offerings of Albany's *The Music of Bernard Rands*; this is by no means the work of a groping, scattered eclectic.

Metalepsis II (1971), scored for soprano soloist, six voices, and chamber group, is the earliest of these entities, a wild child of the experimental music underground of the era. It's chock full of graphic notation and other indeterminacy that shows some kinship to the 1960's work of Penderecki, Lutoslawski, and Crumb -- even including a sizable quote from Palestrina in the best tradition of the last of these vanguard composers. The work is very effective despite its freewheeling and episodic formal sense, showing much variety in its depiction of warm mystery and arresting vigor—and excellently mirroring the feel of the highly charged anti-tyranny texts set here.

Music from the great early baroque master serves as inspiration for *Madrigali (after Monteverdi/Berio)* (1977), but in a uniquely personal way. Except for a full statement of the madrigal *Amor Lamento della Ninfa*, no overt quotations are encountered. Rands's low-key employment of borrowed material is especially effective here, as references to *Amor* subtly pervade all the movements; this snitch proves to be much more than showcase window-dressing. And while more triadic sounding than the other items (as one might expect given the source of inspiration), the work does not lazily drape its coat on the rack of functional harmony. Special mention should be made of the last movement, one of the most moving and lovely entries in this composer's *oeuvre*.

Triple Concerto, scored for piano, percussion, cello, and chamber orchestra and dating from the 1990's, shows this composer almost totally eschewing 1960's style indeterminacy -- though his division of the orchestra into separate sections, each allied with a particular soloist, hearkens back to other works of that era such as Elliott Carter's *Double Concerto*. The selection employs an almost Bartókian sonic world ripe with octatonic fragments and yearning melodic ideas, though often underpinned with cluster-like verticals. Formally, it owes little to traditional concerti, opting instead for an intriguing and leisurely unrolling quilt of cadenzas and fully scored sections. It's a lush, sensitive work of much depth.

All three pieces demonstrate Rands's expert ear for creating marvelous timbral effects; sinuously crisscrossing soprano lines in *Metalepsis II*, the solemn vibrato-less solo viola foursome that opens *Madrigali*, and a section of swirling percussion/piano/harp/high woodwind filigree in the *Triple Concerto* are just three of many telling examples.

Performances are very good. Edwin London's direction of the Cleveland Chamber Symphony is carefully paced and sensitively balanced; despite rare rough ensemble moments, the group responds well to its director. The vocal group Ineluctable Modality occasionally commits pitch errors and sings the Palestrina excerpt with a raw-throated quality but otherwise acquits itself ably. No such reservations need be expressed regarding the CORE Ensemble's trio of soloists, though; their playing is splendid indeed. Production is fine and sound is good. This excellent release is very highly recommended.

Am Am and Eur

DAVID CLEARY

The 20th-Century Piano. Henry Brant and John McGinn, piano. AmCam Recordings.

The music contained on this appealing CD is mostly written in a style considered a bit out of fashion these days: craggy, independent American atonality which eschews serialism, drawing its inspiration primarily from pre-World War II sources. Henry Brant is of course the genuine article here, a composer active during that investigational era. Best known these days as a pioneer figure in the exploration of spatial placement of instrumental forces, he also wrote solo works that are not amenable to this technique. His piano pieces on this release are short, attractive, and well-crafted. According to the liner notes, *Two Conclusions* was written simultaneously to fulfill a compositional assignment and annoy Brant's conservative teacher at the time; apparently, the piece succeeded on all possible fronts. Both movements are slow and brooding, suggesting an Americanized interpretation of Alban Berg's earlier work. *Music for a Five and Dime*, meant to satirize popular "sheet music" sold (and often played for customers) at cheap department stores of the 1920's and 1930's, is a charmer. This is essentially a free-form Ivesian rag full of humorous touches, including the entrance of a buzzing alarm clock. Brant performs his own pieces here, giving a solid, thoughtful rendition of the *Conclusions* and a puckish, if at times finger-tied presentation of the *Five and Dime*. Given Brant's advanced age, his playing is especially remarkable.

The remaining compositions are all capably written and at the very least worth a listen. Especially recommended is *Racconto*, by Lawrence Moss; this eloquent, inspired piece, built almost exclusively of small fragments which are then repeated in embellished fashion, is tightly constructed, well paced, and excellently written. Susan Forrest Harding's *Bojador* is intensely dramatic, cast in an early Schoenberg-styled expressionist manner -- a good piece to hear. *Dream Prologue* by John McGinn is showy, full-textured, colorful, and very idiomatically written; it most strongly suggests atonal Liszt. John Stephens's *Preludio and Scherzando* clearly echoes the Bergian and ragtime ethos of the Brant pieces and is a short, nicely shaped work. *Four Pieces for Solo Piano*, by Russell Woollen, is a curious, somewhat eccentric entity that has some listenable moments. Its dissonant polytonal harmonies clearly recall piano music by William Schuman and Roy Harris. The work's outer movements are waltz-like, while its second section suggests a dissonant updating of Satie's *Gymnopédies*; the third movement, an odd, perfunctory set of variations on a John Bull *Galliard*, is less effective. Pianist McGinn, while not a flashy, heart-on-the-sleeve player, presents all these works with a sturdy technique, attractive tone, and earnest integrity. He also proves himself to be a first-class extemporizer; his three improvisations presented on this disk are very compelling listens -- better, in fact, than a few of the written-out selections here.

Sound quality and production values are very good. This is an enjoyable release worth hearing.

Affirming Richard Wilson

DAVID CLEARY

Richard Wilson. *Affirmations*. Albany.

This listener recently reviewed a CD of orchestral and chamber music by Richard Wilson released on the Koch label and liked it very much despite a few modest reservations. If anything, *Affirmations* is an even better listen, reinforcing the notion that Wilson is a splendidly talented and highly accomplished composer whose music rewards seeking out.

The harmonic language in these selections is non-triadic, yet contains notable use of scalar material (especially whole tone and octatonic configurations), at times suggesting an update of French composers like Debussy and Messiaen. The title track, scored for Pierrot ensemble, is one of Wilson's finest efforts. Its outgoing opening movement is aggressive and stalwart, tempered with occasional contemplative material—a tendency reversed in the finale, where more forceful passages periodically intensify the prevailingly pensive figures. These entities sandwich an impish scherzo that begins in fragmented fashion and gradually adds flesh to its teetering ideas. Throughout, the piece is purposeful and very cogently put forth, demonstrating an excellently defined formal sense. Also well constructed is *Intercalations*, a solo piano work. Its four movements hearken back to older models, such as ballades and rittercares, without showing obvious elements of neoclassicism. And the keyboard writing is very effective, with movements two and four employing an earnest, square-cut technical approach while the odd-numbered movements explore more traditional colorist-styled pianism. A look at the scoring utilized for the cycle *Transfigured Goat* (mezzo-soprano, baritone, clarinet, and piano) might suggest cursory kinship to Schubert's *Shepherd on the Rock* -- but a moment's listen immediately dispels any such notions. With its prevailingly satiric feel, occasional ragtime touches, and block-like, declamatory word setting, comparisons to Stravinsky's *Renard* seem more apropos. It all perfectly matches the wry, surrealist text used, proving to be an often bizarre, but hugely fun listen. *Civilization and Its Discontents* also exhibits a strong measure of cockeyed humor, partly by saddling its five tiny movements with self-important, Freudian-derived titles that are nearly as long as the pieces themselves. But fortunately, the drollery is embedded in the music as well; Wilson's writing takes delightful advantage of the solo tuba's ponderous and rather eccentric nature.

Performances are strong, with mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart, baritone Richard Lalli, clarinetist Allen Blustine, tuba player Stephen Johns, and pianists Blanca Uribe and Wilson turning in fine efforts. Editing is excellent. Sound is generally good, the only exceptions being found in *Transfigured Goat*, where tinny first-movement sonics and one moment of distortion can be heard. This is a top-notch release, very highly recommended.

Calendar

April 1

Ives Quartet in Thomas Oboe Lee's *Morango, Almost a Tango*. Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco, CA.

April 2

Berkeley Contemporary Players present music of Don Aird, Jonathan Kramer, and Edward Cone. Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

April 3

Tribute to Andrew Imbrie in Celebration of His 80th Birthday, with music of Imbrie, Bauer, Kirchner, Rosen, Aird, Wilson, and Del Tredici, performed by the Berkeley Contemporary Chamber Players, with Gilbert Kalish and Fred Sherry. Wyatt Pavilion, University of California, Davis, CA.

April 4

Chen Yi's *Dunhuang Fantasy*. Arizona State University, Phoenix, AZ.

April 5

Stravinsky's *Neoclassic Period*. Museum Amphitheatre, Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Christophe Eschenbach leads the Orchestre de Paris in Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*. Concert Hall, Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

San Francisco Symphony in Sviridov's *Small Triptych* and Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 7*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Music of Lachenmann and Nono. Columbia University, New York, NY.

April 6

30th anniversary of the death of Igor Stravinsky.

György Kurtág. Cité Internationale Universitaire, Paris, France.

Nono's *A Pierre*. IRCAM, Paris, France.

April 7

FLUX Quartet in works of Zorn, Duchamp, and Xenakis. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

April 8

80th birthday of Andrew Imbrie. Berkeley, CA.

Orchestra 2001. Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA.

Premiere of *Navigating the Light*, by Janice Giteck and Judith Roche, performed by the Seattle Philharmonic Orchestra. Meany Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA. Repeated May 6, ArtsWest Playhouse and Gallery.

April 9

Multimédia. Salle Olivier-Messiaen, Paris, France.

Penderecki String Quartet in Górecki's *Quartet No. 2*, Scelsi's *Quartet No. 4*, and Crumb's *Black Angels*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. A second program is given April 11.

A Musical Festschrift to Andrew Imbrie, including new works by Imbrie, John Harbison, Gunther Schuller, William Smith, Wayne Peterson, Robert Helps, Hi Kyung Kim, and Mario Davidovsky. Hellman Hall, San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

April 10

Composers, Inc., presents Crumb's *Makrokosmos, Vol. 1*, plus music of Miller and Bresnick. Green Room, Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, CA.

Mina Miller. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

April 11

Ensemble Intercontemporain in Dallapiccola's *Canti di prigionia*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

San Francisco Symphony, with Evelyn Glennie, in MacMillan's *Veni, Veni Spiritus*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Andrew Imbrie's *Spring Fever*, Schuller's *Paradigm Exchange*, Robert Helps's *Post Cards*, and Hi Kyung Kim's *Orange Pastel*. Recital Hall, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA.

April 13

Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 5* performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Salle Pleyel, Paris, France.

Mark Alburger's *The Little Prince*, with David Saslav, Harriet March Page, Heather Gavin, Dierdre Lobo, and Melissa Smith. Meadowlands Assembly Hall, Dominican University, San Rafael, CA. Through April 28

Zappa's *Dog Breath Variations*, *Uncle Meat*, *The Girl in the Magnesium Dress*, *Outrage at Valdez*, *Be-Bop Tango*, and *G-Spot Tornado*, Mackey's *Banana Dumptruck*, and Janssen's *Verstelwerk*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

April 14

Morton Subotnick's *TV Lunch No. 2*. The Kitchen, New York, NY.

April 16

Earplay celebrates Andrew Imbrie's 80th birthday with his *Earplay Fantasy*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

April 18

California E.A.R. Unit in *Circuit Breakers*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Morton Subotnick's *Gestures: It Begins with Color*. The Kitchen, New York, NY. Through April 21.

April 2

Brant's *Invisible Rivers* and Mackey's *Indigenous Instruments*. Longy School of Music, Boston, MA.

April 23

48th anniversary of the death of Sergei Prokofiev.

April 24

Ensemble 21 presents Jason Eckardt's *Tangled Loops* and *Polarities*, and music of David Rakowski. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

April 25

NEC Chorus and Chamber Singers in Thompson's *Odes of Horace*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

April 27

Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No. 2* performed by the Orchestre National de France. Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, France. Repeated April 28.

Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Stravinsky's *Firebird* (1945 version). Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Andrew Frank's *Ballade* (1999). University of California, Davis, CA.

April 29

New Music from Davis. Davis Art Center, Davis, CA.

April 30

San Francisco Contemporary Players in *Hungarian Trios*. Ligeti's *Horn Trio*, plus music of Bartók, Kurtág, and Veress. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA

Chronicle

February 1

Lisa Cella in Ferneyhough's *Superscriptio* and Saariaho's *NoaNoa*. Stanford University, CA.

Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra* performed by the Albany Symphony Orchestra. Albany, GA. Repeated February 3.

February 2

Presences Festival 2001. Maison de Radio France, Paris, France. Programs through February 18.

February 3

Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* performed by the Juilliard Choral Union. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

February 3

Empyrean Ensemble in Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*, Yu-Hui Chang's *The Horizon Unfolds*, and Josheff's *Prosperous Soul, Gregarious Heart*. Julia Morgan Center, Berkeley, CA. Repeated February 4, University of California, Davis.

Kyle Gann's *Hovenweep*, Roberto Sierra's *Trio Tropical*, Chen Yi's *Qi*, and Oliver Schneller's *Trio*. Dia Center for the Arts, New York, NY.

Christopher Taylor in Messiaen's *Vingt Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus*. Miller Theater, New York, NY. "The stereotype is that 20th-century music is hard music, like a *Wozzeck* or a *Lulu*, something like horror-movie music. But the Messiaen is wholesome and joyful and outgoing and optimistic and celebratory music. Sometimes Messiaen acts a little icy and mathematical" [Christopher Taylor, *The New York Times*, 1/28/01].

February 4

Death of Iannis Xenakis (b. 5/29/22, Braila, Romania), at age 78. Paris, France. "[He was a Romanian-]Greek-French composer who often used highly sophisticated scientific and mathematical theories to arrive at music of primitive power. . . . He had been in poor health for several years and lapsed into a coma several days ago By training, Mr. Xenakis was an engineer and architect; his musical education came late. . . . He rejected the idea of intuitive or unreasoning randomness in composition, for example, and by constructing his works on laws and formulas of the physical sciences, he sought to control his music at every instant. He once said, "This is my definition of an artist, or of a man: to control." At first he depended on the use of mathematical models of disorder. By using calculations derived from, say, the numbers of different-sized pebbles on a shore, Mr. Xenakis could determine the pitches of notes or their placements in time. In this way he could create music with chaotic inner detail but a decisive shape or impulse. Typical examples of such partly randomized effects in a Xenakis composition might include a bundle of nonaligned upward slides on orchestral strings. Once computers became available to him in the early 1960's, Mr. Xenakis was able to work much faster. . . . [H]e inevitably began to create a tradition of his own in composing so abundantly. Iannis Xenakis (pronounced YAHN-nis zen-NAHK-ess) was born into a prosperous family . . . [H]e was sent to the Greek island of Spetsai to be educated at a British-style boarding school. His musical studies began at the age of 12, and even then he intended to study both science and music. In 1938 he moved to Athens to prepare for admission to the Polytechnic School, where he enrolled in 1940 and graduated in 1947 as a civil engineer. He lived in Athens during the Italian and German occupations of World War II. For much of this time he was a member of the Communist resistance, which was directed at first against the Germans and Italians and then, when they were defeated, against the British. In 1945 he was struck by a shell fragment from a British tank and lost an eye and part of his cheek, leaving the left side of his face deeply scarred. 'In Greece, the resistance lost, so I left in 1947,' he once recalled. He moved to Paris ('In France, the resistance won'), where he found a job in architecture at Le Corbusier's studio. He was there from 1947 to 1959, and contributed to some of the studio's most important projects, including the pavilion for the Philips electronics company at the 1958 World's Fair in Brussels. He always maintained that the Philips Pavilion was entirely his own design, and certainly its simple but strikingly original geometry of curves and planes is worked out on principles very similar to those he had used in his first published composition, *Metastasis* for orchestra (1953-4). . . . The first performance of *Metastasis* . . . was led by Hans Rosbaud at the 1955 festival in Donaueschingen, Germany, one of the important meeting places of the European musical avant-garde. *Metastasis*, largely built on glissandi of rising volume that could recall an airplane rising during takeoff, caused a sensation.

Many young composers were impressed by Mr. Xenakis's sense of music as pure sound, but other musicians, notably Pierre Boulez, detected a lack of craftsmanship. Mr. Boulez was eventually persuaded to commission a score from Mr. Xenakis for his *Domaine Musical* concerts in 1963. He was rewarded by one of Mr. Xenakis's strongest pieces, *Eonta* for brass quintet and piano. But the antipathy between the two remained. Mr. Xenakis did not lack champions, however. [Hermann] Scherchen conducted the premiere of *Pithoprakta* for trombones, percussion and strings in 1957 and the premiere of *Achorripsis* for small orchestra the next year. A little later Gunther Schuller gave the composer his first American performance. George Balanchine stitched together two of his scores to create the ballet *Metastasis and Pithoprakta*. Like other of his works, *Metastasis* and *Pithoprakta* were regulated by Poisson's Law of Large Numbers, which implies that the more numerous the phenomena, the more they tend toward a determinate end -- as in flipping a coin. 'I have tried to inject determinism into what we call chance,' said Mr. Xenakis, who used the scientific word 'stochastic' to give a name to this idea of probability in music. As the 1950's drew to an end, Mr. Xenakis started working in the electronic music studio of French radio, producing *Concret PH* for the Philips Pavilion. In 1961 he visited Tokyo for the first time and met the pianist Yuji Takahashi, for whom he wrote *Herma*, a work of cascading complexity for solo piano. In 1963 came his first trip to the United States, to teach at Tanglewood. . . . [I]n 1966 he founded his own studio in Paris, the *Équipe de Mathématique et Automatique Musicales*. . . . His work with electronic music continued, notably in *Bohor* (1962) and in various projects combining electronic sound with laser projections. One of these was *Polytope de Cluny* (1972), devised for the Roman bathhouse in Paris. . . . In other works, he combined his music with literary ruins -- texts from the Greek plays or other classical sources. One powerful example is *Ais* for amplified baritone, percussion and orchestra (1979), on lines from Homer and Sappho. Another piece in the same mode, *The Goddess Athena* (1992), for baritone and chamber ensemble, as performed late last month by the Met Chamber Ensemble at Weill Recital Hall. But Mr. Xenakis could also create a feeling of ancient drama, ceremony and intensity when using voices without words, as in *Nuits* for chorus (1967). . . . Percussionists enjoyed Mr. Xenakis's music for its vitality and drama, and the solo pieces *Psappha* (1975) and *Rebonds* (1988), as well as the sextet *Pleiades* (1978), became classics of the genre. His last work was a piece for percussion and ensemble, *O—mega* (1997). Mr. Xenakis became a French citizen and married a Frenchwoman, the writer Françoise Xenakis, who had been decorated for saving the lives of resistance fighters. . . . He wrote several books and essays on mathematics, architecture, town planning, and music. . . . He rejected criticism that he wrote 'a species of desensitized music.' Asked once if he composed without sentiment, he answered: 'Yes, if you mean that kind of traditional sentimental effusion of sadness, gaiety or joy. I don't think that this is really admissible. In my music there is all the agony of my youth, of the resistance,' as well as the occasional mysterious, deathly sounds of those cold nights of December '44 in Athens.'

'From this,' he added, 'was born my conception of the massing of sound events' [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 2/5/01]. "Romanian-born French composer, architect and mathematician Yannis Xenakis, who invented a new genre of music composed with the aid of computers . . . 'France loses one of its most brilliant artists today,' French President Jacques Chirac said in a statement of condolence. Xenakis, born . . . to a wealthy family of Greek origin, moved to Greece in 1932 and subsequently fought with the Greek resistance during World War Two, losing an eye in battle. Expelled by Greece in 1947 because of his political beliefs, Xenakis moved to Paris where he closely collaborated with modernist architect Le Corbusier for the next 12 years. Parallel to this, he began studying composition at the Paris Conservatory under illustrious composers including Olivier Messiaen and Darius Milhaud. Xenakis developed a new composing technique using computers and based on the mathematical probability of the recurrence of notes and rhymes. This yielded some of his breakthrough works, *Metastasis* in 1955 and *Achorripsis* in 1958. 'By breaking free from the constraints of the classical norm, by taking the path of random music and by using the inputs of science, he contributed to the definition of a new area of freedom for musical art,' Chirac said. Xenakis became a naturalized French citizen in 1965 and the following year set up the School of Mathematical and Automatic Music" [Reuters, 2/5/01].

A Great Day in New York. D'Rivera's *Wapango* and *Aires Tropicales*, Davidovsky's *Festivo*, Zhou Long's *Wild Grass*, songs of Rorem and Bermel, Schuller's *String Quartet No. 3*, Davis's *Dance*, and Zorn's *Rugby*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Kurt Erickson's *Toccata No. 1* performed by the Berkeley Symphony. St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA.

February 5

Festival: The Twentieth-Century Piano, with Marino Formenti. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Through February 12.

Earplay. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

February 6

Live electronics II. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Composers, Inc. Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

Steven Gerber's *Elegy On The Name Dmitri Shostakovich*, performed by Michael Zaretsky. Boston University, Boston, MA.

Juilliard Orchestra. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

February 7

Death of Dale Evans, at age 88. Apple Valley, CA. "She . . . bec[a]me an accomplished sound-stage equestrienne . . . before she met and married [Roy] Rogers, the King of Cowboys, and composed the couple's enduring theme song, 'Happy Trails to You'" [James Barron, The New York Times, 2/8/01].

Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony present an all-Stravinsky program. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through February 11.

February 8

Computer Music. Stanford University, CA.

February 9

Alejandro Barletta. Americas Society, New York, NY.

A Great Day in New York. Danielpour's *The Enchanted Garden*, Kernis's *Air*, León's *Parajota Delaté*, M. Wagner's *Wing and Prayer*, songs of Del Tredici, etudes of Viñao, Karchin's *Sonata da Camera*, Mackey's *San Francisco: 'round the world*, Moore's *The Mystery of Tao*, and Wuorinen's *String Sextet*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

February 10

Dutilleux's *L'Arbre des songes* performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Salle Pleyel, Paris, France.

The Paul Dresher Ensemble, with Joan Jeanrenaud and Terry Riley, in the world premieres of Dresher's *Unequal Distemperment: A Concerto for Cello and Electro-Acoustic Band*, Davis's *Blue Funk into Darkness for Cello and Ensemble*, and Riley's *Banana Humberto 2000: Concerto for Piano and Electro-Acoustic Band*, plus the third movement of Dresher's *Elapsed Time, Duo for Violin and Piano*. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Mauricio Kagel. Miller Theatre, New York, NY.

February 11

UC Davis Symphony Orchestra. University of California, Davis, CA.

Steven Gerber's *Serenade Concertante* performed by the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra. Indianapolis, IN. Repeated February 12.

Poulenc's *Babar the Elephant*. Tsai, Boston, MA.

Orchestra 2001. Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. Also February 14, Philadelphia.

February 12

Hard Rubber Orchestra. Vancouver East Cultural Centre, Vancouver, Canada.

February 13

ASCAP West Coast Membership Meeting. The Beverly Hilton, Beverly Hills, CA.

Janice Giteck and Judith Roche. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

February 15

54th birthday of John Adams.

Juan Reyes. Stanford University, CA.

Matthew Bauer's *Soundscapes*. Jack Straw New Media Gallery, Seattle, WA.

February 16

Ann Millikan and the California E.A.R. Unit. Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, CA. Repeated February 17.

Moritz Eggert. San Francisco State University, San Francisco, CA.

February 17

Berio's *Opus Number Zoo*, Hindemith's *Variations on "A Frogie Went A-Courting,"* and Crumb's *Voice of the Whale*. First and Second Church, Boston, MA.

Minimum Security Composers Collective. Temple Ohebel Shalom, Brookline, MA.

February 18

Bartók's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* and Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen*, with Christophe Eschenbach. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

North/South Consonance Chamber Orchestra in Pleskow's *Wintergesang I*, Treiber's *Music for Celesta, Horn, and Strings*, Askim's *Vital Signs*, Gee-Bum Kim's *Psalm 84*, and Schiffman's *Chamber Concerto No. 2*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

Ned Rorem Hosts Michael Torke and Christopher Rouse. 92nd Street Y, New York, NY.

February 20

Ensemble Intercontemporain in György Ligeti's *Chamber Concerto*, Guo Wenjing's *Inscription on bone*, and Liza Lim's *Machine for contacting the dead*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

February 21

Emily Bernstein. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.
New Music Festival, with Pamela Z. Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. Programs through February 24.

February 22

Ensemble 21 performs music of Karlheinz Stockhausen: *Kontakte* (1960), *Tierkreis* (1976/83), *Klavierstück IX* (1955). Kathryn Bache Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY. "The Beatles even featured [Stockhausen] on the cover of *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and John Lennon's 'Revolution No. 9' was directly influenced by Stockhausen's electronic works. *Kontakte* is widely considered one of the most groundbreaking and important works of electroacoustic music. Performed here by two stunning young virtuosos, pianist Marilyn Nonken and percussionist Thomas Kolor, the piece blends amplified percussion and piano sounds with an electronic tape that is projected in surround-quadraphonic sound in the auditorium. *Tierkreis* is Stockhausen's cosmic meditation on the zodiac. The work is cast in twelve parts, one for each sign. Surprisingly playful and light for Stockhausen, *Tierkreis* exhibits the composer's lighter side. Originally written for music boxes, the composer has arranged the work for flute, clarinet, trumpet, and piano, with tremendous luxury of sound. *Klavierstück IX* is a daring and hypnotic piano piece that begins with the same chord repeated 144 times (a calculation associated with Fibonacci proportions that are imbued within all aspects of the work)" [Internet release].

Steve Mackey's *Ravenshead*, with Rinde Eckert and the Paul Dresher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band. Theatre Artaud, San Francisco, CA. Through February 25.

February 23

retrospective Rolling Stones. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France. Programs through February 25.

New Music Festival. Cowell's *The Banshee* and Stravinsky's *Histoire du Soldat*. Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. Programs through February 24.

Mark Applebaum's *Dead White Males* performed by the Stanford Symphony Orchestra. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford, CA.

Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (with Stephen Drury), Antheil's *A Jazz Symphony*, Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, Hovhaness's *And God Created Great Whales*, Crumb's *A Haunted Landscape*, and Adams's *Slonimsky's Earbox*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA. "Fabulous concert! Absolutely great orchestra and the *Concert* with Stephen Drury was lovingly, respectfully done, showing Cage's imagination and originality. The Hovhaness was another high. Only the Adams disappointed" [Pamela Deutsche].

February 24

Hommage à Stravinsky. Hellman Hall, San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

New Music Festival. Belinda Reynolds's *Cover*, Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children*, and music of Cage and Reich. Santa Clara University, Santa Clara, CA. Programs through February 24.

Garrop's *Thunderwalker*. Tsai, Boston, MA.

Higdon's *Rapid Fire*. Edward Pickman Hall, Longy School of Music, Boston, MA.

February 26

New York New Music Ensemble. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

San Francisco Contemporary Players present *European Tour de Force*. Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA.

Feldman's *Piano*. Stanford University, CA.

February 27

Master Classes with György Kurtág. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France. Through February 28.

ASCAP Foundation presents *Thru the Walls*. Cutting Room, New York, NY.

February 28

Abghari/Meshulam Duo. Stanford University, CA.

Comment

By the Numbers

Number of U.S. commercial classical radio stations, 1991

52

Number of U.S. commercial classical radio stations, 2001

37

Number of U.S. non-commercial classical radio stations, 2001

Slightly more than 100

Items

"France loses one of its most brilliant artists today," French President Jacques Chirac said in a statement of condolence. "By breaking free from the constraints of the classical norm, by taking the path of random music and by using the inputs of science, he contributed to the definition of a new area of freedom for musical art," Chirac said. U.S. President George W. Bush, in his condolence message to the composer's family, said: "Huh? Who?"

Internet release
2/5/01

Adolph Herseth . . . who has served as principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony for an unparalleled 53 seasons, has announced he will retire from the orchestra at the end of the 2001 Ravinia season. The musician known . . . as "Bud" -- whose face familiarly turns radish-red when scaling the stratosphere -- turns 80 this year.

John von Rhein
MusicalAmerica.com
2/26/01

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 at work on two music dramas, *Animal Farm: An Orwellian Comedy* and *The Bald Soprano*.

JOHN BEEMAN studied composition with Peter Fricker, and later with William Bergsma at the University of Washington, where he received his Master's degree. His first opera, *The Great American Dinner Table*, was produced on National Public Radio. Orchestral works have been performed by the Fremont-Newark Philharmonic, Prometheus Symphony, and Santa Rosa Symphony. *Desert Sketches*, a chamber work, was released in 1996 on the *Classic Sketches* CD by the Violeto Trio. Chamber music compositions such as *Six Etudes for String Quartet*, *Elegy for Solo Cello*, and *The Five Gifts of Life* were performed on recent NACUSA concerts. The composer's second opera, *Law Offices*, premiered in San Francisco in 1996 and was performed again in 1998 at the San Mateo County Courthouse, through a grant from Philanthropic Ventures Foundation. *Channels*, an electronic music composition, was created for an art installation at the Aspen (Colorado) Art Museum from October 15 - November 29, 1998. Beeman has also received a 1998 ASCAP standard award.

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.

MARK FRANCIS is Lecturer of Music at Mississippi State University. He has previously held positions at Centenary College, Northwestern State University and the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts. He holds a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Kentucky. A recipient of 6 ASCAP Standard Awards his compositions include works for chamber, orchestral and choral ensembles, electronic music and 50 art songs. His compositions and arrangements are published by Connors Publications and Little Piper Publications. He is President of the Southeastern Composers League and the composition board member for the College Music Society-South Chapter.

CHRISTIAN HERZOG is a Bay Area composer and writer.

JANOS GEREKEN is the Arts Editor of the Post Newspaper Group. A version of his article on Kelly-Marie Murphy will be published in the program brochure of the San Francisco Opera for a premiere in 2005.

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.