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Meredith Monk

Catching Up with Meredith Monk

ANDREW SHAPIRO

I caught up with Meredith Monk on August 31, 2001.

SHAPIRO: I read that some of your music was in the film *The Big Lebowski*. I loved that movie but don't recall the part with your music.

MONK: You know that really funny scene where Julianne Moore is flying on the harness over her painting?

SHAPIRO: When she splatters paint all over the canvas?

MONK: Yeah, that's where my stuff comes in.

SHAPIRO: How did that end up happening?

MONK: Well, I think Carter Burwell knows my music well. He does a lot of the work for the Coen Brothers. He writes scores for them but he also does music direction for them as well. I always love the way that they use music in their films.

SHAPIRO: I like that part when Jeff Bridges goes to the supermarket in his bathrobe after drinking a White Russian on the drive over.

MONK: Such a crazy film!

SHAPIRO: What other commercial music have you done.

MONK: Well, I just finished a Mercedes-Benz commercial for Japan.

SHAPIRO: Do you have a publisher working for you trying to gain those types of opportunities or is it more that you have a bunch of friends that are using your stuff in their projects?

MONK: Well, two years ago, I got a phone call asking me if I would be interested in doing some music for Japanese Mercedes-Benz. The reason I had always said no to those types of things was because I grew up in that world--my mom was a jingle singer--and I ended up making a very different choice for my life. But, the producer said that she knew my music very well and really wanted to work with it. She sent me a reel of some of her stuff and it was very elegant so I knew I could trust her sensibility. That's the only way I'd be interested in doing something like that. It wasn't like she was asking me to do anything else than my own work. So when she called me again in August it was very easy for me to be open-minded about doing it. I've also had some music used in films over the years. Jean-Luc Goddard used a piece of mine, Do You Be in his film called La Nouvelle Vague. David Byrne used some of my music in True Stories. My music has been here and there in films but I'd actually love to write a film score sometime for something other than my own

SHAPIRO: Of all of your work, I'm most familiar with your latest piece, *mercy*. That's because I was down at the American Dance Festival [Durham, NC] this past summer where the piece was premiered, and attended the rehearsals and all three performances. How did you feel about the experience there?

MONK: Well, collaboration is really challenging and I hadn't done one like that for many years. More than ten years, actually. The idea of collaborating with Ann Hamilton, who is a magnificent installation artist, was for both of us to break down our habitual patterns of working so that we could go past what we usually do to try to find something new. While we each worked on our own parts (in my case writing and performing the music and in her case focusing on the visual aspects), we conceived the piece together. So it wasn't like I had brought her in to do set design for me or she had brought me in to create music for her. We were both really hanging out in the unknown and while that's never comfortable, when two sensibilities line up, a third thing is created that is really very interesting. It ends up becoming something that neither of us would do ourselves. That's the best part of collaboration. I felt very good about the music though I'm going to work on it some more. When a piece is performed for the first time it's never really finished. That's the beauty of live performance.

SHAPIRO: And how did you feel about premiering the piece at the American Dance Festival?

MONK: Well, for me to be in a dance context like that is very difficult. I've tried to stay away from it for 30 years because my work is music based. What I really do every day is sit at the piano and work. Compose music. So that's really what my thrust is, being a singer and composer. It's true that, in some of my larger pieces, there's a movement component, but I'm also very content to just do music concerts. I feel very represented just doing that, whether it be concerts just for myself or with my own vocal ensemble. Being in this dance context was very difficult, but at the same time I was very grateful to have the support necessary to be able to make a new piece. Every few years I'll make a large music/performance piece and in between those occasions I'll work on music and record CD's and do concerts. From time to time I make interdisciplinary pieces that include film, images or some sort of movement component. Something that's consistent about my work is that it's fundamentally non-verbal. So in some ways a dance audience can understand that work because it's not like a play or something that is dependent upon text. So in that way a dance audience is very open to my work. In the singing we're doing, we're not using text. I use voice as an instrument. And the singing is very physical.

SHAPIRO: Seeing your company come in with the musicians and rented equipment along with a truck and wardrobe made me think about the enormous amount of expenses incurred. You have to fly these people down there and put them up in hotel rooms. It really is a huge budget. When you were around 25, how did you look at these sorts of expenses? Did you ever say to yourself, "Oh, I really have to have all of these things in place for me to be able to realize my idea?" Or, did you just focus on doing little things, like "I have a friend who has a little art gallery and so I'll just focus on doing a small, onewoman show because I just don't have resources to do anything bigger?"

MONK: When I first came to New York, I did things like solos and duets. Smaller scale pieces. At that point it was a very interesting time in New York. There were a lot of galleries and churches in which you could perform. In 1966, I made a piece, 16 Millimeter Earrings, that had images and music. I was singing but the piece also had a very complex technical set-up with four movie projectors and four tape recorders and a mixer.

At that time, that was a lot of gear and a lot of technical complexity. I would borrow the projectors and tape recorders and my friends would run them in the performance. So things were accomplished in a grass roots kind of way. Then I started doing some big outdoor pieces with about 60 to 100 people. I would make big choral pieces. In those days there were volunteers. Entire families would be in these pieces. Now it's a little more difficult to do something like that because people are so centered on making money because they have to. It's so difficult to survive. In those days, we could take other jobs that would only take a few hours a day. I modeled for artists, I taught music classes for children, and I could get by. And now it's so difficult to just get from one day to the next, because the prices are so high. People are having so much more of a struggle to survive. So in that sense, the spirit of those earlier times is harder to achieve. We're talking about 1966-69.

SHAPIRO: And what about that time with regards to composing inside of the academy?

MONK: I remember being in high school in a theory and harmony class and there was one guy who was really a rock 'n roll freak. He was bringing in all sorts of I-IV-V compositions. But our teacher was pretty open to that sort of thing. At that time, teachers had to be. There was beginning to be a strong sense that pop music was a huge part of western culture. So they had to acknowledge it. Now I feel that there's the danger that it's going to go back again to a much more conservative sort of view. You had mentioned that you went to Oberlin. Back in the early 70's, there were a lot of exciting activities going on there. That was a pretty interesting time. I was there for one of those winter-term sessions. It was a hip school -- very politically active, very forward looking. Now we seem to be in a period when the walls are getting higher. Obviously, right now, it's a much more conservative period politically and so you're fighting some of that impulse. It makes me sad, because Oberlin really was a school known for expanding ideas about music. I've heard that it's a lot more conservative now, but I'm hoping that it'll come back around again.

SHAPIRO: Have you heard the new Björk record, Vespertine?

MONK: No, but Björk recently did a cover of my song, *Gotham Lullaby*, on the internet. I haven't met her but she came to a concert of mine at Lincoln Center last summer. The Lincoln Center Festival presented a three-concert retrospective of my music called *Voice Travel*. She was at the third one. I like her version of *Gotham Lullaby* a lot. It's really interesting, so I've been meaning to write to her a card to tell her that I liked it.

SHAPIRO: Back to *mercy* for a second. The music was mostly for piano, doubling with synthesizer, and a percussionist.

MONK: Alison Sniffin was the keyboard player. She plays about seven instruments. She plays violin, French horn and, in the last piece, *Magic Frequencies*, I also had her play theremin. She has perfect pitch and is an incredible musician. It just turned out that the music this time around was more keyboard oriented. She plays violin, but only at the end. I'm also very interested in using marimba and vibes this time around. So, between Alison and John Hollenbeck, I've got something resembling a little orchestra. I'd have loved to use a bigger ensemble of instrumentalists but with the two of them I can get a lot of different colors. Budget is very much a part of it, so, in a sense, chamber music is what I'm able to do. It's been hard for me to do larger pieces in the last few years because of the financial limitations.

SHAPIRO: With this in mind, I'm wondering how much you've focused on the soundesign elements that synthesizers can give you.

MONK: I'm focusing on that sort of use to a certain extent. The organ sound is actually a sample from my old Gibson Kalamazoo organ. I love that organ. You just don't hear a sound like that anymore. You can't get a sound like that from a synthesizer. I still have that organ. It has a really rich bass sound.

SHAPIRO: What I really mean, though, is to ask if you've ever rolled your sleeves up at a current-day synthesizer and used it as a tool to give yourself a new "sound" altogether?

MONK: I have a sampler and I've tried different things with it. The first time I tried working with it was for an opera commissioned by Houston Grand Opera called ATLAS. Since we only had 10 instrumentalists, we experimented with interesting sounds like the sound of rubbing a glass but down two octaves and stuff like that. We sampled in some other non-instrumental sounds as well. But, I'll tell you, my focus is still writing for the voice. I feel like the voice has limitless possibilities. So the thrust of my music is there. I'm still totally captivated by the voice. That's where my primary compositional energy goes. But I'm sneaking into working more instrumentally. Right from the beginning, I have always thought of the voice as an instrument. I've been commissioned to write a piece for full orchestra. It's for Michael Tilson Thomas and the New World Symphony -- a 90-member orchestra. I've been enjoying thinking about instrumental color and just thinking about the orchestra as a group of singers in a way. I'm slowly realizing that, to a certain extent, the way that I can get certain things out of the voice, I can also get out of orchestral instruments. What I'm trying to do is work with instruments in ways that we just don't associate with those instruments. The goal is to find different types of sound. It seems so difficult to get past what has already been done with a Western European orchestra, and yet I feel like it's very challenging to think about the orchestra in a different sort of way. I'm thinking about it as being a group of individuals.

SHAPIRO: And where are you with it?

MONK: I'm just in the beginning. I went down to Florida last March and did a process with the orchestra. I brought another piece down there and we played with that material. I'm now beginning work on some other material. Part of this process is unusual because I'm working with the instrumental players in a similar way to the way I do with my own ensemble; I bring in the material but we try different variations such as altering the ways that we voice things. It makes the instrumentalists feel very much more a part of the process. I think that that's Michael's idea -- to put the piece in front of a younger group of people who would be more willing to engage themselves in the process. We had a great time. I came back so energized and inspired by being with them. They were showing me all of these different things that they could do. I think that the orchestra feels excited because normally, who they are is not at all factored into what is being written for them.

SHAPIRO: Will it be recorded?

MONK: I'm sure it will be eventually.

SHAPIRO: You said that between larger musical theater pieces that you make records. Are these records of songs or compositions?

MONK: A lot of my music is in song form and it always has been, for instance, *Gotham Lullaby* that I mentioned earlier. I've been recording for ECM since the early '80s. I've done around 14 albums all together, many of which have been on ECM.

SHAPIRO: Have you ever cared to make the distinction between being a composer or a songwriter? Do you think of yourself as being both of those things? MONK: I think of myself as a composer and a singer. But within that, there are song forms. The way that I work on songs has a much more abstract quality than a usual song because it doesn't have words. I wouldn't call myself a songwriter in that sense because I'm not someone who has lyrics and then sets those lyrics to music. That's not really how I work at all.

SHAPIRO: Are you familiar with the Cocteau Twins?

MONK: I've heard of them.

SHAPIRO: For the most part their singer, Elizabeth Frazier, sings in her own made up language.

MONK: That's how I've been working since the mid-60's. From the beginning, I've always thought that the voice is an eloquent language in itself.

SHAPIRO: So, it got pretty exciting for everyone leading up to *mercy*'s first performance.

MONK: It was wild. I've never gone through something like that before. We didn't have a dress rehearsal! I've never not had a dress rehearsal before. It was pretty amazing that we got through it all in one piece. As performers we were prepared because we had run through it in New York many times. But the challenge was getting it together as far as the technical problems were concerned since we hadn't run it through along with the video and all that other stuff. So, that was the thing that was really hard for me, and I think for Ann [Hamilton] as well.

SHAPIRO: Speaking of Ann, I wonder how you feel about the collaboration.

MONK: Well, each of us is usually in charge of all the elements that are involved--sound, visual, video and other elements as well. So it was really wild because in a sense this piece was about both of us giving up territory. From a spiritual point of view it's great because in doing only your own part of the work you're finding something in yourself that you would never get to if you were doing everything yourself. In something like that you find a "third" thing hopefully.

SHAPIRO: I noticed that *mercy* didn't have any program notes. Are you against the idea of using them?

MONK: I'm not really interested in going in front of an audience and telling them about the work or telling them how they should react to something. I'm trying to give people a really direct experience. That's one of the reasons why I don't use text in my performances. I can perform all over the world and people have a direct experience with the music because it can go directly into the bloodstream or the heart or whatever. You don't have to pass through the filter of language.

SHAPIRO: I've been thinking about some established collaborative artists that for a long time just worked by themselves. Do you advise younger people to just do "their" work and then wait for the other shoe to drop?

MONK: Well what I would say to someone like you and the situation that you're in is that you should just keep on honing your own work. You have to spend years patiently doing just that. You need to spend all of your time and energy figuring out who you are and what you have to say that's really different from anyone else. Your energy has to go there first before you think about things like who is going to play your music and who is going to produce it. That will come but it's important to understand that that's something that comes next. The first thing is to spend the money and the time on the thing itself really. If you build that now, you're building your inner strength and your own aesthetic and style -- who you really are. Then, when things are hard you'll have the strength to get through them. Also, when things are good you'll have the strength to make things happen for yourself. Sometimes good times are also very complicated. So if I were you I'd just be spending my energy working along just trying to develop what it is that you have to say. Then the other aspects will just come along. Opportunities will find you. The world will then open up. I think if you try to open the world up first, before you've straightened out what the core of your work is, it starts getting confusing.

SHAPIRO: I'm wondering how you went about hiring the people you perform with.

MONK: For years, from the '60s through the '90s, I rarely had an audition. What would happen would be that someone would just walk into my life and it would be the right person at the right time. Before the vocal ensemble that I formed in the late '70s, the work that I did was for solo keyboard and voice. I formed an ensemble because I wanted to expand upon the solo work that I had been doing. When I started working in the mid-60s, I was really working alone. I had discovered one day while vocalizing at the piano that the voice could be an instrument. Within the voice are limitless possibilities of texture, color and range. My life changed after that. I went on to work for many years alone. But at a certain point I wanted to create more complicated vocal textures and counterpoint. An example of finding someone to work with would be an outgrowth of my time spent at Oberlin when I was doing some work there in 1974. There was a student named Andrea Goodman. She sang with me in a piece that we made there. In the late '70s I asked her to continue working with me. So, up until the late '80s that's the way things happened. I never did big auditions or anything. There was one where I had to replace a group of people and someone who auditioned for me was Ching Gonzalez. I chose him right away. I met Katie Geissinger in 1990 when I made a big piece for Houston Grand Opera. At that point the Ensemble that I had been working with for about 15 years was changing. People had reached the age where they wanted to leave New York, they wanted to have children, have other lives. So I had to audition people. It was a huge audition of about 300-400 people and then I chose 15 people from that. Katie was one of those people. I've been working with her for about 12 years. Theo Bleckmann is a jazz singer and someone suggested that I use him for a piece called Facing North. Each person comes in a different way but I've been lucky in that I can work with the same people year after year. A lot of people have to pick up new companies all the time. I've been working with this Ensemble for 10-15 years. Something happens when you work with people for that long. It becomes a sort of shorthand of working. There's so much that I don't have to say to them. They just know.

Concert Reviews

Sho Pro Arte

DAVID CLEARY

Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston. January 6, Sanders Theater, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

January 6 saw the world premiere of Lightning, with life in four colors comes down, a concerto for viola and chamber orchestra by Christopher Theofanidis. Inspired by Native American poetry, the work's three movements (more are apparently in the offing, according to the program notes) demonstrate both an effective ear for rhapsodic bravura-style solo string writing and an overall pensive nobility of spirit. But little variety of expression is encountered within this ruminative feel; the pervasive employment of static accompaniments and spare, low-key scoring (admittedly all the better to hear this easily covered instrument) becomes wearisome over time. Structural concerns, while not neglected, prove loosely delineated, while the harmonic language—tonal, with hints of Copland, folk, and process idioms—is ably handled. Soloist Kim Kashkashian played beautifully, featuring flashy finger technique, excellent linear shaping, and ample, hall-filling sound. The Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra of Boston, sensitively directed by Isaiah Jackson, provided thoughtful support.

Vital Organ

DAVID CLEARY

Organist Carson Cooman. January 10, Appleton Chapel of the Memorial Church, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

If future musicologists ever see the late 20th and early 21st centuries as a bleak time for pipe organ literature, Carson Cooman certainly won't be to blame. This intrepid Harvard undergraduate has been tirelessly commissioning and performing new works for his instrument over the past number of years. Last night's recital was an excellent example of this, featuring eight such entries.

The best selections heard were the last two presented. *Spirit-Dreaming Fantasias* (1999-2000) by Maria Fernandez-Sheldon evokes Latin American idioms on this quintessentially European instrument without sounding forced or precious. The piece bristles with forthright, irrepressible melodic material crammed with colorful energy. Despite subtle nods to Ginastera and Revueltas, it's a one-of-a-kind pleasure. Thomas Oboe Lee's *Fantasia* (2001) takes the organ's moniker "the king of instruments" very much to heart. It's a sturdy, showy, and exciting homage to J.S. Bach's namesake work in G minor that convincingly delineates a small rondo format and deftly handles a harmonic language ranging from flinty discords to lucid triads.

Of the two ternary-structured curtain raisers, Daniel Pinkham's Aria and Interlude (2001) pleased more. Its relatively tonal ethos, while wide ranging in focus, seems well grounded in a long-range sense and its tripartite format is convincingly balanced. For all its sincerity, Peace Prelude (1991) by Joe Utterback is less successful; formal sections seem lopsided and the chromatic harmonies wander. Utterback's Beside Still Waters (2001) is a better listen, being lyric and warm yet focused and engaging. The work's jazzy sound world seems a more natural fit for this composer's voice. The six Messiaenlike Organ Preludes for Saints and Martyrs (2001) by Robert Allworth, despite their pervasive slow tempos, uncompromisingly dissonant sonics, and austere moods, are good to hear. A surprisingly large variety of expression is encountered within the basic approach of choice.

The most self-consciously avant-garde selection was *next* (2001) by Jukka-Pekka Kervinen. It consists of numerous small, focused events centered within an atonal sound world and liberally interlaced with silences—essentially Feldman with a wide dynamic range. And like Feldman's best work, it also demonstrates an able sense of pacing the varied building blocks. *Prelude on "Lonesome Valley"* (2001) by Robert Ehrhardt, scalar with elements of polytonality, makes little effort to disguise its source material but projects a certain uncluttered nobility that keeps the listener's interest. The three excerpts from Sandra Gay's *A Host of Angels* (2001) are piquant character pieces with personality and profile, though the middle movement, "Angels Dancing On the Head of a Pin," seems more diffuse than puckish.

Cooman's performance was first rate. His playing exhibited excellent foot and finger technique, careful attention to pacing and melodic shape, and fanciful, yet never inappropriate stop choices. He also contributed two charming compositions for flute and organ, *Invocation* (1999-2000) and *Brightnesses* (2001). Both make felicitous use of a post-Impressionist sound world and are written with idiomatic sensitivity. And final kudos go to Cooman for inspiring a burgeoning cutting-edge repertoire of organ music.

Monadnock Music Has a Bolle

DAVID CLEARY

Monadnock Music presents A Symphony Concert to Celebrate the 70th Birthday of Music Director James Bolle. January 11, Sanders Theatre, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

Individual movements of Elliott Carter's *Symphonia (sum fluxae pretium spei)* (1993-96) have been commissioned by the Chicago and Cleveland orchestras and the complete work has received a performance in Britain (as well as a CD recording)—but tonight's Cambridge-based event was its U.S. premiere. It was without doubt the highlight of this year's local new music scene so far.

Simply put, Symphonia is a masterpiece, one of the major orchestral works of our era, and a brilliant crowning jewel in a career brimming with essential listens. As the title suggests, its layout approximates that of the classic symphony with a few important modifications, most notably an attempt to fuse elements of scherzo and finale into a single closer. The first movement, subtitled "Partita," even contains two contrasting ideas, one dramatic and intense, the other a bit more restrained (if not quite lyric) and punctuated with staccato events; both ideas are presented in close proximity to each other, though, not as traditional sonata-like theme areas. Imbuing the closing movement with buoyant, fleecy material may seem an odd choice to counterbalance the weighty preceding movements, but Carter makes it work well by gradually intertwining heavier, more assertive music as the piece goes along. There is much to admire about the work, including a manner of speech both outgoing and eloquent, formats that are imaginative and well balanced, and scoring both kaleidoscopic and clean. And despite a duration that nears Eroica Symphony dimensions, there's not a dull moment to be encountered.

Conductor James Bolle led the Monadnock Music Festival Orchestra (an entity consisting of this organization's regular performers augmented by Boston and New York freelance stalwarts) in a presentation perfectly combining intelligence, precision, and heart. Lengthy exposed solos were few and far between here, but Heather Taylor (oboe), Nicholas Hart (English horn), Krysia Tripp (piccolo), Richard A. Kelley (trumpet), Ole Bohn (violin), and Robert Black (contrabass) made the most of the opportunities presented.

At performance's end, the audience stood and applauded Carter as he came on stage to take a bow. It was a fitting tribute to a special piece and a masterful composer.

O Fortunato

DAVID CLEARY

Mezzo-soprano D'Anna Fortunato. January 18, Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Gioacchino Rossini, known as one of history's most facile tonemeisters, bragged at one point that he could set a laundry list to music if he chose to. Composer Rodney Lister, no slouch himself when it comes to writing vocal pieces, has done the old Italian master one better -- his song *Mama Stamberg's Cranberry Relish* (2000) actually uses the instructions for a holiday recipe as basis. It was one of many enjoyable entries on a voice recital spotlighting both his and Milton Babbitt's oeuvre.

The aforementioned Princeton serialist luminary was represented here by two compositions (separated in time by 40 years) that set poetry by German Expressionist writer August Stramm. Du (1951) is a masterpiece both expressive and possessing great depth of feeling. Despite its relative conciseness of gesture and duration, mildly reminiscent of Webern in spots, it's a bit more leisurely paced than later works such as Philomel. And the composition's excellent sense of architectural balance adds depth to the listening pleasure. Expanding on the older selection's voice-piano scoring by adding viola, Mehr Du (1991) evinces the more fragmented, mercurial style of unfolding found in Babbitt's later work. But despite this, one encounters attention to local drama and long-range shaping that proves most enjoyable to experience. And the work's tightness never precludes a feel for warmth or intimacy.

Lister's music traversed a wide spectrum of styles. Both Cranberry Relish and Of Mere Being, the latter a cycle that sets poetry by Wallace Stevens, belong to the Barber/Rorem/Thomson school of triadic songwriting. The former is especially clever, ironically underscoring its drolly-didactic recipe text with a wistful minor mode piano accompaniment. A more dissonant Expressionist ethos informs Everness (1990, text Jorge Luis Borges), expressed in an appealingly atmospheric and subtle fashion, Paradoxes and Oxymorons (1984, text John Ashberry), treated in a more traditionally angry and angular manner, and Fish in the Unruffled Lakes (1981, text W. H. Auden), superimposing colorful filigree material over the quietly ecstatic mood that predominates. All are wonderfully focused, first rate entries. Scored for the same trio as Mehr Du, the three songs comprising Even so, Even We (1996) belong primarily to the same disjunct sonic universe but leavened with more tonal elements; evocative, resigned, and autumnal, it's an excellent piece to experience.

Performances were generally fine. D'Anna Fortunato's mezzo-soprano voice was splendid, sporting top-flight diction and a sound quality that was full, flexible, and cleanly controlled in all ranges. Soprano Denise Konicek exhibited good musical instincts but possessed a smaller instrument that was sometimes a little wobbly in break areas; her enunciation, while not bad, was a bit less crisp than Fortunato's. Violist John Ziarko played in a soulfully expressive fashion, exhibiting a solid tone that blended well with the rest of the ensemble. Lister's piano playing was a model of support and sensitivity.

Making the Connection

DAVID CLEARY

Boston Modern Orchestra Project presents the *BMOP/NEC Connection*. January 19, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Composers seem to be living longer these days; Elliott Carter became a nonagenarian a few years ago and Leo Ornstein is fast closing in on 110. Boston's best example of tonemeister longevity would appear to be Arthur Berger, who will turn 90 in 2002. Over the past four years, the Boston Modern Orchestra Project (BMOP) has devoted itself to performing this ageless composer's complete orchestral oeuvre—the last installment of which occurred this evening. It proved to be one of many highlights in an excellent concert mostly devoted to music with a New England Conservatory connection.

Serenade Concertante (1944, rev. 1951) and Prelude, Aria, and Waltz for string orchestra (1982, a reworking of the mid-1940's selection Three Pieces for String Orchestra) are rarely heard gems from Berger's neoclassic period. Both are brisk, charming, tautly motivic, Stravinsky-like entries that deserve wider exposure. The former is a concerto grosso cast in an imaginative reworking of sonata form and exhibiting its share of warm depth, while the latter is a set of character pieces that convincingly mixes perkiness and brains.

Of the rest, the most impressive was Lee Hyla's Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (2001). This splendid piece, while containing stylistic elements typical of its composer, presents them in a new light. Such things as clangorous harmonies, solo lines underscored with drum figures, and music that is by terms placidly hushed and drivingly energetic can be found—but the presence of triadic verticals, stacked fifth figures (snitched from Berg's Violin Concerto), and use of full, not chamber orchestra backing for a concerto are new elements to Hyla's style. Laura Frautschi performed the challenging virtuoso part wonderfully. One of Hyla's pupils, Curtis Hughes, was the winner of this year's BMOP/NEC student composition contest; his Gestations (1999, rev. 2001) is a most worthy offering. Expressionist in sound and colorful, if not flashy, in scoring, this selection utilizes ostinato fragments and rhythmic verve without overtly evoking Stravinsky. Structurally, it exhibits an intriguing variant on the narrative curve idea, placing its climax early on without seeming premature.

Flyin' Home (1997) by William Thomas McKinley is a fiery toccata that wears a love of Stravinsky, John Adams, and film music nakedly on its sleeve. Sporting a functionally scalar manner of organizing pitches, it's a rousing closer in the same vein as Frank Zappa's G-Spot Tornado and similar pieces. What it lacks in structural tidiness is more than made up for in sheer bubbly elan; in brief, it's irrepressible and irresistible. Ironically, the composer whose name would likely be the most familiar to the average concertgoer produced the night's weakest entry. The Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra (1951) by Heitor Villa-Lobos, while a charming showpiece for its soloist, is a sloppy, episodic mess that lacks shape, proportion, and clear relationships between themes. Guitarist Luiz Mantovani, winner of the orchestra's annual concerto competition, overcame an unsteady opening to give an accomplished presentation; his interpretation of the warm slow movement was especially sensitive.

Conductor Gil Rose led the orchestra in a set of fine performances that ranged from introspective sympathy to feisty verve. And thanks go to Rose and his group for championing a fine, infrequently-encountered body of symphonic music written by a composer both aged and accomplished.

Floor Wax! Dessert Topping!

DAVID CLEARY

Collage New Music. January 13, C. Walsh Theatre, Suffolk University, Boston, MA.

It's a piano recital!

It's an opera workshop!

Hey, hey, you two. It's both!

Well, so much for speculating on the kind of verbal banter Robert Schumann's famous alter egos might have indulged in during this age of television commercials. But there's actually a point to the foregoing, as this unlikely schismatic program pairing was encountered at the most recent concert given by the Collage New Music group. Happily, the two halves complemented each other effectively.

The concert's first part basked in Christopher Oldfather's top-flight keyboard playing. His energetic pianism, marked by a lively tone quality, clean finger work, and sensitive linear differentiation, stood music by Elena Ruehr, Peter Child, and William Albright in good stead. Ruehr's charmingly cheeky Swing Set (2001) employs serial control of pitch while indulging in a tonal ethos that embraces elements of Debussy, Gershwin, boogie-woogie, 1940's swing, and Manuel de Falla's Ritual Fire Dance. If anything, the excerpted selections from *Doubles* (1999) show Child to be even more eclectic, filching from nearly every composer imaginable; snatches of distorted Messiaen, Ives, Joplin, Chopin, Scarlatti, Ravel, and Mussorgsky (among others) are heard in the work's gestural and harmonic language. But Schumann's influence looms largest, pervading the overall structural organization -- in essence, this piece updates the masked-ball-miniature collection idea of *Papillions* and Carnaval. By themselves, the movements purvey an easy warmth and friendly manner of discourse. And Oldfather's selection of movements resulted in a well-balanced large-scale entity. Albright's Queen of Sheba (1968) is a remarkably eccentric reworking of ragtime's stock in trade, packed with sudden silences, odd modulations, 180 degree shifts in texture and dynamics, curious rhythmic hitches, and audible foot tapping. Oldfather described it as "one of the silliest pieces ever written," and while most listeners will likely agree, it's important to further qualify this by noting that the work is gleefully audacious and great fun to hear.

Edward Cohen's one act opera The Bridal Night (2001) occupied the evening's back half. Based on a Frank O'Connor short story and set in a small Irish coastal village, this is a bleak and tragic slice-of-life tale concerning a disturbed youth's unhealthy obsession with the local schoolteacher. The overall sound world, atmospherically gloomy yet never oppressive, ultimately descends from that of Berg and Schoenberg. An intimate feel pervades the general proceedings, helping keep things on a tellingly personal level. Vocal writing is both declamatory in style and idiomatic in nature. As is typically the case with Cohen's work, this is earnest, sturdy, well crafted stuff very much enjoyed from this quarter. The performance was excellent; Janet Brown, Janice Felty, David Kravitz, and David Ripley sang with a substantial though never overbearing sound quality and solid diction. Lynn Torgove's stage direction was both economical and effective, making good use of minimalist props and the Walsh Theatre's modest stage space. David Hoose adroitly led the vocalists and small accompanying chamber group (the latter a Pierrot configuration with strings expanded to a quartet and percussion added) in a warm, sensitive presentation.

Congratulations to Collage for a fine evening of music making, one that ranged from operatic breadth to solo keyboard conciseness with ease. On that, everyone can agree.

Harry Partch Centennial Fete

KEN BULLOCK.

Harry Partch Centennial Celebration. February 2, San Jose State University, San Jose, CA.

"The Intimate Harry Partch!" an acquaintance said, and that seeming oxymoron stuck: this evening "concert" (not one of Partch's favorite words) of early works by "a music-man seduced into carpentry," performed by John Schneider's Just Strings (a group founded originally to perform Partch and Lou Harrison), had more of the intimacy of a cabaret or cafe than either the formalities of most concerts and recitals or the rigorous, percussive, mythic rituals of the old hobo's later performances toward a total theater. Yet there was the satisfaction that only a light touch -- however unexpected-- can give, and a new sense of curiosity about the whole of this most idiosyncratic and American work.

Just Strings played following an afternoon of discussion, commentary, multi-media presentations and exhibits to celebrate Partch's centennial, February 2, at San Jose State's Music Concert Hall. Rare photos were on display (including one of a simpering technician putting make-up on a glowering Partch before a TV appearance) in the lobby (filled with sounds from CDs of Partch's work). Inside the hall -- dark while the day was bright outside -- films and videos of performances of Partch's canon were shown: Windsong; U.S. Highball; Barstow; Revelation in the Courthouse Park (in which Euripides's Bacchae meet 50's rock-and-roll hysteria); Delusion of the Fury . . . these films and clips, among others, punctuated the afternoon's talks and gave a thumbnail history (shaded in with copious slides and bites of "period" sounds, not only Harry's, by Philip Blackburn's presentation, A Possible Detour Around the Sonata Blockade) of the Bricoleur's Progress from "great zealousy in the preservation of spoken inflections in song" through his seduction into carpentering his unique instruments (some demonstrated by Just Strings during John Schneider's talk, 41 Notes to the Octave?) to the no less vernacular later (and doubly classical, for Partch and his style and material) period of ritual, corporeal total theater.

After a 1973 film portrait of Partch, The Dreamer That Remains, and Schneider's lecture-demo, Lou Harrison gave an Intonation Seminar, the text mostly available in print in 1/1 (The Journal of the Just Intonation Network, vol. 10 #4, Summer 2001), in which Harrison paid tribute to his old comrade and put their position as modernists in perspective: "The conflicted and complex Harry Partch evaded the professional music world by building an elaborate theoretical structure which he actuated by instruments he made himself. He loved hobos and hated the academic world. He was ignited by Hemholtz, became a one-man Studs Terkel, and employed historical and ethnic dramatics in service of his Freudian understandings. He has touched us all." In a tribute dated 1988, titled with a quote from Plato's Dialogues -- and from Partch-- "I Do Not Quite Understand You, Socrates," Harrison reminisces, "Harry Partch and I used to joke with one another that, whereas we were both publicly considered radical modernists, we were actually dealing with, and much more concerned with, Greek and Hellenistic music." How many modern utopias originate in an Arcady projected?

Blackburn's *Possible Detour* followed Harrison, then Danlee Mitchell, Randy Hoffman, Jon Szanto, and Allen Strange of the San Jose State Music Department presented *What We Saw, Heard and Experienced*, a Partchian performance of text and memoir. Afterwards, all of the above, joined by Charles Amirkhanian, were moderated by Allen Strange in a roundtable -- with audience contributions -- entitled *Why Now*?

Mitchell, Szanto, and Hoffman, all of the Harry Partch Foundation in San Diego (Mitchell is Executive Director and Partch's heir) which co-produced the event with the SJ State Music Department (Randy Hoffman and Brian Belet serving as producers), recalled working with Partch and presenting his works, both before and after his death in the 70's. Szanto noted that they "never lost an audience" with Partch's works staged in full visual aspect with the intonation of his instruments: 'it just grabbed people." Yet the last time funding was available for a full staging of a major Partch work with all aspects of his style was the production of Revelation in the Courthouse Park at the 1987 American Music Festival! Charles Amirkhanian remembered the humor of his one meeting with Partch, at a UCLA chamber ensemble concert of Boulez when, "at the first note Harry stood up, shouted 'Goddamn' equal temperament!"-- and stumbled in his moccasins over all the blue-haired women in the aisle and out of the hall . . . We found him at intermission, getting drunk in a nearby bar. He came back for the second half of the program-- and did it again!" A composer in the audience told of how he contacted Partch to see if he could visit him, Partch generously responding that he would stop off in Petaluma on his way down the Coast to spare the young man the trip-- but when his correspondent responded that he hoped to examine Partch's instruments at his home, 'Harry told me to go make my own goddamn' instruments!" After a tale about a Steinway retuned to Partch's intonation, which reminded the audience of one of Blackburn's slides of a privy at Big Sur, made from a piano shipping case so that the sitter could take in the panoramic view while reading the logo "Steinway" ("seduced into carpentry" indeed), John McBride, publisher of Invisible City, reminded Amirkhanian of their late mutual acquaintance George Oppen's poem of seeing a wrecked piano and a woman sweeping her hand over the strings: "Mr. Steinway's poem, not mine . . . But it rang." Later, we found out Oppen wrote that poem after a day with the Amirkhanians.

The most difficult issues confronted in the Why Now? session, so hilarious with anecdote, were around the question, will Partch remain mostly an inspiration, a sensibility, a visionary focussed on an evanescent vanishing point, his scores merely read or performed as museum pieces, or will they be transcribed (as Ben Johnson has done, controversially) for "ordinary" instrumentation? Panel members replied with a history of Partch's own arguments running both ways: in 1952, Martha Graham wanted to commission works for her company scored for standard orchestra, and Partch seemed happy to comply -- but the money, from a third source, never materialized. Reminded of this 20 years later, Partch asked, "How could it have been my music?" There was the suggestion that his music is so sensitive to instrument and timbre that Partch himself would've had to re-conceive whatever piece entirely for the character of the conventional instruments rather than a mere re-scoring. It was also remarked that it would be easier to teach a Broadway performer to play the Diamond Marimba than teach a conservatory student to dance. As ever, Lou Harrison put it into perspective: "I'm in the condition of slowly becoming a baroque composer. I transcribe for everything else. I just say mine are the preferred tunings . . . Harry once asked me if I would compose something for performance by his orchestra -- and, you know, I just couldn't think of anything! Just like when that guitarist asked me for something for his group . . . Jerry . . . Jerry [from the audience: 'Jerry Garcia!'] . . . I couldn't think of anything for him, either!"

And that night, John Schneider and his Just Strings cohorts brought out Partch's disarming charm and pithy American humor. How many composers to whom humor is an integral element of their work have been summarily dismissed for decades, even generations? Offenbach, Satie, Thelonius Monk, Sun Ra.... And after seeing the performance style of *Barstow* on tape and remembering a few stray tonalities, how much influence did Partch have on Frank Zappa -- and his nutty musical film, *200 Motels* -- or on Zappa's old crony, Don Van Vliet (Captain Beefheart).

Schneider strolled and sang and played his prepared guitar. He read *Bitter Music* from Partch's re-discovered hobo journals while the pianist Garry Eister interacted musically and verbally with the text. Schneider also performed the lovely *Three Intrusions* (1949) on an adapted lap-held guitar with metal slide, a little like Hawaiian slack-key, interacting with diamond marimbist David Johnson. In settings of American and Japanese poems, one "variation" combined a Shakespeare lyric for guitar and solo voice. Another, *The Crane*, a 13th-century poem by Tsurayuki, was rendered instead like an old English madrigal.

Other pieces ranged from the 1929 My Heart Keeps Beating Time, for voice and piano, through the extraordinary anachronisms of Li Po Poems (1933) for baritone and adapted cello (Ben Wyatt) to San Francisco: A Setting of the Cries of Two Newsboys on a Street Corner (two baritones hawking the Chronicle and the Examiner newspapers, with adapted cello, Kithara, and Chromelodeon), which Lou Harrison reviewed in 1944 at Carnegie Hall, calling it the soggiest sound he'd heard, making him homesick for West Coast fog. The program also included rediscovered songs for voice and guitar of the hitch-hikers' graffiti that would later be reworked into Barstow (what other artist has based a major work on that seminal 20th-century American mode of locomotion?), and the Two Studies on Ancient Greek Scales (Olympos Pentatonic and Archytas Enharmonic) played first on Harmonic Canon (Philip Arnautoff) and later on just-tuned guitar, harp, and zither (1946-50)

This was an evening at once scholarly and entertaining, rounding out the myth of Partch the Primitive into a more global view of an artist constantly searching out and creating modes of expression, ranging over the primitive, classical, and contemporary worlds to arrive at ways of playing, singing, performing that are not only idiosyncratic, but unique.

The Harry Partch Foundation's excellent website is at corporeal.net.

Krash Kronos

DAVID CLEARY

Crash Arts presents Kronos Quartet. February 2, Sanders Theater, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

The only new music group that can be considered to have attained anything analogous to rock star status is the Kronos Quartet. Their most recent Boston appearance showed them taking this crossover notion very seriously, extending far beyond such obvious trappings as amplification, intricate lighting, and first violinist David Harrington's between-selections patter to color much of the music presented this evening. The program was dominated by brief, punchy arrangements of items that frequently exuded an aroma of ethnic or popular origins.

The best of these bonbons were four transcriptions prepared by Osvaldo Golijov. His versions of Rahul Dev Burman's Aaj Ki Raat, Anibal Troilo's Responso, Severiano Briseno's El Sinaloense, and Chalino Sanchez's Nacho Verduzco were extremely colorful and imaginative, laden with subtle touches and never settling for easy solutions. Alfred Schnittke's Collected Songs Where Every Verse Is Filled with Grief, arranged by the quartet, proved to be another winner -- fully imbued with bleak nobility. While a tad more pedestrian, Sy Johnson's version of Myself When I Am Real (a Charles Mingus improvisation) certainly works well enough. Sensemaya, Silvestre Revueltas's landmark orchestral piece, was played in an unusual arrangement prepared by Stephen Prutsman for string foursome and taped percussion; if anything, it imparted an even heavier dose of grit to this feral work. Requiem for a Dream Suite (transcribed by David Lang), from a film score by Clint Mansell, was the weakest of the lot -- a bland, static entity that put an unappealing new age spin on process-related idioms. Those audience members who had come hoping to hear one of Kronos's signature Jimi Hendrix encores had to content themselves with a spiffy version of Dick Dale's Miserlou Twist. Pannonia Boundless, by Aleksandra Vrebalov, proved closely related to these items, being essentially a fluffy 20th-century update of Brahms's gypsy-like Hungarian Dances.

In such company, the two substantial selections on the evening's program stood out prominently. Triple Quartet by Steve Reich (scored for three string quartets and presented here in a version for single quartet and tape) is a splendid listen, imparting wonderful variety to its busy process-music-oriented outer movements and exhibiting masterful use of canonic writing in its weighty center section. It stands proudly alongside this composer's finest work. Sofia Gubaidulina's Quartet No. 4 is a remarkably original composition, unlike anything else your reviewer can ever recall hearing for such an ensemble. Its live players are underscored by prerecorded material consisting largely of strings being rapidly tapped with large rubber mallets, sounding for all the world like whispering balalaikas. The four performers' parts are shot through with col legno, pizzicato, and tremolo figures that echo the taped accompaniment to varying degrees, ultimately foreshadowing realtime re-employment of rubber on string near the end of the work. And this general approach, nicely grounded by said recapitulatory use of material, serves to impart a unique slant on variation technique. It's truly first rate stuff.

Violinists Harrington and John Sherba, violist Hank Dutt, and cellist Jennifer Culp were in fine form, performing with rock-sure left hands and bow arms and putting forth a solidly focused sound quality. The aforementioned pop-derived trappings did not always prove successful, however. The sound system employed produced tinny or raw sonics, curious ensemble balances, and undercurrents of feedback on various occasions, while Larry Neff's intricate and imaginative lighting often proved a distraction from the music rather than an enhancement. Playing great music without frills shows this group to be the stars they are.

Dinosaur in the Glass Shop

DAVID CLEARY

Dinosaur Annex presents *The Looking Glass of Future Past*. February 3, First and Second Church, Boston, MA.

This performance occurred on Super Bowl Sunday, and despite the fact that the local pro gridiron entry was one of the participating teams, the audience proved sizable.

The best piece on this evening's concert was not even originally scheduled to appear. A Packet for Susan (2000) is yet another splendid entity from this Mark Boykan's late period oeuvre, full of twilight warmth and goodwill. Serial though not astringent in sound (featuring a strong preponderance of perfect fourths in its textures), the work brims with figuration both supple and well crafted and shows off its mezzo-soprano/piano duo to optimal advantage. Singer Pamela Dellal's excellent voice featured burnished low- and midrange notes, full-throated high pitches, and excellent control in navigating tessituras; her diction was also very good. Donald Berman provided sensitive pianistic support.

Eric Chasalow's piano trio Yes, I Really Did (1998) is a selection both eccentric and effective. Its use of tonality is striking, surrounding functional triadic progressions with more clangorous items in such a way that the two incongruities melt into each other harmoniously. Chasalow states in the program notes that the material employed is Beethoven-like, and the work for the most part exhibits the older master's intensity and gruffness; it is likely no accident that much of the music here concerns itself with Grosse Fugue style dotted rhythms. Echoes of the piece's fragmented slow introduction recur throughout the prevailing fast tempo material, helping to ground the work structurally. Cyrus Stevens (violin) and Michael Curry (cello) joined Berman to give a fine presentation that stressed this trio's mercurial capriciousness.

The provocatively titled *Curriculum Vitae with Time Bomb* (1980), a duo for accordion and percussion, shows its composer Lukas Foss in a tail tweaking mood. Much of this odd work suggests parallel universe versions of polka music and rock drummer solo breaks. Fortunately, a rondo style underpinning—bizarrely expressed, to be sure—lends a bit of depth to Foss's merry pranks. Katherine V. Matasy, trading in her trusty clarinet for a squeezebox, teamed with percussionist James Russell Smith to give an agreeably outlandish performance.

In his *Requiem*, *ver.*2.001 (2000), Lansing D. McLoskey demonstrates a well-developed ability to push notes around. The work's odd numbered movements are fast in tempo and energetic in feel, echoing Messiaen's jagged octaves from *Quartet for the End of Time* in the curtain raiser. But movements two and four are extremely still and hushed, consisting primarily of colorless, static chords possessing minimal direction; sorry to say, it's a good example of this piece's shortness of depth and overall slickness. The ensemble's Pierrot plus percussion core, nimbly led by Michael Adelson, gave it well.

Scored for flute and string trio, *Tientos* (1991), by Ian Krouse, pleased least. In its use of ostinati and pandiatonic tonality, kinship to Stravinsky can be noted -- but this selection's Spanish-style gestures (derived from flamenco models) and prevalent use of aleatoric techniques help minimize any feelings of style study. But regrettably, the work is too long, lacks an overarching structure, and is shot through with melodic ideas and harmonic unfolding that are flat and shapeless. It did prove to be an able vehicle for Sue-Ellen Herschman-Tcherepnin's fine flute playing, though. Violist Anne Black joined Stevens and Curry in support.

While not all the composers heard this evening acquitted themselves as well as the New England Patriots, the best produced music worth tearing oneself away from the television.

Listening in Longy

DAVID CLEARY

Listening In: An Evening of New Works by Longy Faculty. February 5, Pickman Concert Hall, Longy School of Music, Cambridge, MA.

Listening In, by Longy faculty composers, provided a generous overview of musical styles and approaches to an audience that seemed eager to eavesdrop.

Two entries by Paul Brust pleased especially. The cello/piano duo Lament exudes a Messiaen-like timeless feel—lyric, atmospheric, and lovely—without overstaying its welcome. And fortunately, this does not preclude either motivic economy or structural integrity. In short, we have here an ideal mix of beauty and sturdiness. His Sonata for Solo Alto Saxophone, by contrast, is a nicely constructed and nervously extroverted composition possessing clearly defined ideas oozing with personality. An excerpt from Eric Sawyer's operain-progress Our American Cousin was also highly effective, finding its composer putting forth music in a stormy, dramatic mood that perfectly underscores the personal distress immediately following Abraham Lincoln's assassination. Despite a prevailingly dissonant sound world, the scene is idiomatically written for its singers, never stooping to ugliness in vocal timbre or text setting. Only three movements of Howard Frazin's Declamation, Jest, Murder, and Rebirth for cello and piano were performed this evening. Perhaps the darkest work in this composer's oeuvre, it elucidates a brooding sound world reminiscent of Maurice Ravel and Bernard Herrman. Its first movement, an intense reworking of the latter composer's interlocking augmented triad idea from the soundtrack to Vertigo, works especially well.

The pieces heard here by Peter Aldins and Jeremy Van Buskirk were more problematic, exhibiting difficulties located at opposite ends of the compositional spectrum. The former's *Sonata for Double Bass and Piano* ambitiously tries to accommodate a wide range of approaches (extended techniques, baldly triadic passages, and clangorous verticals among them) within its chunky Hindemithoriented neoclassic baseline. Unfortunately, these unusual elements sound pasted in, not smoothly integrated. Conversely, Van Buskirk's *Prayer* (for cello and double bass) and *Still* (a computer tape entry) display a noticeable lack of internal contrast. Briefly put, this is music a little too static for the uptown scene and a little too busy to sit comfortably in a downtown milieu, very slow to unfold and a bit lacking in color and shape.

Performances for the most part were top-notch. Cellists Emmanuel Feldman and Rafael Popper-Keizer, pianists Shuann Chai and Sandra Hebert, contrabassist Pascale Delache-Feldman, and alto saxophonist Philipp Staeudlin all played splendidly. The singers in the opera excerpt varied in quality, though. Soprano Kathryn Bemis's voice possessed an especially strong, full sound and good diction, better in both respects than Mechelle Tippetts's capable, if somewhat less substantial instrument; pitch problems and inelegant timbres plagued baritone David Frieze's singing. Sawyer's piano accompaniment was a model of stable support.

Shapey Tribute

DAVID CLEARY

The Composers Series: A Tribute to Ralph Shapey in his 80th Year. February 6, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

The featured composer at this concert was longtime Chicago iconoclast Ralph Shapey. Nearly all the music programmed here was composed during the early 1960s, a particularly fertile period for him. The level of listening pleasure encountered varied widely, with strong selections regrettably being outnumbered by less successful ones.

Of the four pieces performed this evening the best by far was *Discourse for Four Instruments* (1961). Unlike the other entries heard, one encountered a certain amount of open space and audible differentiation of voice—and therefore a lucid feel for medium-range contour—in the unfolding. Rather than coming off as elements of a barnyard free-for-all, the intense gestures find room for confident self-assertion. And the internal workings that make things tick, such as the staggered ostinato overlay in the piece's middle movement, are given a chance to exert their magic. Excellent stuff indeed.

Songs of Life (1988), only the first two of which were presented, exhibits certain problems; texts are not often set in an intelligible, syntactical way and accompaniments tend to be opaque and overwritten, sometimes swamping the singer. The coda section to these two songs also comes across as harmonically inconsistent, its sudden employment of planed parallel fifths seeming to have little to do with the work's densely dissonant main body. However, the brawny music heard here does help mirror Shapey's conception of the text's vitality. String Quartet No. 6 (1963) and Piece for Violin and Eight Instruments (1962), while possessing certain attributes, come across as knotted thickets of thorny East-coast counterpoint separated by sections of static, suspended music. True enough, the Quartet exhibits integrity in its building materials by assigning (in Carter-like fashion) discrete motifs to each of its players, and both pieces show careful attention to long-range architecture, in both cases setting up balanced arch formats. But it's just not enough to tempt this listener back for a second hearing.

No hedging needs to be made with regard to the performances, however -- all were first-rate. From the large contingent of players heard, one should cite the hearty-sounding *Discourse* foursome of John Holland (violin), Alicia DiDonato (flute), Michael Norsworthy (clarinet), and Stephen Drury (piano); soprano Monica Garcia-Albea's excellent singing in *Songs*; and David Fulmer's inspired solo violin playing (backed commandingly by Orlando Cela's group, the Soria Chamber Players) in *Piece*. A series of taped interviews with the plain speaking composer (unable to attend for health reasons), which were scattered among the selections, was a further asset.

Boston Construction

DAVID CLEARY

The Boston Conservatory presents *The Construction of Boston*. February 8, Boston Conservatory Theater, Boston, MA.

No musical entity is harder for a composer to get performed than an opera. It is thus most unfortunate when such a rare opportunity results in a weak presentation. Despite their best efforts, the Boston Conservatory's student opera department was not able to do justice to Scott Wheeler's one act opera *The Construction of Boston*.

Primarily composed in 1988, the piece is based on Kenneth Koch's eccentric play of the same name. The fanciful plot describes the building of Beantown from the ground up by three mid-20th-century experimental artists, Robert Rauschenberg, Jean Tinguely, and Nikki de Saint-Phalle. Musically, it's a chunky, low-key charmer, redolent of the neoclassic stage works of Virgil Thomson and Igor Stravinsky, which sets its sweetly humorous text (suggestive at points of Gertrude Stein) in plain speaking fashion. Numerous old-fashioned historical touches are encountered, including periodic employment of quasi-Classical dry recitative keyboard to underpin certain declamatory vocal passages and the portrayal of the opera's three primary characters as Baroque style gods and goddesses. Construction's relatively static sense of drama betrays the work's origins as a cantata; nevertheless, opportunities can be found for good theater here.

But even though some positive elements were encountered, the performance heard Friday evening left a good bit to be desired. One should enthusiastically cite Seth Bodie's attractive costumes, which ranged from the conservatively prim to the glitteringly outlandish without ever seeming dour or tacky. A few of the student singers also distinguished themselves well, most notably Linda Feldmann, Matthew Rippere, and Kathryn Zeager. But Patricia-Maria Weinmann's direction seemed constrained and the sets by Caleb Wertenbaker were rudimentary in a bad sense, coming across as a concession to a non-existent budget rather than being archetypal. Despite conductor Yoichi Udagawa's best efforts, the pit orchestra of student players was simply not up to the task entrusted to them; shaky individual execution, poor intonation, and off-kilter ensemble abounded here. Nor were coordination and intonation between the singers and orchestra optimal—members of both camps seemingly need to develop the ability to listen to each other and look up at the conductor. Wheeler's piece deserved a better fate.

Blodgett Ying

DAVID CLEARY

Blodgett Chamber Music presents the Ying Quartet. February 15, John Knowles Paine Concert Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

When it comes to the Ying Quartet, music making is definitely a family affair. And this ensemble, consisting of siblings Timothy and Janet (violins), Phillip (viola), and David (cello) Ying, is a splendid one indeed. The first half of their recent concert was devoted to new music, two of the selections having been commissioned through the quartet's ongoing "LifeMusic" project.

Eagle at Sunrise by Augusta Read Thomas, a showy, intense single movement entry, packs a memorable wallop within its brief duration. The piece's focus on a solo cello line, by turns bravura and warm in feel, provides the frame for a central section consisting primarily of dissonant, at times quasi-imitative counterpoint intercut with tremolando moments. Daniel Kellogg's Three American Hymns for String Quartet is an equally enjoyable listen, its three movements essentially being elaborate fantasias on traditional American sacred fare. This is a by-and-large tonal work, imbued with elements of Copland Americana in its outer movements and more clangorous polytonal and atonal sounds, ranging from Roy Harris to Charles Ives, in the central movement. But Kellogg is no sound alike, imparting a surprising consistency to the varying levels of consonance as well as a compelling, forceful voice of much personality. Forms, while non-prescriptive, are convincingly put forth. Both works show the Yings commissioning wisely.

Three Rags by William Bolcom, originally written for piano and arranged by the composer for quartet, made for a delightful curtain raiser. These brief charmers wholeheartedly put forth the gestures and format of this quintessentially American genre while folding in eccentric touches of varying kinds, ranging from *sul ponticello* scratchiness to unusual harmonic shifts to out-of-style scales (the most notable of this last being the prominent whole-tone collection heard in the first movement's subsidiary theme). It all comes across as being cleverly urbane leavened with a splash of eccentricity.

These three works showed the quartet off to fine advantage, letting the group indulge in a range of playing that spanned the gamut from easygoing charm to intense anguish. Ensemble balance and coordination were superb and the quartet's individual members possessed sturdy digital technique and a large, unforced sound. Bravos go to this first-class foursome, a bunch sure to please mom and the critic equally well.

Short Philharmonic

DAVID CLEARY

New England Philharmonic. February 23, Tsai Performance Center, Boston University, Boston, MA.

The Greater Boston area is home to numerous community orchestras, none of which have made a greater commitment to the performance of new music than the New England Philharmonic. For its 25th Anniversary Gala Concert, the group requested a new work from its current composer-in-residence. The resulting piece, Symphony No. 3 (2001), shows Richard Cornell to be a devotee of Expressionists such as Alban Berg; here, one encounters dense yet colorful orchestration, complex though not turgid textures, and a tonally grounded harmonic language that employs serial controls. But the melodic material used exhibits personality—not Viennese, either—and the selection's binary format is neither traditionally symphonic nor slavishly Schoenbergian. It's an effective, well-constructed entry much worth revisiting. The orchestra, ably led by Richard Pittman, gave a solid, nicely considered rendition of this challenging composition. Danielle Maddon (violin), Mana Washio (flute), Ioannis Tselikas (oboe), Zachary Lyman (trumpet), and David Liquori (tuba) made the most of their solo opportunities.

Style and Idea

MARK ALBURGER

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony, with Renée Fleming, in Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and the conductor's *Songs on Texts of Emily Dickinson*. February 27, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through March 3. Reviewed March 1.

The old saw has it that we are products of nature and nurture -- the sum of our backgrounds (genes) and experience (influences). But there's magic, too -- that spark -- call it soul, call it spirit, call it style. Everyone has it. Let's take a look at how Michael Tilson Thomas has it, as shown by his dual roles as composer and conductor of the San Francisco Symphony on March 1 at Davies Hall.

First, background: the guy's got a lot of natural musical talent (in older days, the term "genius" was bandied about). Second, his talent was nurtured, in part due to association with such bright lights as Igor Stravinsky, Aaron Copland, and Leonard Bernstein. And yes, Thomas's *Poems of Emily Dickinson*, premiered as a complete cycle in this concert series that began on February 27, bears the imprint of these three as well as resonances from Alban Berg, George Gershwin, and Charles Ives -- three other Thomas favorites. But it is from these choices and the composer-conductor's unique responses to them that his own signature style emerges. This Dickinson cycle sounds like it could have been written by no other, and if that's not personal magic, I don't know what is.

Renée Fleming was charged with singing the cycle, and she did a glorious job. If the words were not always intelligible, we had the program book in front of us. At times Thomas's settings almost seem too big for the reclusive Amherst poet, but this seemed part of the composer's vision. If Copland gave us *An Outdoor Overture*, this was *An Outdoor Emily*, making Dickinson's universal visions ring far beyond a 19th-century salon.

Fleming shone in a darker, more subdued fashion with a lovely rendition of Richard Strauss's *Four Last Songs*, the last of which (the "Last Last"?) was utterly "a transport one cannot contain" (whoops, that's Dickinson again, in a poem Thomas did not set). Strauss self-quotes (a bit of his transporting *Death and Transfiguration*) and word paints (with two trilling piccolo fluttering into the afterworld) his way to the celestial railroad (Evasion transporting?).

Genius was generally in the air. Thomas's conducterly choices are as informing as his composerly ones. As if to show style through the decades, the conductor showed the other side of Strauss's muse in that early sweet of sin, *Til Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks*. If Strauss started as a modernist in this 1895 work, full of interrupted phrases and over-the-top sentiments, he certainly ended ironically as a classicist in the 1946 *Songs*.

Peter Tchaikovsky splits the difference in the 1880 third revision of his *Romeo and Juliet: Fantasy Overture*, which opened the program. The work sounds conservative next to *Til*, yet the melodies are fresh as ever. Classic and progressive: there's that spark again, that style, that genius...

History Lesson

JEFF DUNN

The California Symphony presents music of Kamran Ince and Samuel Barber, with Robert McDuffie, violin, and Barry Jekowsky, Music Director and conductor. March 3, Hoffman Theater, Walnut Creek, CA.

Some fairly adventurous programming graced the San Francisco East Bay region recently. Adventurous, not merely for the novelty of a symphony written by American composer Kamran Ince, but adventurous for a post-9/11 world where depictions of ancient Muslim/Christian battles may now provoke unsettling resonances for some audience members.

Ince's Symphony No. 2 ("Fall of Constantinople") is a worthy addition to a class of battle symphonies from Biber to Prokofiev. Like the latter's Alexander Nevsky, Fall is comprehensive, recreating psychological atmospheres experienced by both soldier and civilian in a broad scope of events from the frightening sounds of siege engines, prayers for survival in the cathedral, to the fear and near panic at the final conquest. Given today's educational system, one wonders how many in the audience shared the composer's appreciation of the 1453 event as "fascinating to an almost mythological extent." One hopes, however, that the vividness of the music compelled some to go home and pull out dusty reference books, or Google the Net to learn more.

Ince himself is uniquely qualified to undertake such a work. Born of Turkish and American parents in 1960 Montana, he moved back to his father's homeland and studied music there as a youth before returning to the U.S. at age 20 to continue his studies at Oberlin and Eastman. The style evinced in the Symphony can be pegged as semipost-minimalist, with iterative melodic cells blocked together in the manner of Adams or, even more similarly, as in the middle symphonies of Hayden Wayne. Ince has a talent for orchestration, with shrieking strings and booming percussion both portraying the machines of war to the audience and presenting decided challenges to members of the orchestra. If the sum total may sound a shade too repetitive, it still is an improvement over such excesses found in works such as Adams's El Dorado or nearly everything by Philip Glass. To his credit, Ince is capable of writing music of almost Elgarian beauty, as essayed in the "Haghia Sofia" episode depicting the prayers of the besieged. More such music would be welcome, but may be less true to the spirit of the history lesson.

Ince's novelty was followed by the more familiar *Violin Concerto* of Samuel Barber, passionately performed by soloist Robert McDuffie. Here the orchestra was in its element, with a well nigh perfect rendition of the first movement and a rousing whip-through of the third. While this listener felt the romantic histrionics and rubatos went a bit too far in the second movement, it was nevertheless comforting to witness the communicative effect of same on the audience, which responded enthusiastically at the conclusion.

Three Coins in an Iceberg

JEFF DUNN

The San Francisco Symphony presents the U.S. premiere of Peter Maxwell Davies's *Symphony No. 8 ("Antarctic")*, with the composer conducting his own work and music of Ravel. March 14, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

"To suffer woes" begins the superscript to Vaughan Williams' Symphony No. 7 ("Sinfonia Antartica"). To celebrate the 50th anniversary of its premiere, the British Antarctic Survey and the Philharmonia Orchestra not only commissioned Peter Maxwell Davies to write another Antarctic symphony, but also sent him down there to get a feel for the place that deserves such a superscript. Unfortunately, "suffer" is what the new symphony does by comparison.

Record cold weather was poised to hit the Bay Area in seeming anticipation of the arrival of Davies' declared last symphony, and cold is what he received from the largely elderly Thursday afternoon audience. Not a few walked out during the performance. What is wrong?

There is no denying the power of the work, its balanced construction, its earnestness of purpose, the charm of its composer preparing the audience with a brief lecture from the podium: "Please hold your hat on! ... Don't think I've run out of ideas ... I've taken the liberty of hurting your ears ... Wrap up well and bear with me [for] a pretty tremendous ride!"

Nevertheless, this reviewer must hazard on first hearing three possible sources of failure for Davies's well publicized and bankrolled effort: failure of conceit, failure of clarity, and failure of concision.

First, the conceit of the hurtful brilliance of the Antarctic sunshine -that according to Davies this must be conveyed by pain to the ears.
Although Davies can write in his diary "distant snowy peaks thrust
millions of crystal needles into any unprotected eyes," this just
doesn't fly in the music: the many sudden dissonant blasts and
shrieks in the orchestra help milepost the construction, but flashes of
light just don't emerge for this listener. Only perhaps the Finnish
composer Kaija Saariaho could do justice to this concept. Vaughan
Williams does a better job depicting a kind of twinkling in the
"Landscape" movement of his Antarctic symphony.

Second, the obfuscation of motives. Most successful music succeeds with "grabbers" -- motives or melodies here and there that are more readily discernable and help guide the listener from place to place or build anticipations. Davies has a few of these, a B-major chord here and there, a nice clarinet melody in the third section, some jazzy syncopations in the fifth. But these are so overlaid with other activities that they barely emerge. As with any piece, more would come to light with repeated listenings, but not a single grabber in the first listening motivates for more. One of the more publicized grabbers is the opening dissonances associated with the noise created by Davies' icebreaker, the Royal Research Ship "James Clark Ross." This is unimpressive compared to the entrance of the Prince in Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet," nowhere near heart-stopping like the sudden blast of the organ in Vaughan Williams's "Landscape" movement. And this dissonance set seems not distinctive enough to be recognized second time around. Another and best potential grabber is the Dum complerentur dies pentecostes plainsong reported in the program notes. It may be in the score, but it must not have been important to Davies that the audience hear it.

Third, the scope -- a duration worthy of the merits of the material. Here Davies has improved upon the Vaughan Williams. But Davies sticks in a whole section which he calls a junkyard, depicting trash left behind by previous expeditions. In another reach of a conceit, he populates the section with snatches of material (unidentified) from previous works. On the whole, Davies could have conveyed much the same information, more powerfully, in half the time. For the best contemporary work of appropriately executed scope, one must turn to Nicolas Maw's *Odyssey*, a masterpiece that is long overdue to the West Coast.

This is not to say the work is uninteresting. There is often an underlying current of softer music off and on drowned out by complex formulations, perorations, and the icy eye needle stuff. This undercurrent has an uncanny way of appearing from time to time, and indeed, in one conceit that *does* work, seems to portray the "bedrock" under the ice.

That Davies is a master craftsman cannot be denied. But perhaps he is more dutiful than inspired. In his conducting of Ravel's *Concerto for the Left-Hand*, he appeared busily bent over as if he were carefully mending wall on his Orkney estate. Neither he nor pianist Garrick Ohlsson brought forth any fire.

Hearing the Ravel, one was struck by how such a familiar work to this listener still has resonance. For the first time the similarity of the sinuous, recursive opening contrabassoon theme to the main motive of Szymanowski's *Violin Concerto No. 2* became apparent. The Szymanowski was written just after Ravel's Vienna premiere. Was Szymanowski in the audience?

Similarly, perhaps further exposure to the unforgiving, carefully constructed ear-shard of a symphony by Davies will bring out the plainchant and other resonances -- if the work catches on, which is doubtful in this country, judging by the audience reaction.

Minding the Gap

JEFF DUNN

The Oakland East Bay Symphony presents music of Jack Perla, John Corigliano, and Wagner, with guest conductor Patrick Summers. March 15, Paramount Theater, Oakland, CA.

Reviewers rightly focus on the several intervals of music making that constitute the meat of a concert. But what about the episodes between, the gaps for the claps? Guest Conductor Patrick Summers came up with a revolutionary concept for the fourth Oakland East Bay subscription concert, taking one of those gaps and using it for the mind to link two works rather than the hands to judge one.

The theme for the concert was *Altered States*, taking the name of the film from which composer John Corigliano extracted his suite *Three Hallucinations*. On the podium before commencing this music, Summers mini-lectured on Wagner, whose Prelude to *Lohengrin* would follow, pointing out that were he alive today, Wagner would undoubtedly be a successful film composer like the Oscar-winning Corigliano. Summers then proffered a remarkable request, that there be no applause between the two works. Instead, he asked for a fusion in place of a gap so that the similarities between the two works could be contemplated, proposing that both the Wagner and the Corigliano offered "strange visions, hallucinations, religious images stretching the mind." "Prepare to be altered!" warned Summers.

To the surprise of this reviewer, Summers' innovation was taken to heart by everyone in attendance -- not a sound was heard between the *Rite of Spring*-like third *Hallucination* and the ethereal descent of the Holy Grail depicted in the Prelude. What did it all mean? To this listener, the hoped-for similarities between the two works were instead overwhelmed by the vast gulf between them. It was significant that the earlier work was performed last, arguing more for a see-how-much-we've-lost than a see-how-far-we've-come interpretation of spiritual, if not musical history.

The orchestrational skills of Corigliano today are on a par with those of Wagner in his time, far superior to those praised in Peter Maxwell Davies's *Antarctic Symphony* recently. Ah! But the metaphysicality, what we would call today naiveté, of the simple strings in high register and triadic harmonies — such purity is gone. Instead, as represented by the Corigliano, we have postmodern irony in vast and acerbic doses: "Rock of Ages" played offstage on a honky-tonk piano, butchered by dissonances in the orchestra. Our apotheosis, as portrayed in the music and film, is a descent to the physicality of our animal roots. Yes Virginia, how far *have* we come? So the coupling suggested.

But we should not overlook the opening work on the program, the world premiere of Jack Perla's *Pixels at an Exhibition*, a title borrowed from an article on digital photography in *The Atlantic Monthly*. The piece was more of an "Overture to *Pixels at an Exhibition*," since it consisted of only two movements, "modules for a larger work," as described by the composer:

whereas Mussorgsky's music magically captures the feeling of undisturbed, lengthy contemplation at a quiet gallery, our experience is ... different. ... I was working on a film/music project about global warming that involves some spectacular earth images. Each day I received links to more spectacular images, which I'd click through while replying to email ... Other images also piled into the inbox -- JPEGs of new children ... All these images jumbled together while working on the piece ... pixels and the mouse click replace brushstroke and the slow promenade.

Given such an introduction, the first "module" heard was a surprise. The beautiful "promenade" theme given on oboe was worthy of an English pastorale in the manner of Moeran. Only in the second module did a minimalistic reel suggest racing electrons, followed by brass flourishes and a chorale. Even though much is missing, the work as it stands serves very well as an overture. After all, opera overtures are by their nature incomplete with respect to the operas themselves. They are just tantalizing hints of what is to come. Judging from what was heard and the bravos, this reviewer and many in the audience are *very* tantalized and are wishing for more from Perla.

Hello Symphony at Goat Hall

JEFF DUNN

San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra, conducted by John Kendall Bailey and Mark Alburger, performs Tom Heasley's New Work for Tuba and Electronics, Stan McDaniel's Duet 1993 ("Remembrance"), Alexis Alrich's Fuse for Oboe, Percussion, Piano, and Strings, Marcia Burchard's Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth, John Beeman's Beeline: A Festival Overture, Erling Wold's Martyrium Pilati from Sub Pontio Pilato, and Alburger's Symphony No. 1 ("It Wasn't Classical..."). March 22, Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA.

"This is a Hello Symphony!" exclaimed Music Director Mark Alburger on March 22, referring to how more and more members of the San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra would troop to the stage as the evening progressed, the opposite of Haydn's "Farewell" concept. Indeed, the pleasures of greeting far more closely matched the moods of the seven compositions than the despondencies of leave-taking. The large crowd -- packed tightly enough into San Francisco's Goat Hall to make goat cheese -- was in for a jolly good time.

The evening began with Tom Heasley performing an unnamed solo tuba improvisation, enhanced by electronic processing. Each note he played was transformed (perhaps by amplifying the partials) into a triad with reverb. The widely spaced chords emerged ethereally, generating a hypnotic state readily analogous to a luxuriant, palatecleaning appetizer, leaving the audience relaxed and receptive. Stan McDaniel's *Duet 1993 (Remembrance)* for violin and cello followed, consisting of three short movements, (legato, jaunty, soulful) characterized by now-you-hear-them-now-you-don't implied tonalities.

Alexis Alrich then began firing up the atmosphere with her *Fuse for Oboe, Percussion, Piano and Strings*. The fusion here seemed to be with various world musics, represented by an accompanying drone and catchy dance rhythms. A nod to Western influences was apparent in the modulatory central sections. Altogether, a rousing endeavor greatly appreciated by those in attendance.

The first half of the "Hello" concluded with excerpts from Marcia Burchard's *Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth*, a work celebrating a famous maze, the walking of which is considered a method of spiritual contemplation. The design for the maze can become a springboard for extensive numerological investigation, details of which were explored extensively by the composer. To her credit, enjoying the music requires no knowledge whatsoever of the maze itself, or the 10 Sefirot of the Kabala which provide inspiration for the movements. Three of the movements were performed -- "Malkuth," "Yesod," and "Tiphareth." A passacaglia ("Yesod") was the most effective. Each note of the tune represented one of the seven 180-degree turns one must negotiate in each of the maze's Cross-defining quadrants. Orientalisms abound in the music, the style of which sometimes sounds like Alan Hovhaness.

The second half began with John Beeman's *Beeline: A Festive Overture*. Beeman wisely rejected an earlier working title, *Flash in the Pan*. The piece starts off with a fine enough flash, but then the heat is turned down for a much slower central interval before the sparky seesaw main theme recapitulates. Hopefully Beeman's work will become more than its erstwhile working title and be performed someday by a full orchestra, thus allowing for some issues of balance to be better addressed.

The conclusion to Erling Wold's opera Sub Pontio Pilato was next on the agenda. The Coptic view that Pontius Pilate later became Christian and was martyred is given grandiose treatment in a postminimalistic yet Symphony-of-Psalms kind of way. The sustained effect of the music was masterful, bringing forth enthusiastic applause. The whole opera will definitely be worth checking out when it's performed next year in San Francisco.

The evening's final "Hello" was the West Coast premiere of Mark Alburger's Symphony No. 1 ("It wasn't classical, it was symphonic ... It wasn't a symphony, because it did not have a sonata-allegro"), op. 21. This is part of a series contemplated by Alburger in which each numbered symphony is based on the structure of a likenumbered symphony by another composer. This First was modeled on Beethoven's. The subtitle is commentary by a witness to Górecki's conducting of his best-selling Third Symphony in California in 1998. Ironic commentary, for Alburger's delightful work is a symphony in every way. And not yet a runaway best seller, but who knows?

Alburger is the closest thing to a reincarnation of George Antheil since H. K. Gruber. You never know what piece of cultural flotsam will be tossed at you next. The first movement is full of fun and syncopation in the spirit of Milhaud or even Don Gillis. The lilting rhythms of Bernstein's song "America" pop in and out. In the second movement, the best of the bunch, a rather too-well-behaved stepwise tune develops a hiccup that morphs into the subject of a development section. In the third, misnamed "Menuetto" (just as Beethoven's is incorrectly characterized), Alburger evokes a fast-paced, strongly accented triple meter reminiscent of Strauss's chasing down the troublemaker *Til Eulenspiegel*. This all-to-short charmer precedes an even more frantic, somewhat ungainly vivace conclusion, made all the more exciting by Alburger's energized, nearly comic conducting style.

Such a satisfying evening that one was reluctant to say goodbye to the Hello concert, but let's hope that this bunch of happy musicmakers has more in store, and that the musical elite of San Francisco will all go to Goat Hall, next time around!

Houdini's Microsymph Dazzls & Astnds

JEFF DUNN

The San Francisco Symphony presents music of Currier, conducted by Hugh Wolff. March 23, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA

Mark Twain's maxim "eschew surplusage" has finally been taken to heart by a composer other than Webern. The result transfigured a concert. How could anyone write a 10-minute symphony with a depth to rival those at least three times as long? How could a man orchestrate in a way to make Peter Maxwell Davies' sprawling *Antarctic Symphony* seem like the laughable work of an amateur? How could anyone write a five-minute slow movement with all the profundity of the best of Mahler? Who has ever written a fabulous Minute Waltz that actually lasts a minute or less?

Houdini came to town in the form of Sebastian Currier. His Microsymph quite simply dazzled and astounded this aged and jaded reviewer. The hand is certainly quicker than the ear: the pen of Sebastian Currier has perhaps written the greatest ever American symphony -- at least until the wool is pulled off, the ears of this reviewer are so convinced!

The first movementlet, "quickchange," zips and scintillates. Sparkles appear here and there, deft touches, ear ticklers, then finally, meows. The second, "minute waltz," in only 50 seconds pulls off a miracle with a great waltz tune that is less a tune than a typifying swooping gesture. Somehow, everything that was elegant and sweet about the latter 19th century is encapsulated in a microapotheosis. Ravel's *La Valse* is now superseded.

Then the "gargantuan" adagio. Again the tell-all gesture, this time the three-note, upward-leaning anacrusis that clearly obsessed Mahler. A massive climax, then a diatonic descending phrase on the harp concludes. Next a 65-second "nanoscherzo" and the finale, "kaleidoscope," where elements of the preceding movements return for a bow as in *Carnival of the Animals*. A dazzling, astounding masterpiece.

Glennie Gets Down

MARK ALBURGER

Martin Symphony, with Evelyn Glennie, performs Masson's *Concertpiece for Snare Drum and Orchestra*, Vivaldi's *Concerto for Piccolo in C* (arr. by Glennie), and Stravinsky's *Pulcinella Suite*. March 24, Veterans Auditorium, San Rafael, CA. Repeated March 26. Reviewed March 26.

Evelyn Glennie is living proof that there is nothing like a live performance. On CDs (such as her recent spirited release of Michael Daugherty's *UFO*), she is superb. In concert, she is a phenomenon. A one-of-a-kind who will surely go down in the annals of music history.

She came out on stage with her head slightly bowed, a vision of loveliness in a shapely purple gown, her long hair framing her delicate face; then she began to bang the daylights out of pieces of metal, wood, and stretched plastic in Askell Masson's Concertpiece for Snare Drum and Orchestra. But this was a sensitive banging, a virtuosic vamping of utmost refinement and theatricality. Glennie's graceful strokes varied from the cacaphonous to the delicate, and she found, with composer Masson, just how many ways there are to attack a drum. Rim shots, regimental patterns, scrapes along the side of the sticks, swishes, and a final roll that went from triple forte to triple piano and back over the last couple of minutes caused many in the audience to jump to their feet, some waving their arms high in the air, rather than clapping, so that the soloist, who shares Beethoven's late physical challenge, could better gauge the response. If Masson's Concertpiece didn't add up to a masterpiece in its colorful expressionism, it certainly was a game effort for showcasing Glennie. This all happened on March 26 at Veterans Auditorium, with the Marin Symphony, conducted by Music Director Alasdair Neale.

Glennie feels the music through her bare feet on the floor, and no doubt through her entire body. It is perhaps one thing to master the one-trick (or several-trick, really) pony of the snare drum. It is quite another to have command of the entire barrage of percussion, in which she excels as well. But we had to take that facility on reputation and recordings at present, for this evening was obviously a solo-percussion showcase for the performer, who next showed her dexterous mallet technique in Antonio Vivaldi's Concerto for Piccolo in C Major, which she arranged and recounted on vibraphone. This was a blindingly executed performance, where notes flashed by (in the first and third movements), so fast that they could almost not be seen or heard in time -- like trying to make out individual waterdrops in a waterfall. Glennie's touch was marvelous, ranging from strident to timorous in a burbling musicality that kept us on the edge of our seats. As for the lovely second movement, it is difficult to imagine that the original scoring would have been half as effective (sorry, piccolo players...).

The bookends to Glennie's performances were the Igor Stravinsky *Pulcinella Suite* and W.A. Mozart's *Symphony No. 41 ("Jupiter")*, both, as with the Vivaldi, for reduced orchestra. Neither quite filled the cavernous space of the auditorium, but the Stravinsky's tempos were certainly brisk enough, perhaps even a bit over the top. Listeners clearly responded to the rapidity, however, with a little chuckle at the end of one of the speedier movements, and the expected chortles following the well-known "Duetto" section (merely listed as "Vivo" in the program).

Record Reviews

Ears of the Listener

MARK ALBURGER

Cassandra [Chianan Yen. Clone. Youngmi Ha. By the Blue Shore. Ji Young Jung. Garak. John Gilbert. Excursions and diversions. Ronald Mazurek. Maiastra. William Toutant. Anagrams and Aphorisms. Riccardo Santoboni. Kaddil. Carlos Delgado. Night Scenes. Dinu Ghezzo. Eyes of Cassandra]. Roger Heaton, clarinets, and Corrado Canonici, contrabass. Capstone.

Andrea Cavallari. Self-Portrait [Fantasia per Flauto. Selfportrait. Magnificat. Achrome. Ritratti. Passages. Red]. Capstone.

Richard Crosby. *American Portrait* [Charles Tomlinson Griffes. *Roman Sketches.* Amy Beach. *Three Pieces.* Lee Hoiby. *Narrative.* William Grant Still. *Seven Traceries.* David Guion. *The Arkansas Traveler.* Louis Moreau Gottschalk. *The Banjo.* George Gershwin. *Prelude No. 1*]. Richard Crosby, piano. Capstone.

Just how many pieces are there for clarinet and contrabass? Certainly a few, if we can judge from the recent Capstone release, *Cassandra*, with clarinetist Roger Heaton and contrabassist Corrado Canonici (nice alliteration!).

It starts energetically with Chianan Yen's *Clone*, with a nice vibrant sound coming from both players. The content has something to do with the Fibonacci series and music-as-DNA-codes, the latter recently discussed in the New York Times. But the music doesn't sound scientific; it sounds ecstatic.

Youngmi Ha, on the other hand, has a stiller, neoclassic take *By the Blue Shore*, where slow and fast passages vary like the weather on an Eastern afternoon. Ji Young Jung strips these notions down to basics in a solo clarinet *Garak*, that shares, with Blue Shore, a heightened interest in ornamentation.

In Excursions and Diversions, John Gilbert intends the players to "more or less satirize their own virtuosity." A refreshing notion. The beginning has a bit of ridiculous call-and-response à la one of Crumb's Madrigals. The Stravinsky jokiness of "big and little voices" (the clarinet is big in sound, the bass less so) works. There's a Crumbian bravura (ha! hee! huh!) as well to Ronald Mazurek's Maiastra (Magic Bird), but this time in the Davidovsky Synchronisms tradition of an inventive work for bass and electronic tape. Lots of downward glissandi and vibrato. This is followed by the brief, intriguing Anagrams and Aphorisms of William Toutant, where delicate sounds meet in stimulating interplay.

Canonici proves himself in the same league as Bertram Turetzky in Riccardo Santoboni's virtuoso, tutta forze *Kaddil*. This is followed by the wonderfully weird Night Scenes of Carlos Delgado for clarinets, contrabass, and electronics. Seagulls and sustains, anyone?

The signature piece comes last, Dino Ghezzo's *Eyes of Cassandra* for clarinets, contrabass, synthesizer, and tape. Ghezzo pulls out all the stops with funny and threatening sounds galore. The cover shot is of the Greek messenger of doom in full scream, and that's it. Whee! Whew!

From this series of confident performances we turn to the very confident composer Andrea Cavallari and his *Self-Portrait*, also on Capstone. The American-born Cavallari has lived mostly in Europe, and he manifests a European-oriented modernism that apologizes for nothing. The performances from his San Felice Contempoensemble are all magnificent (flutist Michele Marasco, pianists Ju-Ping Song and Michele Innocenti, violinist Adelino Hasani, bassist Canonici, sopranos Gerlinde Samann and Charlotte Zeiher, alto Caterina Calvi). We can tick off the influences of Crumb and Varèse (*Fantasia per Flauto*), Stockhausen (the solo-piano *Selfportrait*), and Berio (a *Magnificat* for two sopranos and altos), but it all comes out rather fresh. Canonici sounds as good here in *Achrome* as he did on the preceding album -- a committed performance of a demanding work.

Ritratti is a virtuosic, energetic scuttering and bubbling for flute and piano; Passages thrashes and emotes out for solo violin. Red utilizes Schoenberg's notion of non-repeating orchestrations in each of its eight brief movements -- Pierrot ensemble (augmented by percussion, with viola exclusively) to boot "Red is... Red, Red, Red" has a good beat and you can dance to it (well, not really, but it is strikingly rhythmic). "Anguish" is a perpetual motion overlain with sustains -- the title is perfect. "Red as a Song" is a gorgeous vocalise that recalls the vocal/flute duet in Pierre Boulez's Le Marteau sans Maitre.

A third Capstone album, pianist Richard Crosby's *American Portrait* is virtuosity in a more traditional vein. His Americans are traditional ones, mostly from a broad mid 20th century (teens to the 80's), beginning with the *Roman Sketches* (1917) of Charles Tomlinson Griffes. These impressionist-romantic pieces ("The White Peacock," "Nightfall," "The Fountain of the Acqua Paola," and "Clouds") are certainly more Debussyan than Respighian, but the arpeggios and arching phrases work in any language.

A scherzo is the order of the day, beginning *Three Pieces* (1932) by Amy Beach (a.k.a. Mrs. H.H.A....), and that scherzo is "A Peterborough Chipmunk" which scampers altogether programatically. The following "Young Birches" tremolo in the breeze, with the help of a lovely melody. And "The Hummingbird"? Yes. it buzzes around....

In these contexts, the Lee Hoiby *Narrative* (1983) -- by far the latest work on the album, by a space of more than 40 years -- is not a stand out, but a blend in, fitting nicely with the overall mood of the album in its tranquility and turbulence.

William Grant Still, always the surprising master, turns in *Seven Traceries* (1940. Among the standouts are "Muted Laughter," a polytonal chuckling that relates to Heitor Villa-Lobos, and the solemn intonings that seem to anticipate Messiaen "Out of the Silence." "Wailing Dawn" contains tragic wiffs of birdsong. "A Bit of Wit" seriously brightens the day.

You can't keep a good melody down, and David Guion does his bit to keep the folk tune "The Arkansas Traveler" moving. Unlike Percy Grainger, who used to program Guion's version regularly, I've hung around with too many children over the years not to hear this as "I'm Bringing Home a Baby Bumblebee." Memorable, with a sting.

Louis Moreau Gotschalk's appealingly rhythmic *Banjo* (ca. 1855, but not sounding out of place in this 20th-century collection) and the wonderful *Prelude No. 1* by George Gershwin round out the festivities.

What's the Buzz?

MARK ALBURGER

Eugene Chadbourne. Insect Attracter [Mourning of the Praying Mantis. Termite Damage. The Cricket in My Life. The Swat. The Cricket in My Life. Ashley Adams, Carrie Biolo, Joee Conroy, Brent Dunn, Misha Feigin, Bunk Gardner, Steve Good, Tom Heasley, Paul Lovens, Barry Mitterhof, Dennis Palmer, Dan Plonsey, Ted Beichman, Brian Bitchie, Gino Robair, Leslie Boss, Bob Stagner, Carrie Shull, Pat Thomas, Tony Trischka, Bruce Wagner, Alex Ward, Charles Waters. Leo Records.

The buzz is that Eugene Chadbourne has assembled an impressive roster of performers and let 'em go buggy in *Insect Attracter* (Leo Records). The gathering that is *Mourning of the Praying Mantis* can bee as delicate and quixotic as a gagaku ensemble. The music tremolos and unfolds in a disarmingly insectivorous manner. On the other hand, the real predators are found in Termite Damage, a free post-rock jam with the following personnel and instrumentation

Chadbourne - electric guitars, electric bass, banjo, bass banjo, electric toaster, Casio Rap Man, Heevix Jam Master, Electric Ladybug Bob Stagner - percussion
Dennis Palmer - cheap electronics, Casio Rap Man, synthesizer made by someone's father
Charles Waters - soprano and alto saxophone, bass and Bb clarinets. Casio Genius Box

The Cricket in My Life turns out to be oboist Carrie Shull, accompanied by Chadbourne (5-string banjo and "personal effects"), Leslie Rosson (bassoon and shawm), Alex Ward (Bb clarinet and alto sax), Pat Thomas (piano and "bargain electronics"), and Paul Lovens ("selected drums and cymbals and Stradivarius saw"). Thrashy.

Chadbourne continues on a jittery banjo gone mad in Swat. A San Francisco team of percussionist Gino Robair, contrabassist Ashley Adams, tubist Tom Heasley, and woodwind player Dan Plonsey contribute to the frenetic texture, where, every once in a while, the ensemble grinds to a halt. Swat.

The Cricket in My Life returns for a zany conclusion that sounds like the Hatfields and the Osama bin Ladens.

Life Is Basically Beautiful

MARK ALBURGER

Jay Cloidt. Kole Kat Krush [Kole Kat Krush. Karoshi. Jimi's Fridge. Life Is Good... And People Are Basically Decent. Exploded View. Light Fall. Kole Kat Krush]. Kronos Quartet. Basso Bongo. Paul Dresher Ensemble. Starkland.

Jay Cloidt is a clown prince of music. His compositions bubble over with good humor, yet are full of intelligence and edge. Kicky rhythms and elliptical harmonies collide, postminimal and postpop sensibilities meld into a convincing whole. He is not above a belly laugh, as in the title cut(s) *Kole Kat Krush*, heard in two versions at the beginning and end of the album (from Kronos Quartet and the Paul Dresher Ensemble respectively), where snippets from Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* spring out from a soup of Beethoven, Sly and the Family Stone, and music of India.

Karoshi is a basso drop-dead evocation of Japanese salarymen, recounted by the bass instruments and sampled percussion of the Basso Bongo ensemble. Howls of derisive laughter, Bruce -- car crashes, explosions, Gershwin, Grieg.... Jimi's Fridge pays homage to Hendrix in outer space trajectories generated from a sample of the motor from Cloidt's own refrigerator. Comin' ta get ya baby... Nothing funny (except the title) or rhythmic here, just ominous arcs of cold distortions.

Cloidt notes that the five relatively short movements *Life Is Good... And People Are Basically Decent* can be played together or as standalone works. "Contrary" takes a contrarian view of "Chopsticks" in a variety of dizzy tempi and syncopations. More motor cycles (indeed motorcycles) in "For Bud," plus bullroarers and stairmasters. "Driver" is a driving rock-minimal boogie with prominent parts for violin, synth-harpsichord, and bassoon. "Gehenna" -- the Greek word for fire and the valley near Jerusalem -- is an elevated, sustaining mystery. There's no halfway for Cloidt; he explores extremes effectively. "DixieLurch Music" is more of an urban shuffle indebted to Thelonious Monk, Charlie Parker, and Frank Zappa. The Paul Dresher Ensemble sounds its fantastic self throughout.

High spirits continue in three movements from *Exploded View*, an all-sampler piece where human and automotive sounds are transformed into cats and chipmunks and trash and whistles. And as for *Lightfall*

[T]his piece was an attempt to create a work that is straightforwardly beautiful, above all other considerations - something that I find difficult to try, even embarrassing. But then again, one of my friends reassured me, "Don't worry -- it's not that beautiful!

But not bad for a piece that still insists on having power mowers and metallic clankings and choo-choo trains and mbiras...

Jumping with Buckner and Mitchell

MARK FRANCIS

Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner. 8 O'Clock: Two Improvisations. Mutable 17505-2

The two parts of Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner's 8 O'Clock: Two Improvisations (Mutable) are broken up into several tracks for convenience though they are not intended to be multi-movement pieces. Thomas Buckner, voice, and Roscoe Mitchell, saxophone and percussion, make a kind of acoustic electronic music with all kinds of unusual sounds. There is little sense of tempo and no sense of meter, with very little patterning; it simply begins and goes. There are elements of third stream and post-bop, where clashing seems more important than trying to work off of what the other performer is doing. Other influences in the air are Berio, Coltrane, and serial pointillism.

Valentines

MARK FRANCIS

Mel Graves. *Day Of Love*. Mutable 17503-2. mutemus@interport.net.

Mel Graves's *Day of Love* CD contains two large compositions, the first of which is the namesake. The 1996 title work is a collection of eight songs with introduction and bass interlude. The poetry is by Pablo Neruda and the text is in English. The scoring is for baritone, flute and contrabass. The rough, primal introduction shows Graves's interest in third-stream jazz and classical avant-garde. A variety of extended techniques are used with the flute and bass, with the voice sometimes reciting the text. The songs are generally through-composed with occasional ostinati. The most "song-like" of this cycle is the fifth movement, "Body Of A Woman;" the bass sets a groove making the song swing a bit.

The second composition, *Global Village* (1988), is a three-movement work for string quartet. The first movement, "Dance of Life - Dance of the Whirling Dervish," is a kind of Turkish jazz. The second movement, "Dance of Death - Dance of the Shaman," begins with a solo violin gradually adding percussion. Gradually the players return to the stringed instruments creating repeated patterns to accompany the improvisatory melody. The third movement, "Dance of the Global Village," begins with lots of glissandi and features numerous false starts and stops.

Triduum, Parts 1 & II

MARK FRANCIS

James MacMillan. *The World Ransoming* and *Cello Concerto*. BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Osmo Vanska. BIS-CD-989.

The World Ransoming and Cello Concerto are part of MacMillan's three-part Triduum, an Easter triptych (the third is a symphony). MacMillan describes these works as a contemplation though it's hard to miss the symbolism of the soloist and the tutti. The World's Ransoming is a concertante work for English horn and orchestra, a 21-minute, single movement, representative of Maundy Thursday. The work begins with a violent Varèse-like chord that gives way to the lyricism of the English horn, representative of Jesus. The tutti seems to represent the violent world, foreshadowing the crucifixion. This work is filled with many contrasts: cowbells, plainsong, a Bach chorale, as many ideas compete for the listener's attention. There is very little repetition until the quiet, plaintive ending. This return represents the clarity of soloist's (Christ's) purpose.

The Concerto for Cello and Orchestra is a three-movement work representing Good Friday. Though a concerto this work is highly-descriptive, like a tone poem. The first movement, "The Mockery," alternates between the soloist and tutti (Christ and his accusers). MacMillan is not shy about using the entire orchestra, with lots of percussion. The second, "The Reproaches," is slow and modal as the cello uses a viola da gamba-like tone. The final "Dearest Wood and Dearest Iron," depicts the crucifixion. Again this movement uses a wide variety of sound including an anvil to depict the driving of the nails. The cello finally emerges but is cut off by a brass choir and percussion.

Authors

An ASCAP composer, MARK ALBURGER writes for Commuter Times, teaches at Diablo Valley College, and is published by New Music. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSICi.

KEN BULLOCK is a writer on music, and theatre critic for Commuter Times.

DAVID CLEARY's music has been played throughout the U.S. and abroad, including performances at Tanglewood and by Alea II and Dinosaur Annex. A member of Composers in Red Sneaker, he has won many awards and grants, including the Harvey Gaul Contest, an Ella Lyman Cabot Trust Grant, and a MacDowell residence. He is a staff critic for The New Music Connoisseur and 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

JEFF DUNN is a freelance critic with a B.A. in music and a Ph.D. in Education. He is an avid collector of recorded performances of new music, a dedicated opera-goer, and a composer of piano and vocal music. His post-modernistic career has included stints as a ranger-naturalist, geologic explorationist, and geography professor. He now serves on the board of directors for New Music Forum and is a Bay Area correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

MARK FRANCIS is Lecturer of Music at Mississippi State University. He has previously held positions at Centenary College, Northwestern State University and the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts. He holds a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Kentucky. A recipient of 6 ASCAP Standard Awards his compositions include works for chamber, orchestral and choral ensembles, electronic music and 50 art songs.

ANDREW SHAPIRO (b. 1975, New York City) holds a degree in music composition from the Oberlin Conservatory. Shapiro lives in San Francisco where he composes for a variety of different areas including dance pieces, film scores, the concert hall, and club bookings with his group, ShapiroEnsemble.

Calendar

May 1

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

San Francisco Symphony in Weill's *Threepenny Opera Suite* and Martin's *Petite symphonie concertante*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 4.

May 4

Sarah Michael's Arachne. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 19.

Terry Riley and the All-Stars. Columbia University, New York, NY.

Dan Locklair's Brief Mass. Christ United Methodist Church, Greensboro, NC.

May 6

Stefano Scodanibbio and Edoardo Sanguineti. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

May 7

Composers, Inc., presents Brouwer's *Crosswinds*, Chambers's *Firehose Reel*, Felice's *Piano Sonata*, Kuss's *Contraband*, La Rocca's *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and Shearer's *At Waters Edge*. Green Room, Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

Art as Spiritual Practice, with Richard Foreman and Meredith Monk. White Box, New York, NY.

May 9

City Opera presents David Meckler's *Apollo 14*. Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew, New York, NY.

May 11

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* closes after 21 years and nearly 9,000 performances. West End, London, UK.

24th anniversary of the death of William Grant Still.

Lifting the Veil, a Meet the Composer Forum with Mary Lou Newmark, Belinda Reynolds, and Nancy Bloomer Deussen. California State University, Sacramento, CA.

May 13

San Francisco Contemporary Players in Revueltas's *Homanaje a Garcia Lorca*, Ruanova's *Ricercare II*, Maldonado's *Figuralmusik II*, and Zohn-Muldoon's *Danza Nocturna*. Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, CA.

May 16

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA. May 19

SFS Youth Orchestra in Ives's *Decoration Day* and Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 20

Markus Stockhausen and Barre Bouman. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

May 29

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Schuman and Schumann, featuring the former's *George Washington Bridge* and *Concerto on Old English Rounds*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 30

Composers Concordance presents Nowak's *Resound*, Dello Joio's *Two Concert Etudes*, Pehrson's *Violhexy*, Parwez's *Chitarang*, Schuller's *Episodes*, Yttrehus's *Explorations*, and Hardish's *Jazz Sonorities*. Frederick Loewe Theater, New York University, New York, NY.

May 31

Pauline Oliveros 70th-birthday celebration. Lorraine Hansberry Theater, San Francisco, CA. Through June 2.

Chronicle

March 1

William Susman's *Asphyxiating Uma*. IMC6 Theaters, Sunnyvale, CA. Through March 3.

Gunther Schuller conducts the Manhattan School of Music Symphony in his Seven Studies on Themes of Paul Klee and Lutoslawski's Piano Concerto (with Jessica Bruser). Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY. "The Paul Klee piece is Mr. Schuller's most familiar opus, and it made for an engaging opening, from the jazz that swings through the third movement, 'Blauteufel" ("Blue Devil"), to the almost cinematic local color of "Arabische Stadt," which plays off a distant flute and close-at-hand oboe in snatches of genuine Arabian melodies" [NYT, 3/7/02].

March 2

Orchestra 2001 Celebrating 20th Century Poland. Lutoslawski's Venetian Games, Gorecki's Symphony No. 3, Ptaszynska's Winter's Tales, and Bacewicz's Divertimento for Strings. Kimmel Center, Philadelphia, PA. Repeated March 3, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore.

March 4

Martin Rokeach. Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

March 5

Composers, Inc., presents Deniz Ince's *Piano Trio*, Freund's *Trio*, Korde's *Tenderness of Cranes*, Martin Rokeach's *Fantasy on 12 Strings*, and Sanchez-Gutierrez's *Luciernaga*. Green Room, Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

Kernis's The Four Seasons of Futurist Cuisine, Perle's Critical Moments II, and Kellogg's Divinum Mysterium. Tully Hall, NY.

March 6

San Francisco Symphony in Kernis's *Symphony No.* 2. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. "[It] concludes with one of the most terrifying sonic onslaughts in the literature" [San Francisco Chronicle, 3/8/02].

March 7

Other Minds 8, with Ellen Fullman, Takashi Harada, Lou Harrison, Tania Leon, Annea Lockwood, Thomas Buckner, Pauline Oliveros, Ricardo Tacuchian, Richard Teitelbaum, and Randy Weston. Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, San Francisco, CA. Through March 9. "Sounds of otherworldly beauty" [San Francisco Chronicle, 3/9/02].

March 8

91st anniversary of the birth of Alan Hovhaness.

Laurie Anderson's Happiness. UC, Berkeley, CA.

Premiere of Nancy Bloomer Deussen's Et in Terra Pax. San Jose, CA.

Composer Portrait: György Ligeti. Columbia University, NY, NY.

March 9

Premiere of Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Daydreams*. Berkeley, CA. Through March 17, Palo Alto, CA.

Empyrean Ensemble. Davis Art Center, Davis, CA.

Dan Locklair's Dream Steps. St. Peter's Episcopal, Charlotte, NC.

March 10

Laurie Amat, Dave Anderson, and Erling Wold, including music from the latter's *Sub Pontio Pilato*. 1627 Blake Street, Berkeley, CA. Petersen Quartet. Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

March 11

Berkeley New Music Project, with music of Keeril Makan. Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Artemis Quartet in *Hungarian Twentieth-Century Masters*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

March 12

North/South Consonance presents *Arthur Berger's 90th Birthday*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

Quintet of the Americas. Americas Society, New York, NY.

Premiere of Mark Petersen's *Uxmal: Fantasia Tucateca*. Emerald Ridge High School Performing Arts Center, South Hill, WA.

March 13

Ear Unit 20th-Anniversary Celebration. LACMA, Los Angeles, CA.

March 14

Peter Maxwell Davies conducts the San Francisco Symphony in his *Symphony No. 8 ("Antarctic")*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Sound on Film, with music of Andriessen, Stockhausen, and Tavener. Columbia University, New York, NY.

Complete Piano Works of Pierre Boulez performed by Marilyn Nonken. Cooper Union, New York, NY. "[I]nspiring" [NYT, 3/20/01].

March 15

National Symphony Orchestra of Bolivia in Respighi's *The Pines of Rome*. Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia. Through March 17.

March 16

Liderman's Song of Songs. University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Gyoto Monks. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

The Art of the Song. Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, CA.

Elton John and Billy Joel. Madison Square Garden, New York, NY. "Two piano men with four first names used 176 keys to create an evening that progressed from nostalgia to chaos" [The New York Times, 3/18/02].

March 17

Pacific Sticks in I'lana Cotton's *Women's Voices, Women's Words*, with Laurie Amat. LOV Community Service Center, Newark, CA.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Reflections on the Hudson*, with The Community Band of Brevard. North Brevard, FL. Through March 24, Merritt Island.

March 19

Death of soul-jazz organist John Patton, of complications from diabetes and kidney malfunction, at 66. Montclair, NJ. "Patton . . . developed a broader audience when John Zorn hired him to play a tense, climactic solo on 'Erotico (The Burglars),' a track on Mr. Zorn's 1986 album, *The Big Gundown* [Ben Ratliff, The New York Times, 3/25/02].

New Century Chamber Orchestra performs arrangements by Billy Childs, Eumir Deodato, Terry Riley, Kurt Rohde, Andy Stein of music from the Beatles' Abbey Road. St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA. "Riley . . . explored the dark grinding rhythms of 'I Want You (She's So Heavy' fearlessly" [Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle, 3/23/02].

March 22

Gershwin's Strike Up the Band! Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

SF Composers Chamber Orchestra performs Tom Heasley's *Tuba and Electronics*, Stan McDaniel's *Duet 1993: Remembrance*, Alexis Alrich's *Fuse*, Marcia Burchard's *Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth*, John Beeman's *Beeline: A Festival Overture*, Erling Wold's *Sub Pontio Pilato*, and Mark Alburger's *Symphony No. 1 ("It Wasn't Classical...")*. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA.

March 24

Richard Goode performs two of Debussy's *Preludes*. Hertz Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Mark Alburger's Symphony No. 6. Santa Rosa, CA.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *A Silver, Shining Strand* performed by The Kona Community Orchestra. Kona, HI.

Steven Gerber's *Notturno* performed by the American Arts Trio. Borden Hall, Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY.

ICE (Intergalactic Contemporary Ensemble) in *Nancarrow's Studies No. 3C* and 7, Vali's *Folk Songs*, Childs's *Hands*, Newman's *American Beauty*, and Stalvey's *Requiem for a Dancer*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.