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Locking Wits in the Lair of Dan Locklair

KEN KEUFFEL

Dan Locklair (b. 1949), a native of Charlotte, North Carolina (USA), holds a Master of Sacred Music degree from the School of Sacred Music of Union Theological Seminary in New York City and a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Presently, Locklair is Composer-in-Residence and Professor of Music at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

KEUFFEL: You seem to be incredibly busy. Have you ever felt in a position to break away from the academy?

LOCKLAIR: I think every serious composer, especially one who's gaining a following, thinks about that...Several composers have tried. But to live the lifestyle I've wanted, with a steady source of income, I've accepted the reality that the academy is really the place to be. Now, I've also enjoyed teaching (at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, N.C.); that makes a difference, too. I have to juggle two full-time professions. My career as a composer goes on, and the commission deadlines are throughout the year. In addition, requests to attend premieres and performances continue to come in. I've had to decline things because I've had to balance it with my full-time professorship.

KEUFFEL: How do you feel about saying no?

LOCKLAIR: It's difficult - especially when it's something you want to do. A couple of summers ago, I did turn down a few commissions. A couple of them pained me because they were works I eventually wanted to do. But one of them was for accordion and violin - there were serious performers involved, but this was not a combination I had a great deal of trouble turning down.

KEUFFEL: You seem to write a number of works for university ensembles, too.

LOCKLAIR: I take this role seriously...I value my relationship with colleagues and with students because that's a way of ensuring future audiences for contemporary music. If composers don't work in universities, students can't see role models. Classical music's already in a bad enough state as it is.

KEUFFEL: Peter Perret (music director of the Winston-Salem Symphony) has done his part for new music. How would you view his tenure?

LOCKLAIR: Yes, but though he's conducted several works of mine, I've never been commissioned by the symphony. In the past, the Winston-Salem Symphony has done a lot of 20th-century music. I don't think a number of the choices have been wise. That's what, in one way, has gotten us into a fix with 20th-century music...So many of the choices of new works have been the ones that have ended up alienating a large group of the public -- which then immediately jumps to the conclusion that anything from the 20th century will chase you away.

KEUFFEL: I've been led to believe that composers are writing in more accessible styles. This has been made known to the public by the press, and yet, this rush to judgement remains.

LOCKLAIR: It does. Incidentally, that's one of the things I try to fight against in teaching. When you teach a Music 101 class, which I do every third semester, you've got a lot of non-music majors. Many know nothing about new music. They have open minds when it comes to it.

KEUFFEL: Which composers from the 20th century have you most admired?

LOCKLAIR: I've really admired the music of Milton Babbitt. It wasn't that he didn't experiment -- he did. Babbitt stuck to his guns. Even though he experimented, he remained true to himself, in his own way. I think a number of composers in the last century did not remain true to themselves. They simply felt the need to do what was prescribed as "the right way."

KEUFFEL: You just write in the way that suits you, then?

LOCKLAIR: I feel it's very important to be honest with yourself. The music I create is an honest expression of what I want to express in sound. And what I'm doing is gaining a following. You gain a following one listener at a time, never forgetting that a composition has to have something to say.

KEUFFEL: But there's a question about how you say it. I happen to find your work fresh, but the language is not so off the wall that I can't get to the message...

LOCKLAIR: I've continued to embrace tonality, as has John Adams, Philip Glass and Steve Reich. Their music's tonally based, too, but it's music that's their own.... It's important for a composer to have his or her own voice. It's still a mystery to me about how we achieve that. Still, over time, you create a work of art and then another; you begin to see those fingerprints we call style.

KEUFFEL: You've said, "I don't want to write faceless music." This reminds me of a composer who was scolded at a seminar for saying contemporary music suffered because composers wrote "ugly" music.

LOCKLAIR: One of the biggest difficulties we have is being able to judge quality. Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* is highly dissonant, but it's an important piece. Other pieces are dissonant, but there's nothing there. Audiences may be frightened away by dissonance, and call a certain dissonant piece of music ugly, but I don't think that's a qualitative judgement. When I say faceless, what I am referring to is music that could have been written by any number of composers. A composer might write in different styles, but still, there's personality in how he handles instrumentation, how she creates rhythm. History, fortunately, also takes care of it all.

KEUFFEL: What are some of the things a composer can do to become better known?

LOCKLAIR: It's important for a mainstream composer to create in a lot of different genres. If you're creating music in the choral realm, there's a whole group who will have heard your music and value you as a composer. And yet, if you're not writing orchestral music, where there may be a completely different audience, they may not get to know your music. I did some pre-concert talks once for the Buffalo Philharmonic. Several people in the audience came up and said, "You know, I've done your choral works, but I didn't know your orchestral music." That's one of the things that's exciting about writing in a number of different areas. Also, it's important for a composer to have a conductor or a solo performer championing his music.

KEUFFEL: Of course, you can promote your music by performing it, too.

LOCKLAIR: Yes, I am also an organist, but often, I don't have the time to get in shape for recitals. Still, creating your own repertory and going out and doing it -- that's a trait of earlier composers. It does give people an idea of the music from the horse's mouth, but composers are not necessarily the best interpreters of their works.

KEUFFEL: You've set lots of poetry to music. What's the key to doing it well?

LOCKLAIR: You must be a servant to the text. You've got to convey the text in a way that the music fits the words like a glove. You've got to do it in a way that brings the words to new life, not necessarily better life.

KEUFFEL: Do you consciously set out to create something new when you write a piece of music?

LOCKLAIR: If you try to search for something new, you are most often doomed to failure because you're chasing something that's already been discovered...I use the technique of whistling in *Changing Perceptions*. I use whistling as an integral part of the piece. It's not done just once and then forgotten. It's not a new technique to use whistling, any more than it's a new technique to bow a vibraphone. What I've never responded to is music that's gimmicky, to music where it's obvious a composer is doing something simply because it's something that nobody would have thought of doing. Once one person has done something, it has been done. The big question is how it is used.

KEUFFEL: The bottom line, then, is...

LOCKLAIR: In every piece I create, I try to create the best possible piece of music that I can at that given time in my life. And to express something so that it really excites me. I figure, if it can excite me, or in a sense bring peace to me, it will have the same effect on someone else.

KEUFFEL: That's often easier said than done.

LOCKLAIR: When I make a piece of music, I'm basically making something out of nothing. It's as scary the 2000th time you do it as it is the first time.

KEUFFEL: It's been said that it takes a lifetime to learn to compose well.

LOCKLAIR: One of the frustrations with students now -- and especially during the age of computers -- is the realization that you do not develop the inner ear or the craft of composition overnight.

KEUFFEL: The initial ideas of an untrained student may be good, though.

LOCKLAIR: But they will always remain ideas. Without the craft, the inspiration just remains a seed. That's why I'm so glad that a number of composers do turn to teaching and remain in teaching. This is the way we can guide young composers.

Robert Starer: A Remembrance

DANIELLE WOERNER

The American composer Robert Starer, respected throughout the music world for both the lyricism and the craft of his writing, died in April in Kingston, NY, at the age of 77. This article combines a brief biography of his life in music and letters with a personal remembrance by a singer who worked closely with him on many of his vocal pieces during the past decade.

Born in Vienna in 1924, Robert Starer was a citizen of several musical milieus during his active life. The composer, pianist, author and educator began his musical training at the State Academy in Vienna at the age of 13. Just a year later, after Hitler's annexation of Austria in 1938, the young Jewish musician emigrated to Israel, continuing his studies at the Jerusalem (then Palestine) Conservatory. There, his mentors included Joseph Tal, and his education included Arabic music as well as the European music on the school's curriculum. During World War II he served in North Africa and Europe with the British Royal Air Force. After the war, he came to New York for postgraduate work at The Juilliard School, also studying with Aaron Copland at Tanglewood in 1948. From 1949 to 1974, Robert taught at Juilliard, and from 1953 to 1991 at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, where he was named a Distinguished Professor in 1986. By 1957 he had become an American citizen, residing in New York City and later in Woodstock, NY, where he shared a home with his long-time partner and frequent artistic collaborator, the novelist Gail Godwin.

Robert truly became a part of that famous little rural community and its environs, one of its major cultural figures and a great supporter and encourager of those involved in its musical arts. The team of Starer and Godwin created chamber operas and other pieces which were presented at the Hudson Valley's major concert venues, performed by a combination of professional and semi-professional singers and instrumentalists from the area. For the past three years, a new Starer work with a libretto by Godwin has been featured in *The Woodstock Cycle*, an annual series of new pieces on spiritual themes which they helped inaugurate at St. Gregory's Church, Woodstock. His four chamber operas were performed in the area, including the premiere of *The Other Voice*, based on the story of a 7th-century abbess; larger-scale works were played by the Hudson Valley Philharmonic and sung by the various choral societies.

I met Robert in 1991, at a benefit Hauskonzert for a new opera company, shortly after I had moved to the area from Manhattan. Robert evidently enjoyed my singing that day, for he invited me to come and read through some music with him whenever I liked -- not only his own, but Faure, Schubert, operatic arias, anything we both enjoyed. We of course dipped into his own music as well, and I was immediately struck by its beauty and originality as well as its fine writing for the voice, the latter a skill in short supply among many composers of our time who write otherwise compelling pieces. We performed together at a number of local and regional benefits, and for my debut with the Woodstock Chamber Orchestra he wrote a beautiful piece, *Letter to a Composer*, to a Gail Godwin text. We later recorded his chamber pieces *The Ideal Self* and *Images of Man* together -- Robert giving what turned out to be his last recorded performances as a pianist -- for a CD issued internationally by Parnassus two years ago, during the celebration of Robert's 75th year. More recently, he was working on a new piece for me to premiere -- a work with dancers and flute -- at the next *Woodstock Cycle*.

I mention this personal history in some detail because, through it, I came to know Robert as a colleague and a friend, and had an opportunity to see at close range both his generosity and his marvelous sense of balance about what was most important in music.

This was a composer whose work is known internationally through performances and over 20 recordings on Albany, CRI, MMC, Parnassus, Transcontinental, and Vox. He was continuing to add to his large and varied oeuvre of solo instrumental, chamber, choral and orchestral music, and many compositions for singers, up until just a day or two before his death, when he was completing a major choral/orchestral commission. His stage works include several ballets created for Martha Graham, and Broadway theater collaborations with Herbert Ross. Orchestras in the U.S. and elsewhere perform his symphonic music, under the direction of conductors that have included Mitropoulos, Bernstein, Steinberg, Leinsdorf, and Mehta. The recording of his *Violin Concerto*, with Itzhak Perlman and the Boston Symphony under Seiji Ozawa, was nominated for a Grammy in 1986. Other noted Starer interpreters include sopranos Leontyne Price and Roberta Peters, violinist Jaime Laredo, cellist Janos Starker, and flutist Paula Robison.

Yet this was also a composer who made many a gift of music to those in the bucolic area to which he had "retired," and that sense of community as well as individual musical connection was very important to him. When we wanted to record *Letter to a Composer* on the chamber music CD, he created an appropriate version. His *Woodstock Cycle* pieces were gifts to the artists, St. Gregory's, and the community at large. After his death, many people who had known him in his earlier days at Juilliard and Brooklyn College commented on his lively interest in those around him and his generosity of spirit.

As for that sense of balance: when working with him to prepare pieces I was struck by how this composer, so precise and intentional in his compositions that one could say he never wrote an unnecessary note, always seemed to put the larger picture foremost. A few wrong notes in a rehearsal -- even, heaven forbid, a performance -- troubled him not at all when he felt that the essence, the heart, of the piece was being realized.

In addition to his compositions, Robert left an enduring legacy through other kinds of publications. In the pedagogical arena, *Rhythmic Training* and *Basic Rhythmic Training* are standard texts in programs of musical study. He wrote a number of pieces for young musicians, for, as he said in his autobiography *Continuo: A Life in Music*: "Being with the young keeps us young and, as we all know, the child in us is the creator." *Continuo* was published by Random House in 1987 and excerpted in *The New Yorker*, *Musical America*, and the *London Times*. In 1997, he saw his novel, *The Music Teacher*, published by Overlook Press.

Given his elegant, economical use of the written word as well as the musical note, it is Robert Starer who should have the last word here. In *Continuo*, he described his intention in relation to the contemporary listener: to write "music that is not tedious; music that holds his interest because of its beauty and logic; music interesting enough to demand and hold his full attention; music that -- let us not be afraid to say it -- gives him pleasure."

Concert Reviews

Little Goes a Long Way

JEFFREY SMITH

Mark Alburger's *The Little Prince* (after Antoine de Saint-Exupéry), with Heather Gavin, David Saslav, Deirdre Lobo, Jennifer Rizzo, and Melissa Smith, directed by Harriet March Page. April 13, Dominican University, San Rafael, CA. Through April 22.

The centerpiece of Dominican University's 7th Bay-Area Fringe Festival was *The Little Prince*, scenes from an opera by Mark Alburger of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's classic, which was awarded by a panel of the Bay Area Theatre Critics Circle as Best New Piece. Heather Lukens Gavin (who took first place for Best Actress) superbly played and sang the title role. She is sprightly, winsome, and exuberant. She also adds androgyny to her character -- a trait discernible in Saint-Exupéry's original. Mark Alburger is to be congratulated for his musical score and Annette Lust for her part of the translation from the original French as well as for her role in assembling the entire Festival.

The full-length version of *The Little Prince* will be given this fall at Dominican University and in San Francisco.

Two Reviews from the Tempo Festival

DAN PLONSEY

Tempo Festival. Steve Coleman and the Five Elements. June 1, Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Tempo Festival. Roscoe Mitchell / George Lewis / David Wessel / Thomas Buckner / George Marsh. June 2, Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

The June 1 performance of Steve Coleman and the Five Elements at the University of California's *Tempo Festival*, in Berkeley's Hertz Hall, was unconvincing. Whatever the merits of Coleman's interesting-sounding compositional procedure (multiple rhythmic cycles of combinations of 1, 2, 3, 4 pulses), neither his soloing (at great, great length) nor that of the two trumpet players (so brief that I infer that they are either students of his or persons for whom his respect is not high), nor that of pianist Andy Milne made much of an effect. Coleman noodled endlessly in that post-fusion mode which is neither quite tonal nor atonal -- very eighth-notey, as though neither his mind nor heart were present. No departure, no arrival, nothing in between, just a commitment to the lack of commitment.

The set-long piece (medley?) was structured around a series of riffs which gradually flowed from one to the next, sometimes superimposed, and could have provided a rich and cohesive form for improvisation. At the beginning of the second set, he explained that the interactive computer element would not be a part of the concert (despite three pages of program notes exclusively to the contrary), and he blamed the software, joking that perhaps it had wanted to be paid more. Speaking to a couple of Center for New Music and Technology personnel later, we learned that the truth was that the software had been ready, but the human components were the ones that were unprepared. Oh well.

By contrast, a set the next day in the same venue by Roscoe Mitchell, George Lewis, David Wessel, Thomas Buckner, and George Marsh was entirely compelling, and rewarding -- with interaction/non-interaction at a very, very high level: the five elements (oops, that's the name of Coleman's band!)... five performers merging in ways which were never obvious to form a rich, varied whole. A couple people complained about Buckner's stage presence, but there seem to be always those who are freaked out by improvising singers; some of the physical gestures which we accept in rock and opera somehow make listeners uneasy in an improvising context. Buckner was great, as were all the others.

Though no form was pre-planned for the entirely improvised set, the method was almost an anti-method. Lewis spoke of listening to what the others were doing and doing something different. The group accomplished this on both large and small scales. On one occasion, Buckner and Lewis performed longish sounds of very different textures, while Mitchell played an erratic series of short bursts on flute, saxophones and small percussion which added up to a very long spacious melody. One after another of the players took to the fore upon occasion. The key to such exemplary improvisation seems to be for musicians to move easily from foreground to background, and for there to be a fairly extreme variety of time lengths of ideas -- both individually and collectively. And the key was there in these performances.

The *Tempo Festival* is a long overdue, even revolutionary, event for the often-staid UC Berkeley Music Department! We hope that CNMAT can continue to do this on at least an annual basis!

Another View of Buckner

KATTT SAMMON

Tempo Festival. Roscoe Mitchell / George Lewis / David Wessel / Thomas Buckner / George Marsh. June 2, Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

As an improvising vocalist, I was initially put off by Thomas Buckner as part of a quintet of improvisers at the *Tempo Festival* on June 2 at Hertz Hall in Berkeley, but my opinion changed by the end of the concert.

It was not Buckner's physical gestures (which were very much appreciated. -- he was interesting to watch, to see how he achieved various sounds), it was just that there was too much of him at times in the mix, or that his improvisations amounted to too much of the same thing throughout long periods of time, to the point that it was physically difficult to listen to him after awhile.

But by the end of the show, the last number, the feelings changed, because he really let loose. Suddenly it was easy to appreciate Buckner's humor, generosity, his contribution -- but what a journey to understand him!

A Thousand Thanks

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* ("*Symphony of a Thousand*"), with San Francisco Symphony Chorus, San Francisco Girls Chorus, and San Francisco Boys Chorus. June 10, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

The world has come a long way since Toscanini declared that Gustav Mahler was music written on toilet paper. The composer's works are now the bread-and-butter of most major orchestras. Though Mahler's *Symphony No. 8* (1906-07) is not his greatest work, it's still one of the most ambitious pieces ever written, and his most public and imposing. With its broad spiritual aspirations -- nothing less than the salvation of man -- and thunderous volume, it's also a crowd pleaser. In fact this symphony is probably as loud as Varèse's *Amérique* (1918-21), though not as much fun. Mahler, after all, was a sort of summation of the Austro-German tradition, and pain more than pleasure, or pleasure arrived at after, or through pain, seems to be his guiding light here.

The ear-splitting opening movement, "Veni, Creator, Spiritus," is decidedly not like getting seduced with a feather. Mahler's setting of this straightforward 9th-century invocation to the Holy Spirit is loud, relentless, and grand -- with punishing vocal and instrumental writing. Even at the feverish clip of 22 minutes, it seemed to go on forever. And though the combined choruses (190 adults, 45 girls, 20 boys, and soprano Lauren Flanigan) gave it their all, as did the orchestra (especially the winds and brass), one still felt punished for an uncommitted crime. Like the patron who screamed "O.K., I confess!!" at a performance of Reich's *Four Organs*.

Things improved in Part II. This setting of the final scene from Goethe's *Faust* is far more imaginative, and the opportunities for musical evocation are more varied. And what composer could resist writing music for the stage directions, especially the opening one: "Mountain glens, forests, rock, solitude. Holy Anchorites sheltering in the clefts of rocks, scattered at various heights along the cliffs." Mahler rises to this challenge by composing an adagio intro, which lasted 10 minutes here, with especially evocative passages for his 5 bassoons (including contra-), as well as cellos and basses, and it's a landscape as enchantingly bare as that he conjures in the last song of *Das Lied von der Erde* (1907-09). The visual effects in the music here and elsewhere could have been strengthened by a carefully modulated lighting scheme and/or having some or all of the vocal soloists stationed in or above different parts of the orchestra pit, in clear view of the conductor. Mahler, after all, enlisted his designer at the Vienna Opera, Alfred Roller, for advice on choral placement for the work's 1910 Munich premiere. If you have to sit through an obviously theatrical work like this for an hour and a half you might as well see something. Why should all the fun be across the street at the opera? As it was, the visual "drama" here consisted in watching five female soloists, three male ones, the redoubtable Tilson Thomas, chorus, and orchestra -- all in heavy exertion.

But the writing had its fascinations --- the timbral changes between different choirs, Doctor Marianus's ecstatic one-breath solo in "Jungfrau, rein im schönsten Sinne," and the succeeding interlude dominated at its beginning by harmonium, harp, and strings. The following full chorus was impressively built and sung, and there were stretches of almost Italianate vocal writing which combined beautifully with the precise yet sensuous orchestral parts. And the symphony's chorus, under Vance George's masterful direction, produced a suitably miraculous muted passage in perfect unison -- like the impossibly low drone of Tibetan monks -- at the start of the concluding "Chorus Mysticus." The final slightly held back orchestral peroration left no doubt that heaven had at last been won. But Davies's sonic hardness asserted itself now and then, which proves that hiring an acoustician, and not just taking out seats, is the best way to make a hall sound good. With so much "fff" you don't want to have to consult your ear doctor. But all bodies, in this less than perfect set-up, responded willingly to Thomas's fevered ministrations. The full house gave it a long, vociferous standing ovation.

Half as Long is Twice as Good

JEFF DUNN

The Berkeley Symphony Orchestra presents the world premiere of *Five Pieces for Orchestra* by Kurt Rohde, plus *Violin Concerto No. 2* (1967) by Shostakovich with Stuart Canin, violin, conducted by Kent Nagano. June 21, Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA.

Does program annotator Paul Schiavo imply that composer Kurt Rohde couldn't deliver the goods when Kent Nagano asked him "to write a work for large orchestra, specifying a composition of broad, expansive scope"?

Accordingly, Mr. Rohde set out to write a piece initially intended to last over a half hour. Supported by a grant . . . he worked on the score from the summer of 2000 through last winter but found that various factors continually disrupted the project's projected development. In the end, the work took the form of a series of five shorter movements lasting [only?] about fifteen minutes in total.

It seems that far too many composers today are remunerated by the number of minutes of music composed, a convention that can easily lead to abuses. Minimalist composers in particular can easily crank buckets of notes. Others seem to avoid serious editing (Daugherty's *Metropolis Symphony* comes to mind), perhaps thinking *any* idea from their font is worth spraying on hapless listeners.

In contrast, Rohde's artistic integrity in refusing to pad has resulted in a provocative and cohesive orchestral suite that leaves this reviewer dying to hear it again and again. Conductor Nagano is certainly convinced of its worth: he enthusiastically described it to the audience as "some of the greatest music you can find -- I mean in the *world*."

The five movements cover a wide range of moods. They are superbly orchestrated -- Rohde's position as violist in the Berkeley Symphony has not been a hindrance in this regard. The first movement features a gorgeous barcarole-like oboe melody, while the second is more animated and dissonant, with significant input from the piano and marimba. The third movement presents fascinatingly original night music—no clone of Bartók here! The weight of the suite falls on the last two movements. Agitated strings and brass snorts characterize the fourth movement, which concludes with material linking it with the previous movements. The finale begins with a grandiose statement followed by lyrical, but increasingly complex passages. These develop into a deconstructive section ingeniously held together by step-wise bass lines and now-you-hear-them, now-you-don't triads segueing in and out of the texture. A mini-coda adds a light touch of finality. Bravo!

After the Rohde, the seldom-performed *Violin Concerto No. 2* of Dmitri Shostakovich sounded rather long-winded and repetitious. The semi-chamber-sized orchestra in this work bows to the soloist's many cadenzas and cadenza-like passages -- a tribute to Shostakovich's regard for the dedicatee, David Oistrakh, and a showcase for soloist Stuart Canin, who came within a half size of filling the great Russian violinist's shoes.

What fascinates about the concerto is its lack of individuality, not as a piece of music in itself, but as a piece distinct from other Shostakovich works, especially the late works. Music from *The Execution of Stepan Razin* (1964) along with the inevitable DSCH squirts through the first movement. The second movement, painted in typical Late Shostakovich Bleak, could well have been titled "In search of a Passacaglia" because of its sectional, but non-repeating bass lines. Or maybe it should have been called "Let's *dare* not have a Passacaglia!" since the *Violin Concerto No. 1* already exhibits a masterpiece of the form. Finally, permeating the first and third movements is the obsessive rhythm, *da-da-DUM*, a nervous tic that gracelessly haunts the concerto. It took two years for Shostakovich to exorcise it in the *Symphony No. 15* - - there the affliction is trivialized away back to the hell it came from by an early example of what we now would call postmodernism, a segue into a quote of the *William Tell* overture gallop.

Viva concision! Half as long is twice as good -- when you're a talent like Kurt Rohde.

Record Reviews

More Barry

SEAN HICKEY

Gerald Barry. *Orchestral Works [Of Queens' Gardens. Chevaux-de-frise. Flamboys. Sur les Pointes. Hard D. Diner]*. Robert Houlihan, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland. Marco Polo 8.225006.

The bold and daring compositional strokes of Irish composer Gerald Barry are here presented in a recording of five of his original orchestral works. Barry, who studied with Stockhausen and Kagel, has cultivated an uncompromising style of constant intensity and high volume that maintains a non-developmental approach, relying on long streams of chords or unison pitches that avoid climax, perpetual tension with little release. Sample for instance the relentless *Chevaux-de-frise*, a series of cropped canons for orchestra that seldom in its 17 minutes lets up in volume and objective luminescence. The piece was composed in 1988 to mark the 400th Anniversary of the Spanish Armada, part of which foundered off the Irish coast of Clare, the birthplace of the composer and where he still makes his home. This work is barbaric, impulsive, pagan, its long and wiry lines bathed in brass that require superhuman stability from the players as well as the listener. It leaves both breathless in its unyielding pressure, its unceasing violence, failing to either climax or wane. *Of Queens' Gardens* is constructed along similar lines, though rigorously utilizing passing chords from several Bach chorales that the composer set out in systematic tables prior to composition. One of Barry's most rhythmically variegated scores with repeated phrases starting at different points in the measure, he further elaborates the rhythmic interplay by his placement of strong accents that, along with audacious orchestration, create a broad and sweeping canvas of sound. It's not surprising that one of the composer's major inspirations is painting. The short but rigorous *Diner*, referring to the famous Edward Hopper painting, consists of two dances that cannibalize a melody from an earlier piece, here speeded up and truncated beyond recognition.

Flamboys is a collection of traditional waltzes, hymns and hornpipes written for the quatercentenary of Trinity College, some of the pitches being systematically replaced by those from the composer's earlier *Bob*, and from analogous places in the score. Some of the material is transposed so far down that it falls below the range of certain instruments creating holes in the texture. Barry's characteristic use of long, unbroken chains of loud chords can be found here as well. *Sur les Pointes* may be familiar to some in its guise of a piece for solo piano recorded previously. This arrangement is for wind band and consists of a series of staccato chords at a surprisingly (for Barry) quiet dynamic. The composer has stated that he wished to create a work whose harmonies were entirely "divorced from colour."

Barry's athletic approach to composition can perhaps best be appreciated in the strident and inexhaustible *Hard D*, a work in fifteen sections based again on highly-modified Irish ballads, composed at the rate of one section a day. The high and blistering trumpet passages found throughout this extended work suggest the immediacy with which they were written. Some of the sections are intolerably visceral, such is the way the pitches, and the manner in which they are colored, assault the brain.

Most readers will find this music fairly "accessible," however one may interpret this overused word. Most of all, Barry's is an original music. This is for those who like their environment ear-splittingly urban, their sports dangerously hard-hitting and their strong, black coffee perhaps laced with a bit of whiskey.

Cleopatra by North

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Alex North. *Cleopatra*. Complete original soundtrack recording, the composer conducting the 20th Century-Fox orchestra. Disc 1 (29 tracks): 76'.12." Disc 2 (24 tracks): 74'.49." Varese Sarabande

Alex North wrote the music for several other epics besides *Cleopatra* for Fox's legendary 1963 blockbuster, restored, and released this spring on DVD, in its correct aspect ratio, with an accompanying "making of" documentary. Though North preferred to write for small-scaled films where he could connect with the characters, his huge score for *Spartacus* (1960) is often cited as one of the greatest scores ever composed for film. Some of his other epic outings like *Dragonslayer* (1981), *The Agony and the Ecstasy* (1965) and *Cheyenne Autumn* (1964) have yet to receive the attention they deserve. But *Cleopatra* is thankfully getting a new lease on life. And it confirms what cognoscenti have always known, that North is the greatest composer who ever wrote for film, and among those with the widest and deepest emotional range. His *Cleopatra* score dramatizes the ups and downs of its queen and the two men most closely connected to her -- Julius Caesar and Mark Antony. North also paints a picture of the first century BC in striking yet carefully mixed colors, but never lets the epic overpower the personal, instead balancing such concerns.

The splendidly remastered original tapes let these qualities come through loud and clear, and one can hear sounds inaudible on the original soundtrack LP. The overture, missing in the older format, is built around the theme of Cleopatra's ambition -- an ostinato, with stunning percussive writing for each orchestral choir, and North follows the jazz practice of letting different instrumental groups solo: the brass do Ellingtonian trills or "shakes". The theme makes its most famous appearance in "Cleopatra Enters Rome" (North called it his "Egyptian Bolero") in which he uses all seven members of the sax family, "very crazy," he noted, "but a great sound when played without any vibrato."

The composer also probes the emotional lives of all the major characters: Caesar's physical and mental suffering in "Epilepsy," his barren wife's isolation in "Calpurnia" with its exquisite divided strings and poignant modulations, and Cleopatra's feelings in "Caesar's Departure" (disembodied winds whirring under interlocking string lines). Her alternately tender and volatile relationship with Antony is expressed in many parts of the score -- the bare, non-harmonized string solos in "One Breath Closer"; the touching flowering of "Antony...Wait," and the contrary motion of "Interlude." Their love is even in the spectacularly colored and highly syncopated "Sea Battle" which follows. This latter is also a stunning example of North's orchestral mastery.

But North never loses sight of the characters. The strings, for example, play the theme of Cleopatra's ambition at one point as an ostinato figure repeated 14 times, with harsh dry attacks; and the queen, who's watching the Battle of Actium with her generals from her cliff-top perch, also appears later in the accompanimental string figure which is an inversion of her theme. North makes her anguish for her lover palpable by writing for scordatura strings; the pitches are deliberately mistuned to make it more expressive and dramatic. The composer also recaps some of the party music heard on her barge, where dressed as Venus surrounded by cupids, she awaited Antony as Bacchus. North's music here sounds suitably deranged, with feverish ornamented flourishes in brass and percussion.

The picture had a famously troubled production and Darryl Zanuck canned just about everybody: Fox head Spyros Skouras, originating producer Walter Wanger (who'd wanted to shoot the film at Aswan), director Mankiewicz, even Liz Taylor. Though flawed, *Cleopatra* exerts its unique charms. And the film is raised to a much higher level by North's delicate, powerful, and highly original score. And who but he would write for an orchestra which included flutes, oboes, and bassoons in fours; a mandolin quartet; and a percussion section including sistrum, small dinner bells, tuned cowbells, five suspended cymbals of different pitches, five suspended triangles of different pitches, two small gongs, tubular bells, a gamelan, and a piano, sometimes played with the felts removed? That one could get away with this much in a company town like Hollywood can only inspire.

Rochberg Revisited

MARK ALBURGER

Variations [George Rochberg. *String Quartet No. 3*. Elliott Schwartz. *Bellagio Variations*]. Kreutzer Quartet. Metier.

George Rochberg's *String Quartet No. 3* is one of the great essays in this medium of the latter half of the 20th century. How wonderful to hear the Kreutzer Quartet perform this influential work -- on a level rivaling that of the premiere recording by the now-defunct Concord Quartet so many years ago -- in a new disc from Metier. Here again is a piece that plays with expectations, from the severe structural Stravinskian brusqueries of the opening movement to the warm glow of the quasi-Beethoven theme-and-variations of the middle movement. Flanking this are two headstrong Bartók/Stravinsky marches, concluding with a Mahler-tinged finale. Through it all, Rochberg finds motivic and thematic links that never allow for the music to come off as a disjointed collage, yet at the same time never allow one to escape a certain intriguing sense of stylistic schizophrenia. If the Kreutzer lingers and thrusts a bit differently than the Concord, so much the better by now.

Composed only a few years after the Rochberg, Elliott Schwartz's *Bellagio Variations* is a stimulating multi-stylistic wander through a labyrinthine set of variations on a revealed theme of Otto Luening. Schwartz twists all the knobs, from spiky to sentimental, to keep the listener engaged throughout. This is a keeper album.

Pianistic Percolation

PHILLIP GEORGE

Cesar Vuksic. *Tangos, Preludes, Etudes*. 4 Tay.

Argentinean pianist Cesar Vuksic has produced a delightful CD in *Tangos, Preludes, Etudes* (4 Tay), which begins wonderfully with two little masterpieces by Astor Piazzolla: *Lo Que Vendrá* and *Invierno Porteno*, the latter including a ground bass reminiscent of the Pachelbel *Canon in D*. Piazzolla is not without compatriots in further tango explorations by Horacio Salgán, Anibal Troito (the florid *Responso*), and Pedro Belisario Pérez.

Ten of Claude Debussy's *Preludes* follow -- "Les Collines d'Anacapri," "Voiles," "La Danse de Puck," "La Cathédrale Engloutie," "Minstrels," "Ondine," "La Puerta del Vino," "Les Fées Sont d'Exquises Danseuses," "La Fille Aux Cheveux de Lin," and "Feux d'Artifice" -- in very masterly renditions. The album concludes with two famous Chopin *Etudes*. We look forward to Vuksic recording more Piazzolla and the complete Debussy *Preludes* at a later date.

Walker on Water

MARK ALBURGER

Marty Walker. *Dancing on Water: Daniel Lentz, Peter Garland, Jim Fox, Michael Jon Fink, Rick Cox, Michael Byron*. Marty Walker, Clarinet. Cold Blue.

If people are best known by the company they keep, then clarinetist Marty Walker is blessed indeed. He keeps wonderful company in association with an excellent series of composers in Daniel Lentz, Peter Garland, Jim Fox, Michael Jon Fink, Rick Cox, and Michael Byron. The players are no slouches either, featuring the likes of trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith and percussionist William Winant. And the association of his recording, *Dancing on Water*, with Cold Blue Music is a winning combination as well: both the playing and the recording quality are sparkling.

After a brilliant start off in Fink's *As Is Thought / Aurora* (with bright contributions from harpist Susan Allen and vibraphonist David Johnson against Walker's dark bass clarinet), the album finds its center in a shining realization of Lentz's *Song(s) of the Siren*, heretofore only known to this writer from an intriguing earlier recording on an older music appreciation LP. This new version, as the former, captures a mysterious world of text-sound poetry, distorted rippling muzak, demented but mellow minimalism, and the watery ways of the *Odyssey*. Amy Knowles contributes her ethereal voice to Bryan Pezzone's burbling piano.

Among the Shadows -- Jim Fox's lovely, measured, ritual soul-music -- finds Walker and Pezzone in consort with Smith to marvelous effect. "Among" and "in consort" are the informing principles throughout this album, continuing with Peter Garland's simple and bubbling *Dancing on Water* and *Moonlight*, which features the clarinetist now paired with duo marimbists Johnson and Winant. Walker is not interested in empty virtuosic display; he's interested in making music of the highest quality.

Ironically, the most minimal piece on the playlist puts Walker most in the spotlight. *Elegant Detours*, by Michael Byron, enigmatically derails the group effort in a loopy, watery minimalism of ascending scalar patterns -- by far the longest single selection, too, at 13:25. A reductive process trims off all but the final top sustains. Is it circular breathing or good engineering? Only the sound guy knows for sure...

The CD ends basso *On Tuesday*, from Michael Cox, a deep four-movement work for bass clarinet, where Walker conspires with the contra-alto clarinetist composer. Can't tell you any more about the composers and performers; this is one of those hip classical albums taking its jewel box cues from a certain segment of pop music: no program notes, but the visual design looks great.

Play that Reggae Music

STEVE SHAFFER

Hayden Wayne. *Symphony No. 2 ("Reggae")*. The State Philharmonic of Brno, conducted by Leós Svarovsky. New Millennium.

Hayden Wayne knows subtitles. His *Symphony No. 3* is "Heavy Metal," No. 4 is "Funk," and 5 is "Africa." His *Piano Concerto* is "Rock and Roll." So the *Symphony No. 2* is "Reggae," but it could just as well be "Nah-nah-nah-nah-NYAH-nah," given the prominent use of that age-old, well-nigh universal, children's taunt.

Wayne writes well for orchestra, and he knows a certain market. The reggae rhythms (the backbeat eighths on 2 and 4) are varied and not omnipresent. And who knows, maybe someday the genre will have an honored tradition in concert music akin to the tango. Time will tell, in so many ways....

While the work seems closer to Dvorak and Gershwin than Bob Marley et al, Wayne's gifts for lyricism and invention are real. This New Millennium recording of the four-movement work by the State Philharmonic of Brno, conducted by Leós Svarovsky, does the piece justice. The performance has energy, excitement, and a certain "From the New World."

Concertos from Wernick

ROBERT ROANE

Richard Wernick. *Piano Concerto. Violin Concerto. Symphony II* with Lambert Orkis and Gregory Fulkerson, conducted by Richard Wernick and Larry Rachleff. Bridge.

There was a notion at one time of a "Philadelphia School," consisting of Georges Rochberg and Crumb, and Richard Wernick. As well as an association with the University of Pennsylvania, they also shared a certain sense of rapprochement with tonality after the heydays of serialism. One could even fancy the three exploring related territories: "This is the Piano Concerto that Crumb never wrote." Sure, sure. If Crumb didn't sound like Crumb, that is.

Truth is that these three composers have always cut very distinct personalities, and this is no less true in Wernick's recent Bridge release of *Piano Concerto* and *Violin Concerto*, with Lambert Orkis and Gregory Fulkerson respectively as soloists, and Wernick and Larry Rachleff likewise as conductors of the rather confusingly named *Symphony II* (no this is not a composition, but an orchestra).

Wernick's concerti are big, brawny masterworks full of fire and virtuosity. He provides no easy answers and the soloists offer no solutions other than performance excellence. The conductors of Symphony II respond positively to all the challenges (they'd better, since one was the composer, after all).

Willey's Gifts for Strings

ROBERT ROANE

James Willey. *String Quartets Nos. 1, 2, and 6*. The Esterhazy Quartet. CRI.

"Wild fiddling and slightly loony whimsy" are words James Willey uses to describe the third movement of his *String Quartet No. 6*, on a new CRI recording with the resolute players of the Esterhazy Quartet. They're accurate words, as is the composer's notion of "infernal fiddles" in his *Quartet No. 1*. In short, whether Willey is alluding to hymn tunes (particular "Now the Day is Over") or crashing about in various late 20th-century modernist idioms, he turns all his material to good effect. His writing is clear, incisive, and original.

Vital Women

SEAN HICKEY

Vitality Begun: Songs by Gloria Coates, Flicka Rahn, Judith Lang Zaimont, Lita Grier, Ruth Zechlin and Libby Larsen. Patricia Stiles, mezzo-soprano; Graham Cox, piano. Cavalli 308.

This is an idea long overdue: a CD dedicated to the setting of texts by female poets, by contemporary female composers, each song in the care of a fine female voice, in this case, mezzo-soprano Patricia Stiles.

Gloria Coates's 15 settings of Emily Dickinson poems are filled with sparse rhythmic movement, low piano sonorities, as well as some strumming of that instrument's strings. But what comes across is the mellifluous vocal writing, even when not overly challenging, that serves the despondency of many of these personal poems. Patricia Stiles admirably delivers, especially when, in "In falling timbers buried", she rises to a stirring apogee above the slow, cortege-like ostinato in the piano, redolent of death. Coates mentions that Dickinson borrowed the melodies of the day for the rhythms of her poems, and the vocal line of "Bind me I still can sing" is set to the music of "My country 'tis of thee" and no syllables need adjusting, all underscored by jolting chords in the piano's bass register. Beyond Dickinson, Coates's brief song, "Komplementar," sets a poem that attempts to describe, rather than evoke, colors. Again, the piano places uniform, deliberate chords underneath a dulcet vocal line. "Verwelkte Bucher" is evenly measured, though downcast in spirit. While rhythmically quite apart from other Coates sonic orchestral canvasses, it is still very engaging.

Another composer better known from instrumental music is Judith Lang Zaimont. Apparently, most of her works from early maturity were in the opera, choral or song idiom and the love-inspired *Greyed Sonnets* is an early song-cycle. Unfortunately, only two of the five songs are included here, to texts by Christina Rossetti and Sara Teasdale. "Entreaty," the second song, is exactly that, and Stiles conveys the beckoning in the text with real distinctiveness.

Ruth Zechlin's songs to German texts are filled with dark hues and muted shadings. Each has a peculiar stillness and sense of space that I much savored, "In a blue-glass instant" the most so. The impish "Ant and the grasshopper" of Libby Larsen, with its piano accompaniment reminiscent of a Hanon exercise, is a delight, and the delicious harmonies of "Clinging," also by this respected composer, swathe the wistful text in a fine mist.

The terse songs of Lita Grier featured here left us wanting more. The marriage between text and music is strong, and the searching "Who has seen the wind" (Christina Rossetti) is surely successful in this regard, with less of the four-square rhythms that were a bit less inviting in the other songs. Composer/singer Flicka Rahn is surely secure in the setting of her two texts recorded here, each evoking placid, pastoral scenes.

All of the texts are included, 31 in all. Stiles is an excellent singer who obviously had fun with this music; the only reservation from lauding this recording outright is the unfortunately large-room acoustic. Perhaps the sound could have been made more intimate, and thus more suitable to many of the texts, by closer mike placement. Nevertheless, this is a fine disc with Stiles consistent across a wide dynamic range and Graham Cox as a complimentary pianistic partner. One anticipates that other recordings of similar vitality are forthcoming.

Antics from Mr. Wilson

BRYCE RANKIN

Richard Wilson. *Affirmations* [*Affirmations. Intercalations. Civilization and Its Discontents. Transfigured Goat*]. Albany.

Richard Wilson. *Stresses in the Peaceable Kingdom: The Choral Music of Richard Wilson* [*In Schrafft's. A Dissolve. Elegy. Soaking. Poor Warren. Home from the Range. Can. Light in Spring Poplars. Hunter's Moon. August 22*]. William Appling Singers and Orchestra, conducted by William Appling. Albany.

Richard Wilson. *Symphony No. 1. Gnomics. Tribulations. Viola Sonata*. New Zealand Symphony, James Sedaris, Richard Wilson. Koch.

Affirmations, Intercalations, Civilization and Its Discontents, Transfigured Goat, Soaking, Poor Warren, Home from the Range, Can, Gnomics, Tribulations, Aethelred the Unready -- Richard Wilson's got a gift for titles. He also has a gift for writing self-avowed "chromatic style [that runs] counter to current trends." What sets him apart then from, say, Pierre Boulez? His answer, that he still believes in "the differentiation of thematic material and its recurrence, modified to varying degrees, [to] provide necessary interest and coherence . . . a kind of music that one can follow and remember . . . hav[ing] line and pulse -- the proverbial song and dance."

He has the song and dance, bouncing in the three-movement Pierrot ensemble of *Affirmations* (1990), the title cut on a 2000 release from Albany. And in the interpolations of *Intercalations*, a piano work referring to added days of leap years. And the twisted sense of fun continues in the intriguing *Civilization and Its Discontents*, inspired by a note left by the reclusive, little-known elder brother of Sigmund Freud, Hieronymus Guglielmo Freud [!].

My brother suffered a terrible frustration in his early youth. He harbored a burning desire to play the tuba. But his diminutive stature caused the band director to force him to learn the piccolo instead. It is my opinion that this had a marked effect on him in later life.

Talk about tuba envy! This solo work, in five I-wonder-what-he-meant-by-that movements ("Overcoming the Forces of Nature," "Soap as a Measure of Civilization," "Love, Necessity, and the Death Instinct," "The Aggressive Impulse Thwarted," and "Bad Conscience and the Superego") sent me rushing to my library to compare chapter and verse (Freud divides his into eight chapters). Of course, sometimes a tuba is only a tuba...

Obscure as well is the cryptic *Transfigured Goat*, composed as a curtain-raiser to Wilson's opera *Aethelred The Unready* (the latter not featured on this album, but given recently in New York). Here two unnamed characters, male and female in consort with clarinet and piano, scramble quotations from the plays of Joe Orton, with reference's to the composer's deceased dog Tracy. Cut 17 whimsically mirror's the critic's initial response: "I don't trust myself." I trust a reissue would include the tantalizing texts. Another reaction, from cut 20: "Miraculous" [Mandarin?].

Sometimes composers will simplify their styles when approaching choral music, but this does not sound the case with *Stresses in the Peaceable Kingdom: The Choral Music of Richard Wilson*, another Albany release, this time featuring the artistry of William Appling and his Singers and Orchestra, who are up to all the bewitching challenges that the composer poses. The vocal writing *In Schrafft's* (W.H. Auden) is as sophisticated as its clarinet, harpsichord and marimba accompaniment. In "Having finished the Blue Plate Special" [what a great line], the composer sets three Stephen Sandy poems: *A Dissolve, Elegy*, and *Soaking*, and the listener is immersed throughout. *Poor Warren*, a wonderful four-movement cycle to witty poems of John Ashbery, could almost be *Poor Arnold*, as Schoenbergian harmonies are given whimsical twists. The vocabulary of Warren G. Harding features prominently in the fourth setting, "Qualm."

Home from the Range is a more serious a capella matter, despite the presence of the "ghost" of "Home on the Range," to a Sandy Vietnam-era poem. Seriously beautiful. Also surprisingly beautiful is the ensuing *Can*, the same poet's unlikely ode to a discard. Indeed, Sandy seems to inspire the meditative in Wilson through two other settings, *Light in Spring Poplars* and *Hunter's Moon*. The album concludes with percussory sparkles in the lengthiest setting of the shortest text, John Unterecker's *August 22*.

In marked contrast to the unusualness of many of his titles, Wilson offers a straight-ahead *Symphony No. 1*, in four colorful, post-Bergian movements -- "Preparation," "Action," "Contemplation," "Reaction" (slow-fast-slow-fast, with each of the slower movements as the longer ones). Wilson is afraid of neither big emotive gestures, nor clever, witty turns of phrase, right down to the jovial conclusion, and the New Zealand Symphony, under the direction of James Sedares, makes the most of every moment. Ironically, the writing is more acerbic in the miniscule *Gnomics*, a woodwind trio for flute, oboe, and clarinet, originally written for Meyer Kupferman, and here nicely heard from Randy Bowman, Laura Ahlbeck, and Laura Flax. While *Gnomics* is intended as a divertimento, even more diverting are the piano-vocal *Tribulations* (to poetry of Mark Hollis, A.E. Housman, Judith Viorst, Hilaire Belloc, and Ogden Nash) from mezzo-soprano Mary Ann Hart with the composer at the keyboard. And a perky (Wilson roots for the underdog) *Viola Sonata* rounds out the festivities with Misha Amory and Blaca Uribe.

Wold's World

MARK ALBURGER

Erling Wold. *The Bed You Sleep In*. Table of the Elements. P.O. Box 423838, San Francisco, CA 94142.

Erling Wold. *I Weep*. Spooky Pooch, 5618 Ludwig Avenue, El Cerrito, CA.

Erling Wold. *Music of Love*. Spooky Pooch.

Erling Wold. *13 Versions of Surrender*. Spooky Pooch.

While reading a recent article on the eventual death of the universe, a wave of loneliness descended. The soundtrack was Erling Wold's *The Bed You Sleep In*. We didn't make it, but we're lying in it. And while the Wold soundtrack to a film by Jon Jost is "only" about disintegrations associated with a small logging town in Oregon, the universality is clear. At least in this case, what Terry Riley once said of Young's music seems relevant here: "Listening to La Monte's music is like being on a space station and waiting for lunch."

While Wold's music has occasional commonality with "Hearts of Space" style endeavors, his is in a different dimension, as a postminimal style at once personal and dreamily evocative, with various overtones of popular expressions; in the case of *The Bed You Sleep In* (Table of the Elements), this translates into echoes of waltzes and polkas. And the band assembled is typical "other-Woldian" all-stars: clarinetist Beth Custer, saxophonist Nik Phelps, accordionist Big Lou, keyboardist composer, drummer Mark McQuade-Crawford, violist Katrina Wreede, and cellist Matthew Brubek. Wold's ensembles are often as not little punk-thrash ensembles (usually quite gentle), almost appearing to be catch-as-catch-can assemblages of unlikely instruments (a tradition going back at least as far to the practicalities of Igor Stravinsky's *Histoire du soldat*), yet with a definite canny purpose. But unlike certain vacuum-packed precedents, these are not shrunken orchestras, but weirdly balanced associations that make extraordinary impacts.

As with many of the 12 cuts, the opening title selection emerges from found sounds -- natural and industrial -- that recall Michelangelo's half-finished sculptures growing out of granite. Well, maybe that's laying it on a little thick. Suffice it to say that the resultant gentle, measured, 3/4 pseudo-pop dreamily makes its melancholy effect. And somehow the added percussion, in a number of cuts, is often alarming. Found sounds from instruments are also part of the overall mix, both here and elsewhere in the composer's oeuvre. Additionally Wold can do a nice Glassian boogie, as in "People with Happy Lives, Their Lives Are Such Misery."

A second album, *I Weep* (Spooky Pooch), shows other fascinating sides of Wold's world, including a strong interest in alternate tunings -- as twisted, lovely, and haunted as Parch and Gann -- in such pieces as the opening *It was in the summer that i first noticed your hair, your face, your eyelid*.

[this is o]ne of my newer tunes which has a similar [minimalist] flair [to several earlier works]. The main theme comes back again and again, changed in the typical ways of register, instrumentation and key, but also with shifts in tuning and with algorithmic variations of rhythmic placement and dynamics.

The CD notes, scholarly and sardonic, suit the punky sounds just fine.

Duncan's long day is scored for oboe, trumpet and various inexpensive synthesizers. Maybe it is self-evident. Is masturbating three or four times a day uncommon? "Not one drop of jis shall escape the great Dali," he said, but it escapes me almost continually.

Mo is a piano work which can be played in two different tunings. The tuning used in this recording is a well temperament of Rameau which favors in-tune thirds at the expense of fifths. This fits the closely spaced thirds which exist throughout the piece. The other tuning is a so-called spiral tuning. A spiral scale repeats at some interval other than an octave. This particular scale is based on a cell of a 5/4 major third. The cell is repeated over the pitch space, so that closely spaced thirds are mostly in tune, but anything larger (including octaves) are in general out of tune. Some of the sections were algorithmically derived from the through-composed sections by processing the note lists on a Sun 4/260 . . .

As for the surreal distorted vocals of *Center-Moth and Boss-Puss*,

Antonin Artaud wrote the first poem. There is an original copy in the Bancroft library at the University of California at Berkeley of the book in which it was first published, *Artaud le Môme*. I trembled as I held it. The translation used here was given to my son on the day of his birth by my friend Mark Dippé. I read it to my child and was struck by its beauty. It seemed correct to set one of the poems with music which was as beautiful. Sam Boham sings in this recording. The tuning is close to a C Pythagorean tuning, with a couple of local note shifts.

Seven days ago is a stern, sustained meditation for pipe organ (played by the composer), with pulsations and filigree from vibraphonist Toma di Frutta [!?!]. Somewhere Sverett Hoeck provides flutes.

As we got into it a little bit is another straightforward piano work [like *Mo*], here played on a Yamaha upright.

Another straightforward? Try again again with this mad dash. The two-minute *A little girl dreams of taking the veil* appears to be, known at the time or not, a study for the composer's like named opera, recently revived at San Francisco's ODC Dance Gallery

Max Ernst assembled a number of collage novels out of engravings from popular writings and penny novels of the time. A portion of the second of these, first published in Paris in 1930, is quoted in the second song here. Laurel Monroe sings. The tuning is the just scale: 1/1, 9/8, 6/5, 5/4, 4/3, 3/2, 8/5, 5/3, 9/5.

Two pages of the CD notes are devoted to some of the engravings.

I was severely minimalist for an extended moment in 1978. This moment appears from time to time in my works today, long after it has become very unhip. I recently uncovered several fragments from this era. [One is] presented here as *The whistling note*. The tunings [are] varied, and each instrument sometimes plays in a scale slightly different from the others.

The whistling note does share much in common with *It was in the summer*, with its cranky plucked string sounds and plangent sustains. *Egg* brings Wold's percussive signature into the mix, with flutish whale wails in metered and unmetered contexts. As for *Piano Concerto No. 4* ("*Vsyayukh Minyetchik*"), Wold relates improbably

Vsyayukh Minyetchik was one of the most colorful personalities of 20th-century music. Born in Bulgaria in 1916, she fled German persecution in World War II, settling in Chad [!] until her death in 1983. By virtue of marriage to the son of a Swedish industrialist, she was far more comfortable than almost any of her artistic contemporaries . . .

When I studied with Minyetchik in the early 70's, she had already destroyed a large quantity of her early works. The piano concerto I have recorded here was one of the few survivors, dating from the years of her travel out of war-torn Europe We would often smoke and drink ourselves into a terrifying stupor and produce reams of written material. Most of these writings were worthless, although this wasn't so clear to us at the time . . . She and I shared a certain lack of interest in titles, only coming up with them when they were required. I miss her recently, almost as much as my cat. Of course, Minnie and I were much closer sexually.

What can we say? Sounds ageless and suspiciously, frantically advanced ... *I feel a little worse today than yesterday* is a still sustained scalar descent of high single, but rich, whistles with low dronic rumblings. Bits of middle windy industrial middle ground, too. I feel a little better today.... *Chin ho* is a brief Wild West tack piano

third in the series of portraits of *Hawaii 5-O* characters begun on the Duncan Trio LP *Baron Ochs*. All the pieces use the same note sequence, with variations to capture the personality of the person portrayed.

Ending not with a cosmic big bang but a local wavy, wispy whimper, is *318 45th street*

one of the less beautiful places I lived in Oakland. The house was home to many many mice, who had made intricate nests in the insulation of the stove. Simple nesting might have been ok, except that their evaporating liquid wastes filled the air whenever one tried to bake anything. We decided to get rid of them, and, having watched so many Disney films, decided not to kill them with the typical horrible mechanical death devices. Instead, we bought glue traps. We unfortunately misunderstood their true nature. We were under the impression that one could free the mice after they were caught and release them into some natural setting. However, after we had set the traps and found many many mice caught in them the next morning, it quickly became clear that they would never come free of the glue without having their limbs and skin removed. I had to drown each one individually by hand. This work is a eulogy for those mice. It could be akin to the prayers given by the American Indians to the souls of animals killed in the hunt. The tuning is a 5-limit scale.

Thanks for sharing. Chirps and lonely pianism fade into nothingness.

A second Spooky Pooch CD, *Music of Love* (which is pretty far from romantic lounge music) has much the same concerns as *I Weep* -- a little bit postminimalist / microtonalist, a little bit rock 'n' roll / new age. And the opening *The Islamic Republic of Las Vegas* (three selections) is a lot Middle Eastern, effectively calling to mind the glittering and confused images of its title.

The "Dance of the Testifiers" occurs after the baptismal ceremony and involves all of the twelve original witnesses of the golden plates on which the Book of Mormon is based. The tune is in the style of the music of the Arabs who settled in Andalusia, although nothing else in the piece is, especially the rhythms, which are much more irregular. The arrangement here is for vibraphone, flute and drums, where the vibraphone has been retuned to a scale based on a series of simple just ratios.

. . . Omar and Alma are involved at one point in some fairly explicit sex acts, a few of which might be considered by some perverse in nature. However, at the time this play was written, the AIDS epidemic was just beginning, and we wanted to make known our recommendations for abnormal and safe sex acts. It is in this scene that the second piece, "Ten Tan Girls for Every Boy," is heard. The tuning here is one of the Kirnberger well temperaments and the piece is arranged for strings, organ, clarinet, harp, electric bass, and saxophone.

"Day of the Polygamists" is a Vegas-style extravaganza which is led by Gustav Mahler. He has just finished a long monologue over the love scene above and has come to be very upset by the fact of his impotence. This tune is for piano and wineglasses.

Canned Demon is a brief spin on deconstructed music boxes. The *For Lynn Murdock* (the composer's wife) pieces were originally for "dropped" ("freely tuned") piano. The first is here played on 11 solo strings (which sound amazingly like a Partch chromelodion) and percussion. The second is

drastically rearranged . . . for the rock band NAME. This piece is polytonal, using two fixed minor scales, one based on d: 1/1, 9/5x6/5, 7/6, 4/3, 3/2, 8/5, and 9/5 and one on the b a 6/5 below the d: 1/1, 8/7, 6/5, 11/8, 3/2, 8/5, 16/9, notated in terms of the intervals from the tonic.

Got it? More music boxes follow in *The Story of Play-Do [Doh?]*. *Hagalaz* has its minimalist-microtonal chops down with birdsong and more. The fiery part is hot, almost middle-easternly so; the cold features a series of spatial sustains.

The first half is derived from the "hot" Norse runes: fire, fertility, light, sun, and day, and the second half from cold: secret, unknown, hail, water, pain, and ice. Each section makes use of an extraneous or extra-musical element which is intended to represent the rune somewhat. The tuning here is fairly simple.

The composer then rattles off a classic laundry list of ratios. More bookend music boxes in *Ara Hemat*, followed by *Anus Dentata*

of course, a fear of teeth in an unexpected place.

With its organ in just intonation, this sounds like very holy music (sorry). As does the contented and poignant *Marriage*, in a just-tuned Javanese pelog scale. Final music boxes in *Heaven for Girls* (nice title, as are so many of them -- titles, I mean... girls, too...). More tuning adventures in the initially quiet *Crash* -- quiet, that is, until awaking on a freeway, a section that's so scary, it's evil in its shrieky car screams.

Among the credits, Wold lists Pork Egg and Gerard Grisey.

The fourth album in this Wold tour -- vintage Erling, in consort with soprano Laurie Amat and more instrumental all-stars in various funky combinations -- is *13 Versions of Surrender* (Spooky Pooch). Sure enough, the titular cut is more than the bulk of the proceedings, set to evocative poems of Michelle Murphy, inexplicably lasting 14 cuts. Paul Hansen's wiggly bassoon (prominently B-C) in the opening against Leighton Fong's rhythmic and lyrical cello makes for a stunning combination, ably supported by the composer's pianism. Over this Amat soars and patters in haunting, heavenly transports. At times Wold captures the same pure tones of Rzewski's *Jefferson*.

Close is another unlikely ensemble of flute, electric keyboards, percussion, and double bass -- nicely brought to life by members of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music New Music Ensemble, conducted by Deirdre McClure. As sometimes occurs in Hovhaness, Wold's percussion is excitingly oversized, given to antics such as big drum-and-cymbal crashes in small group contexts.

Keyboardist Wold presides over as quirky a band -- again emphasizing the extremes of treble and bass -- in the lovely *I brought my hips to the table*, with Hansen joined by flutist Elinor van Ommen, trumpeter Scott Macomber, and tubist Tom Heasley, all in fine voice. They engage in humorous oompa and boogie jives, which this writer took in with pleasure live at the ODC Dance Gallery sometime past.

hast du feuer? has indeed fire, but absolutely no frame of reference in its uncredited middle-eastern ululations and pop drumming. It's a stunning work that would not be totally out of place on a boom box in Cairo.

The two movements of *albrechts flügel* fly quietly in pensive and propulsive postromantic pianism, performed by Marja Mutro. Amat and Wold return for his soulful *song of songs*. An excerpt from *Sub Pontio Pilato* concludes, with Amat, the renowned John Dykers, and the lovely Ancora choir, borne up effectively by the Seattle Creative Orchestra.

Throughout Wold's output there is artistry, intelligence, musicality, and wit -- a rare and potent combination. It's infectious stuff that will leave you changed, although how, I can't say.... cough, cough...

Wolff's Lonely Planets

MARK ALBURGER

Christian Wolff. *Tilbury*. *Snowdrop*.

Like some of Erling Wold's music, Christian Wolff's *Tilbury* could call up a space metaphor or two, but for different reasons. And while Wolff also acknowledges minimalist influences, he remains the student of Cage and goes for the concepts rather than the pulse.

The idea is that sounds come in fixed cycles, like planets in a solar system. For example (the simpler case), sound x appears at a more or less fixed duration every 54 beats, sound y every 29, sound z every 11.

This is minimalist organized sound, with lonely-simple notes and collections of notes spinning off into the void, sonically colliding in various nonexplosive ways. *Tilbury 1* (1969) through *Tilbury 4* (1970) (the series is named after pianist John) explore various pitch groups -- single notes within the limited space of a minor 9th, single notes widely spaced, collections arpeggiated at various speeds, long sustains and seven "made-up scales. The dedicated performers are Dimitrios Polisoidis (violin and viola), Roland Dahinden (trombone and melodica), and Hildegard KleeB (piano), on this Mode recording.

The following *Snowdrop*, despite its title referring to an early-blooming flower in Wolff's home state of Vermont, delineates a similar cosmos. This nicely evolves to the final *Tilbury* selection.

Tilbury 5 [1996] was written almost 25 years later at the request of Roland Dahinden, Hildegard KleeB and Dimitrios Polisoidis, to extend the *Tilbury* set. The earlier pieces belong to a fairly austere minimalism (itself a reaction to the austerities of total serialism). This one comes after many years -- starting, just after these earlier pieces, in parts of *Burdocks* -- of trying to loosen up the music and work out of more familiar, standard, Western, 19th and 20th century images, not replicating them of course but variously refracting them. An example is the use of folk song material, not necessarily recognizable, but generating sounds out of a modal pitch base and more direct rhythms. I had contributed to a 60th birthday presentation for John Tilbury in 1966 a 60-note melody. The piece consists of 38 short inventions mostly on that line; four, numbers 23, 27, 28, and 29 draw from Hanns Eisler's anti-fascist song of the 1930s.

Tilbury 5 is indeed later and sounds it. The work has a headlong forward-thrusting motion not heard earlier, a series of scale fragments in constant new assemblages, with individual sections seamlessly connected. And yes, glimmers of folksong do emerge, tantalizing, disconnectedly...

A's from Z

MARK ALBURGER

Pamela Z. *Parts of Speech: An Audio Piece*. 540 Alabama Street, Studio 213, San Francisco, CA.

Pamela Z loves words and music. All of it -- adjectives, adverbs, articles, conjunctions, nouns, pronouns, verbs, melody, harmony, rhythm, repetition, and change. A compendium of the text-sound side of her art (she has many sides) may be had in *Parts of Speech*, available from 540 Alabama Street. This gifted performer-composer brings a gorgeous voice, superb musicality, and a dry wit to all her endeavors. Here she multitracks, loopily loops, and lectures her own spoken and sung voice with found vocals (many) to poignant, urgent, sassy, and hilarious effects. The 27-minute work is divided into five sections.

- I. Parts
- II. Small Talk
- III. Geekspeak
- IV. Ask
- V. Questions (Trip)
- VI. Parts Reprise

Small Talk features synthetic male voice, and the geeks of *Geekspeak* really are computer geeky, evidently recorded on location in the field.

After synthetic definitions, *Ask* is the "Brother/Sister Can You Spare a Dime?" of our time, with the recorded homeless voices of "Ah, please spare change, anything, just something to eat" "Excuse me, I don't mean to interrupt you folks," "Could you spare 80 cents to help me get home," "Say, sir, can you help me," "I'm hungry," and spare, sustained, beautiful backing Z vocals. Ask, ask, ask.

Questions, heard live several years ago at San Francisco's *Opus 415 Marathon*, is just as wonderful on CD -- engaging visual live performance notwithstanding. "How was your trip?" and several other phrases become a poppish rip, over which other wild vocal components are overlain, including what sounds like a sick oboe (it's no doubt all Z's facile, often electronically distorted vocals).

...but the actual classification relies on its use in the sentence...

Radiant Zaimont

ROBERT ROANE

Judith Lang Zaimont. *Radiancance*. 4-Tay.

Judith Lang Zaimont. *The Vocal-Chamber Art: Music by Judith Lang Zaimont*. :Leonarda.

Radiancance is a good title for a Judith Lang Zaimont 4-Tay choral CD, because her music manifests this quality. With the avid participation of the Choral Music Society of Southern California, directed by Nick Strimple, Zaimont's music just sparkles along, be it mythological (*The Chase*, an Atalanta text of the composer's) or percussional (*Meditations*). She can indeed write *Sunny Airs and Sober* (to texts of Shakespeare, Shelley, John Gay, and Robert Herrick), and the final "Life is a jest" is diverting (it can also be heard as "might I suggest"!). She can become spiritual as well, as in excerpts from *Sacred Service for the Sabbath Evening*. This spirituality ranges from somber to something that could almost be characterized as "religious ragtime."

Her solo vocal music can be even more intriguing on a Leonarda release, *The Vocal-Chamber Art*, which finds soprano Elena Tyminski in full voice for *Greyed Sonnets* to poems of Millay, Teasdale, and Rossetti. Both tenor Charles Bressler and pianist Zaimont (she accompanies Tyminski above as well) engage in musical acrobatics in *Chansons Nobles et Sentimentales* (Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud) -- he with dexterous fast French syllables, she with inside-the-piano gratuities.

The Blakian *Songs of Innocence* (what? no *Experience*?!) are colored with virtuosic flute, cello, and harp, from Patricia Spencer, Barbara Bogatin, and Nancy Allen. Soloists Tyminski and the lyrical tenor Price Browne join as duetists in the final selection's Stravinskian overtones. The enchantment continues in *Two Songs for Soprano and Harp* (Rich and Hardy -- no, Zaimont evidently does not favor writing works inspired by merely one poet), from Berenice Bramson and Sara Cutler.

In Zaimont's evocations of *The Magic World*, Native American elements are incorporated. Sometimes her Indians are Crumbianly avant-garde (inside-the-piano music and sleighbells), at other times stereotypical, or even punks. Baritone David Arnold intones, patterns, and war whoops through it all.

Ineffably Long Times

MARK ALBURGER

Zhou Long. *The Ineffable* [*The Ineffable. Wild Grass. Five Maskers. Ding. Metal, Stone, Silk, Bamboo*]. Music from China, New Music Consort, Manhattan Brass Quintet, Brooklyn Philharmonic. Cala.

It's a long way between a farm in Northeastern China and Carnegie Hall, but Zhou Long has made the journey via practice, practice, practice. Born to a Westernized family in Beijing, Zhou suffered the slings and arrows of the Cultural Revolution in the backcountry, before returning to the capitol's Central Conservatory and moving on to Columbia University, where his teachers were Chou Wen Chung and Mario Davidovsky.

Presently Music Director of Music from China Ensemble and Composer-in-Residence with the New Music Consort, Zhou has become one of the highest profile musical creators of his generation. *The Ineffable*, a new Cala CD, showcases this fine composer's ability to move effortlessly between East and West, merging disparate influences into a coherent and convincing style. The title work, for flute/piccolo, percussion, pipa, zheng, violin, and cello holds no dichotomy, but blends all into a compelling, animated, and mysterious unity. A related bewitching, energetic, pensive, and quirky *Jin-Shi-Si-Zhu* ("*Metal, Stone, Silk, Bamboo*") -- for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, percussion, clay xun, and dizi (the latter constituting a trio of flutes: qudi, dadi, and bagdi) -- was influenced by the Tang De Qu, a grand form of T'ang dynasty song and dance.

Wild Grass, from cellist Fred Sherry, distills Zhou's style to a wailing and scurrying diamond, occasionally reminiscent of certain passages in Crumb's *Black Angels*. By contrast, *Five Maskers*, for brass quintet, sounds more burblingly and resoundingly Western, right down to the Varèse-like motives occasionally present (perhaps an influence-gift from Chou, who studied with the great Franco-American privately). *Ding* (for clarinet, zheng, and double bass), in another variant of the East-West synthesis, gives a nod to both 12-tone and tonal writing. Appropriately, the title (according to the composer's CD notes) is the Sanskrit word for "the perfect absorption of thought into the one object of meditation."

Calendar

August 3

Fresh Voices Festival II. Mark Alburger's *Antigone*, Lisa Scola Prosek's *Miniature Portraits* (lyrics by Michael McDonagh), D.C. Meckler's "Toccatà di Luna" from *Apollo 14: A Space Opera*, and Anne Doherty's *Modulating Back to Tonic*, with Tisha C. Page, Harriet March Page, David Saslav, Melissa Smith, Micah Epps, Sharon Walters, Robert Benda, Miriam Lewis, and John Thorn. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through August 5.

West Coast premiere[!] of Philip Glass's *The Photographer*. Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, CA. Repeated August 5.

August 4

Higdon's *Fanfare Ritmico*, Adams's *Fearful Symmetries*, and Rouse's *Violin Concerto*. Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, CA.

August 7

Peninsula Suite, by Nancy Bloomer Deussen, premiered by the Sinfonia Musica, conducted by Peter Willsher. Ottawa, Canada.

August 11

Harrison's *Rapunzel* and Thomson's *The River*. Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium, Santa Cruz, CA.

August 12

Rouse's *Rapture*, MacMillan's *Symphony No. 2*, and Rautavaara's *Angel of Light*. Mission, San Juan Bautista, CA.

Messiaen's *Turangalila Symphony*. Aspen, CO.

August 16

Mark O'Connor and Steve Mackey in *A Tribute to Stephane Grappelli*. La Jolla, CA.

August 17

Christopher Rouse's *Concerto per Corde*. Aspen, CO.

August 19

Górecki's *Symphony No. 3* and Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. Aspen, CO.

Chronicle

June 1

Tempo: Berkeley Festival of Contemporary Performance. Hertz Hall, Berkeley, CA. Through June 9.

Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

June 2

Empyrean Ensemble. Julia Morgan Theater, Berkeley, CA. Repeated June 3, University of California, Davis.

Elizabeth Brown, Mario Davidovsky, Julia Wolfe, and Tan Dun. Dia Center, New York, NY.

Downtown Chamber and Opera Players (Soprano Tyler Azelton, mezzo soprano Laura Wolfe, baritone Mark Duer, flute, two percussionists, the keyboardist composer, and string quintet), conducted by Mimi Stern-Wolfe, in Elodie Lauten's *Waking in New York* (text by Allen Ginsberg). 14th Street Y, New York, NY. "Elodie Lauten became friendly with . . . Allen Ginsberg in the 1970's, soon after she moved to New York from Paris, and for a time she accompanied him at the keyboard when he chanted and sang. In 1996, Ms. Lauten persuaded Ginsberg to write a libretto for an opera she was planning about life in New York. What Ginsberg provided was a collection of published poems that used New York as a vivid backdrop, with Ginsberg's own concerns Lauten completed and first performed the work . . . in 1999 Joining plot on the absentee list were staging . . . action and characters [I]t is . . . a lovely, effective and affecting . . . song cycle Lauten has treated Ginsberg's poetry and its underlying spirit carefully, even reverently. She tucked his personal and sometimes diarylike texts into her own agreeably melodic and eclectic style, but she also appears to have listened carefully for traces of the music that animated Ginsberg's soul. When she found them, both in direct references and by implication, she incorporated them into her settings in the form of blues melodies, the soulful wail of the gospel singer, hints of jazz and the insistent rhythms and bright melodies of pop music" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 6/7/01].

Dan Locklair's *Dubose Heyward Triptych* premiered by the Carolina Chamber Chorale. Charleston, SC. Through June 6.

June 5

North/South Chamber Orchestra in Sellars's *Bassoon Concertino*, Spar's *Carnal Node*, Weirmeir's *Prometheus Unbound*, and Lifchitz's *Danzas Rebeldes*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

June 6

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Mahler's *Symphony No. 8*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through June 10. "The vocal soloists were superb, the choral singing ravishing, the San Francisco Symphony fearless and forthright" [Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 6/8/01].

June 7

Alla Elana Cohen. St. Botolph Hall, Boston, MA.

June 8

Citywinds in the San Francisco premiere of Belinda Reynolds's *Turns*. Old First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, CA.

People's Genome Celebration, with Todd Barton. Smithsonian Institute, Washington, DC.

June 9

Reich's *Clapping Music*, Nancarrow's *Etude No. 1 and 4*, Ligeti's *Etude No 4, 8, and 18*, and Donatoni's *Cloche 3*. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Death of David Sheinfeld (b. 9/20/06, St. Louis, MI), of cancer, at age 94. San Francisco, CA. "His . . . works were performed by the San Francisco Symphony -- where he was a violinist from 1945 to 1971 -- under music directors Pierre Monteux, Enrique Jordà, Seiji Ozawa and Edo de Waart, as well as the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Chicago Symphony, the Kronos Quartet and the San Francisco Contemporary Music Players. In recent years, his music was championed by conductor Kent Nagano, who called him a genius and a gift to the Bay Area. Nagano led the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra in many premieres . . . including *E=MC2* for string quartet and orchestra and *The Earth Is a Sounding Board* His final composition, a symphony-concerto for percussion and orchestra, was written for Nagano and the Berkeley Symphony, and is scheduled for a world premiere in September. In addition to his musical training, Mr. Sheinfeld drew inspiration from a wide range of intellectual fields, including astronomy and particle physics -- he called Albert Einstein a 'real influence' on his work -- and art history. In *Dear Theo*, a 1996 work for baritone and chamber orchestra, he set to music Vincent Van Gogh's letters to his brother. . . . From 1929 to 1931 he studied in Rome with Ottorino Respighi, after thrusting some of his compositions into the hands of Respighi's wife in a hotel lobby while the Italian was in the United States on a conducting tour" [Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/11/01].

June 10

Patti Deuter performs Debussy's *Pour Le Piano*, Rzewski's *Dreadful Memories*, Antheil's *Musical Picture of a Friend* and *The Ben Hecht Waltzes*, Poulenc's *Cinq Nocturnes*, and Axtmann's *Two Preludes*. Melissa Smith performs Poulenc's *Trois Novelettes*, Duparc's *Chanson Triste*, *Soupir*, *Serenade Florentine*, and *Phidyle*, and Debussy's *L'echelonnement des haies*, *Romance*, *Les Cloches*, and *Nuit d'Etoiles* (with David Saslav). Eliane Lust Studio, San Francisco, CA.

David Saslav's *Alleluia* and *Lord's Prayer*. First Presbyterian Church, San Mateo, CA.

June 11

75th birthday of Carlisle Floyd

June 12

Manhattan Chamber Orchestra performs Thomson's *Four Songs*, songs by Peter Warlock, Hovhaness's *Janabar*, Gerald Chenoweth's *Orientale*, and Stefania de Kenessey's *Cutting Loose: Concerto for Trumpet, Strings, and Percussion*, with the latter two composers in attendance. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "Ms. de Kenessey's work . . . has elements in common with . . . Hovhaness . . . [I]t has bright, lively quality that would make it at home in an orchestral pops concert" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/18/01].

Bob Barraz and KT Niehoff. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

June 13

San Francisco Symphony announces a 10-year commissioning agreement with John Adams. San Francisco, CA.

Philip Glass's *In the Penal Colony* (after Kafka), with John Duykers, directed by JoAnne Akalaitis. New York, NY. Glass's signature technique of ravishment by repetition lends itself well to the dreamlike state of unbroken suspense" [Ben Brantley, The New York Times, 6/15/01].

June 15

California Composers' Consortium in music of JJ Hollingsworth. Old First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, CA.

Pamela Z. The Lab, San Francisco, CA.

June 16

Dan Locklair's *Brief Mass*. Bulach, Switzerland Through June 24, Pratteln.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *In These Delightful Pleasant Groves* performed by the San Francisco Choral Artists. Unitarian Universalist Church. Kensington, CA. Through June 24, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Palo Alto (CA).

San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra in Copland's *Appalachian Spring*, and music from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Bernstein's *Candide*. "[The] Copland . . . [was] a crisp, translucent reading that allowed the entire orchestra to shine" [Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/16/01].

Kupferman's *Sonata for Two Cellos*. Lee, MA.

June 17

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *The Voyage of Christopher Columbus* performed by the Foothill College Symphonic Wind Ensemble. Cubberly Theater, Palo Alto, CA.

June 19

ASCAP *Adventurous Programming Award* presented to The Esoterics (Seattle, WA), directed by Eric Banks, at the Chorus America Annual Conference. Toronto, Canada.

Music of Kurtág and Carter. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

June 20

Bang on a Can All-Stars premiere Keeril Makan's *Bleed Through*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "'It seemed to be an aggressive piece at first, but its hard edge quickly evolved into something more complex. Most strikingly, the piece never lost the tautness that made its opening pages so arresting [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/22/01].

June 21

Lucero's *Wuornos*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA. "*Wuornos* needs heavy editing" [Allan Ulrich, San Francisco Chronicle, 6/25/01].

Death of blues guitarist and singer John Lee Hooker (b. 8/17/17, Clarksdale, MI), at age 83. Los Altos, CA. "'No matter what anybody says, it all comes down to the same thing,' [Hooker] once said. 'A man and a woman, a broken heart and a broken home' Hooker's songs stoked the blues-rock of the 1960's. They were picked up by English and American rockers, among them the Rolling Stones, Canned Heat, the Animals, and, later, Z.Z. Top and George Thorogood and the Destroyers. Mr. Hooker recorded more than 100 albums, and he toured everywhere from juke joints to concert halls. . . . He was one of 11 children in a family of sharecroppers on a cotton plantation The bluesmen Blind Blake, Blind Lemon Jefferson and Charles Patton were among the visitors to . . . [his stepfather William] Moore[']s household. . . . [Hooker] started playing on strings made from strips of inner tube nailed to a barn, then moved on to the guitar. . . . [He] worked as an usher in the segregated W.C. Handy movie theater on Beale Street. He soaked up more blues in Memphis by playing with musicians like Robert Nighthawk He moved to northern California, forming bands with local musicians, and was associated with a blues club in San Francisco, John Lee Hooker's Boom Boom Room. He appeared as a street musician in *The Blues Brothers* movie" [Jon Pareles, The New York Times, 6/22/01].

Absolute Ensemble performs Schimmel's *Stairway to Honey / A Taste of Heaven*, Hendrix's *Purple Haze*, Lennon and McCartney's *Come Together*, Kander and Ebb's *New York, New York*, Coleman's *Absolution*, Reich's *Music for Pieces of Wood*, and Daugherty's *Dead Elvis*. World Trade Center, New York, NY.

Downtown Ensemble in Elise Kermani's *Wak Auf*. "Bach's *Wachet Auf* cantata provide the structural model for the work, although in Ms. Kermani's piece the chorales became full ensemble movements, the recitatives were short instrumental solos and the duets were exchanges between bass and violin or violin and clarinet, rather than vocal soloists. Fleeting glimpses of the Bach were heard on a recording, processed beyond recognition and used mainly as embellishment, or as part of the vivid sonic atmosphere that Ms. Kermani created" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/28/01].

June 23

Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Roundtop, TX.

Sonos Handbell Ensemble in *Runaway Child*. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Saratoga, CA. Through July 1, First Unitarian Church, San Francisco.

June 24

Patti Deuter plays music of Debussy, Poulenc, Rzewski, Antheil, and Axtmann. Dance Palace, Point Reyes Station, CA.

Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Aspen, CO.

June 26

73rd anniversary of the birth of Jacob Druckman.

June 30

Seattle Creative Orchestra. Shorecrest Performing Arts Center, WA.

June 29

Quintet of the Americas. Queens Botanical Garden, New York, NY. Repeated Bar Harbor Congregational Church, Bar Harbor, ME.

June 30

Death of guitarist Chet (Chester Burton) Atkins (b. 6/20/24), Luttrell, TN), at age 77. Nashville, TN. "We were so poor and everybody around us was so poor that it was the 40's before any of us knew there had been a Depression. . . . I'd play . . . until the strings broke. When that happened, I'd just rip a wire out of the screen porch and tune 'er up again. It took me 20 years to learn I couldn't tune too well. And by that time I was too rich to care. . . . 'The Nashville Sound?' . . . It's the sound of money " [Chet Atkins].

Comment

By the Numbers

Number of Classical Brits award winners in 2001 that went to performers

7

Number of Classical Brits award winners in 2001 that went to composers

0

Percentage of Qualiton Imports sales distributed through Tower Records, 1996

40%

Percentage of Qualiton Imports sales distributed through Tower Records, 2001

18%

Net financial loss of Tower Records, January-June 2001

\$6,200,000

Total classical and classical-crossover record sales, 1996 (Joseph Micallef)

c. \$200,000,000

Total classical and classical-crossover record sales, 2000 (Joseph Micallef)

c. \$135,000,000

Number of articles on contemporary popular music in Time, June 2001 (4 issues)

5

Total number of articles on contemporary popular music in Time, April-June 2001 (13 issues)

10

Number of articles on contemporary classical music in Time magazine, June 2001 (4 issues)

0

Total number of articles on contemporary classical music in Time magazine, April-June 2001 (13 issues)

1

Number of articles on contemporary popular music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, June 2001 (4 issues)

11

Total number of articles on contemporary popular music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, April-June 2001 (13 issues)

29

Number of articles on contemporary classical music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, June 2001 (4 issues)

1

Total number of articles on contemporary classical music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, April-May 2001 (13 issues)

1

Number of articles on contemporary popular music in The New Yorker, June 2001 (3 issues)

1

Number of articles on contemporary classical music in The New Yorker, June 2001 (3 issues)

0

Number of pictures of contemporary popular musicians in The New York Times Sunday Arts & Leisure Guide, June 2001 (4 issues)

2

Number of pictures of classical musicians in The New York Times Sunday Arts & Leisure Guide, June 2001 (4 issues)

2

Number of pictures of contemporary classical musicians in The New York Times Sunday Arts & Leisure Guide, June 2001 (4 issues)

0

Item

Tower asked all of the major distributors – Universal, Sony, BMG, EMI, and Warner – for extended terms, specifically 360 days to pay for classical product, likened by some to operating on consignment. Universal was the first to agree, followed by Sony; BMG has either agreed or is in the process of doing so. Warner, however, has not; nor has EMD (EMI Music Distribution). Both are attempting to “work something out” with the international chain that has long prided itself on carrying extensive classical back-catalog offerings. Allegro, Harmonia Mundi, and Qualiton Imports are also in the throes of negotiations with Tower, which has asked them and a number of other “non-major” distributors for 180-day terms (not 360, as originally reported by this writer). Thus far, none has agreed. . . . Were the distributors – large or small -- to give Tower longer dating, they would be called upon by all their customers to do the same. “We’re trying to work out something with Tower that we can offer to all of our customers,” said one major-distributor executive. “We can’t go out and cut separate deals with everybody.” . . . Tower has dropped all classical coverage from its in-house publication, “Pulse.”) Insiders say more of the smaller distributors will be frozen out in the coming weeks. Billboard reports that Koch International, an independent whose hit pop product has thus far saved its classical line from being barred from Tower, has not been paid by the chain in the last month. Company president Michael Rosenberg had no comment on the situation. Tower Records chairman and founder Russ Solomon, who called this writer in protest after the first article was posted, says the holds are “temporary.” (Calls to his office in preparation for the May 11 report were referred to PR woman Louise Solomon and not returned.) . . . [Russ Solomon said] “We’re not going out of the classical business, we are the classical business in this country.” No one denies that. And everyone canvassed for these articles expressed concern over Tower’s troubles. Indeed, some feel that they began when the 75-year-old Solomon distanced himself from the company’s day-to-day operations.

Susan Elliott
MusicalAmerica.com, 5/29/01

I seldom listen to pop music because it's too monotonous rhythmically and too coarse harmonically to interest me for long; it depresses me and fails to connect me to a better, nobler society. When I write [prose], I want to feel I could belong, at least in my dreams, to a world in which art must be puzzled out, a realm that believes that beauty is difficult.

Edmund White
The New York Times, 6/18/01

Communication

Dear Editor,

It is very nice to read Michael McDonagh's reviews each month in 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC

Warmest regards,

Earle Brown
Rye, NY

Dear Editor,

I enjoy your great journal.

Christopher Shainin
Seattle, WA

Allan Ulrich[*'s* San Francisco Chronicle review of the *Other Minds Festival*] . . . might actually give one the impression that Ulrich actually likes new music. (If one didn't know better.) I don't know what somebody put in his drink, but I was glad to finally see a (basically) positive review.

Pamela Z
San Francisco, CA

Opportunities

Richard Kostelanetz is preparing a new edition of his *Conversing with Cage* (1988) and would welcome ASAP the texts of any interviews or selected passages of Cage talk not used before, along with permission to reprint, sent to the addresses below. Thank you.

P.O. Box 444, Prince St.
New York, NY 10012-0008
rkostelanetz@bigfoot.com
website: www.richardkostelanetz.com

Kostelanetz is also editing for Routledge *An Aaron Copland Reader* that could benefit from an intern. This would be ideal for a musicology graduate student who need not be resident of New York.

Writers

Composer MARK ALBURGER is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

JEFF DUNN serves on the board of directors for New Music Forum and is a Bay Area correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

PHILLIP GEORGE is an editor for New Music, and serves on the staff of 20TH-CENTURY MUSIC.

After learning to play the guitar, SEAN HICKEY (2/670, Detroit, MI) studied jazz at Oakland University before switching to composition, finishing his studies at Wayne State University in Detroit under James Hartway and James Lentini, with further studies with Leslie Bassett, Gloria Coates and Justin Dello Joio. His principal instruments are guitar and piano and his works have been performed abroad as well as in the U.S. Currently, he is composing another work for piano, *Ostinato Grosso*, and beginning his *Dance Apotheosis*, a work for orchestra. His reviews, articles, bios and other writings have appeared in *The MusicHound Guide To Classical Music*, *New Music Connoisseur*, *Orlando Weekly*, *Transitions Abroad*, *International Travel News*, *Voland*, and 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

KEN KEUFFEL is an arts reporter at the Winston-Salem Journal (www.journalnow.com; Entertainment). His articles on classical music have appeared in a number of other publications, including *American Record Guide*, *The Arizona Daily Star* and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*.

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.

DAN PLONSEY is a Bay Area composer and writer.

BRYCE RANKIN is a Minnesota-based pianist and writer on music.

ROBERT ROANE is a Philadelphia critic who writes widely on the arts.

KATTT SAMMON is a Bay Area, composer, vocal improviser, and writer

STEVE SHAFFER is a Detroit-area violinist and writer.

JEFFREY SMITH is a Bay Area music and theatre critic.

DANIELLE WOERNER is a singer, voice teacher and writer based in Woodstock and New York, NY. She and Robert Starer can be heard together on the CD *She Walks in Beauty: Soprano Danielle Woerner Sings Chamber Music and Songs of Otto Luening and Robert Starer* (Parnassus PACD 96012).

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