

# 21ST CENTURY MUSIC

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DECEMBER 2002

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# Tagging Along with Hagerty

TOM MOORE

Mark Hagerty is a composer living in Wilmington, DE, who is flourishing as he approaches his 50's, with new commissions and performances around the world. His music is challenging, rugged, serious, unique, compelling.

We spoke at his home on May 12.

MOORE: How did you get started in music?

HAGERTY: It's actually almost a gothic image. My early experience came from the Lutheran Church, where I got to hear a lot of good four-part harmony, including Bach. My mother was interested in music, and she bought a record collection, where you would get one each week for a dollar when you bought your groceries. It was a really good selection, and because I was a sick little asthmatic kid, I had nothing better to do (indeed there *is* nothing better to do) than to sit and listen to *The Greatest Music Every Written*. I don't remember this myself, but I am told that when I was three, I would sit in front of the loudspeaker and request *The Firebird*. I liked all the Russians -- Mussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, later on Prokofiev, Shostakovich, and Stravinsky. Those were my favorites, because they are vivid, picturesque pieces. I couldn't go out to play, so I listened to all this stuff and thought about it a lot. That was my early ear training. Then I would pick out melodies on the piano. My uncle had played the trumpet, and there was a trumpet sitting around the house. I picked that up, tried to make a noise on it, took it to school and got some lessons, and got to the point with that where I was admitted to conservatory at Oberlin as a trumpet major. I think that I was barely admitted, and I don't think I would have been that good, but that was my start at the Conservatory. Somewhere along the line I got healthy, and it was found that I could sing, and since I was a tenor there was quite a bit of demand. I got to do a lot of singing, so I studied voice at Oberlin, and later in Boston and elsewhere, and sang professionally. That's a dim memory now, since I don't really sing anymore. As far as composing, I literally worshipped the composers as a kid. I had pictures of all of them in my room - I thought they were gods, and I thought that it was a miracle that Beethoven was able to write music when he was deaf...and that it was the height of presumption to think that I could do that or make any kind of contribution, so I put it off for a long time. Some time in my middle teens I started re-harmonizing hymns in a sardonic way -- trying to pervert their meaning and fool around with them. I was having a lot of fun, but it wasn't until I was halfway through college that I decided to major in composition. Before that I had written piano pieces, brass quartets and so forth, but it was a modest start, because I felt unqualified to do it.

MOORE: Where did you grow up?

HAGERTY: In and around Cleveland, and stayed in Ohio through college, taking a year off in Boston at one point. Not so much because I wanted to stay in Ohio, but because I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. Oberlin College and Conservatory is about the only place where everything is there on one campus, so, reluctantly, I stayed in Ohio to study there.

MOORE: You must have gone to hear the Cleveland Orchestra as a teen.

HAGERTY: Yes, actually that started in elementary school. By the time I was a teenager it wasn't the children's concerts anymore -- I got to hear George Szell conduct one of the greatest orchestras in the in one of the best halls. At that time they were heavily into meat-and-potatoes classical work - *Firebird* was adventurous back then. I was also lucky enough to go to a prep school that had a terrific music program -- high-quality theory training, piano lessons, glee club. I listened to Jimi Hendrix, the Doors, Cream, too, but to me that was a very separate enterprise.

MOORE: You studied piano and trumpet in high school?

HAGERTY: I did, but I have absolutely no talent at the keyboard -- it was mostly attached to theory lessons.

MOORE: What was the culture in terms of composition at Oberlin? Were the serialists dominant, or were there other influences? What was the music that was held up as ideal? I don't imagine that it was the Russians.

HAGERTY: No, the Russians weren't taken very seriously. I studied with Richard Hoffmann, who was a student of Schoenberg, and a very serious one. He served as his amanuensis. Richard Hoffmann is an incredibly gifted and very interesting person, not held in favor today, I don't think, a complex guy who did a lot to curtail his own career and exposure. I remember seeing a letter he received from Peters asking to publish all his music, and he didn't respond. He was an incredible teacher. It wasn't that he was stuck on atonality or serialism, but we did use Schoenberg, Webern, and Berg as examples. I had come to love that music before I got to Oberlin, so it was a very natural thing to study it. It was a diverse environment, but I was never interested in the other stuff -- nothing to do with John Cage, or Aaron Copland, or Gunther Schuller, or anything that was less serious than Schoenberg, which was actually quite limiting. But it's good training, and if you can get away from it later, I think that it's incredibly useful. I have never written a 12-tone piece, but it was fun to be in a situation where you felt that you had to justify every thing you did, justify every note, pay a lot of attention to structure -- good training, but not the way you want to write later on.

MOORE: Like studying species counterpoint, I suppose?

HAGERTY: Exactly.

MOORE: What about Brandeis? You had moved to Boston with your wife [harpichordist Tracy Richardson], is that right?

HAGERTY: We took a year off during our undergraduate studies, and I studied at Brandeis, and she took counterpoint at Boston University. I spent a year in a graduate seminar under Seymour Shifrin. He was kind enough to let me in for free, so once a week I took the afternoon off from my job as a janitor, and would go in there and show him what I was working on. I was working real hard on a very ambitious concerto for violin, viola and string orchestra, which Seymour Shifrin just absolutely loathed. I stopped writing that piece and instead wrote a piece for solo cello, which is probably the only piece I have written since I was 20 that I don't care to hear again. Very, very serious, modern, highly-structured, not very fun idiom, and in fact the young woman that played it at Princeton later quit playing the cello and cited that piece as one of the reasons. So I have a guilty conscience about that piece.

MOORE: It was a piece that Shifrin approved of?

HAGERTY: Yes, he liked it a lot, and so did Richard Hoffmann, but that piece was really an academic enterprise.

MOORE: The Cantata Singers performed Shifrin's *Cantata on Sophoclean Texts* about 15 years ago, which was recorded for CRI. I recall that work as being fairly accessible.

HAGERTY: To be honest, I was even more solipsistic back then, and didn't have that much interest in his music. I only know a few of his pieces. I did go to a concert of his works, and realized that he went through several different periods. His earlier pieces are rather like the early Elliott Carter -- modern, comfortable American mode, and then got more serious after that.

MOORE: What is your esthetic now? What is your goal when you are writing a piece?

HAGERTY I was always writing the most serious, heartfelt, condensed art music that I could. I like to think that I have let a little more air and light into it. Today I am trying not to write anything unless somebody asks for it. If I am writing something that someone has asked for, my first responsibility is to write something that they will enjoy playing. That has a big influence on how you write. I no longer think it's wrong to have fun when writing, or playing, or listening to music, so I try to make my pieces enjoyable, no matter how serious they may be. I feel less like I am creating and solving problems these days, and more like I am painting or singing, than structuring things. But having spent so much time concerned with form, I think that it happens naturally now.

MOORE: Could you discuss the *Suite for Cello Solo, No. 2*, which Doug McNames played at the Delaware Center for the Contemporary Arts last year?

HAGERTY That piece attempts to accomplish some of the same things as a baroque solo-instrument suite, that is, a lot of the melodies suggest more than one voice, some of the patterns set up chord progressions. It is a suite. It has different pieces with different affects, which is helpful, because I have a tendency to put everything into one piece, and it's often more successful to not try to do everything in one movement. I don't want to be "neo"-anything, but it tries to give the listener the kind of experience that he would have listening to a Bach suite or partita. In doing that I wrote some material that was tonal and some that was not very tonal, but I feel that it was coherent, it fits together.

MOORE: I am interested in the methods you used to structure the piece.

HAGERTY: I have a harmonic language that I developed in my 20's that involves a lot of four-note chords, tonal chords with another note, and sometimes it's ambiguous which tone is the root. For example if you have a C-major chord over an A-flat, depending on the position of the chord you can hear it as based on C or based on A-flat. I use the sort of three or four part voice-leading that I heard growing up in the church. I don't want it to sound like that, but I am very conscious of voice-leading, so when I am writing a prelude, I think about harmonic progression and voice-leading in the same way as somebody might have done 300 years ago. Another thing that happened in that piece is something that I have been doing more of lately, which is to set up patterns, and create building blocks that I can then move around and repeat. It's not a mystery that listeners like to hear stuff repeated, though that was not obvious to those of us who were studying the Second Viennese style.

There's a Scherzo in the piece that moves right along and which Doug McNames played brilliantly, and when I thought of that piece, I was thinking of one of those paintings by Paul Klee which was rough squares in different sizes and colors, that fit together and don't, the colors fit and they don't, and thinking about blocks of music in the same way. It's a very natural way for me to put together a piece, and I was doing it earlier today. I will finish a piece for solo marimba today, and it's the same idea of creating building blocks and putting them together in different combinations, and sometimes writing connective material.

MOORE: You create the fundamental matrix, and the piece is created by manipulating it through the harmonic areas that it suggests.

HAGERTY: Another thing that happens in that cello suite is a set of variations. Within the variations I can harken back to different episodes, styles, and sounds from earlier in the piece. Generally a set of variations is based on a song that I have written, because I find the best way to write a song for an instrument is to first write it for voice. More than once I have used songs as themes for variations -- that happens in the harpsichord suites, and other places as well.

MOORE: I know the works that I have heard in concert, but would like to get a sense of the range of music that is in your catalog.

HAGERTY: I have a couple of harpsichord suites, with five to six movements each, somewhat in the style of the cello suite. There is a chamber concerto for piano, percussion and small orchestra, written quite a while ago, that I still like. That was played long ago at Oberlin, and I have revised it since, and would like to get the revised version played. It's called *Chamber Concerto*. That was back in the days when you could use things like *String Quartet* or *Chamber Concerto*, and if you do that now nobody will touch your piece.

MOORE: You have to have a brand name.

HAGERTY: That's a good way of putting it. Hence the piece that I wrote for Relache is called *High Octane*, the trio for bassoon, cello and harpsichord is called *Green Mountain Music*, and I'm thinking of calling the piece I am working on now for marimba *One-Track Mind*. It's for Chen Zimbalista, a virtuoso percussionist who lives in Tel Aviv. He was a guest on the recent Relache program, and I was very impressed with his playing. I guess he liked my piece, since he asked me to write him something. We are working on an ambitious piece for percussion to include marimba. I've been faxing examples and emailing questions. In the meantime, yesterday I got an idea for a solo marimba piece.

MOORE: A separate piece?

HAGERTY: Maybe an encore. *One-Track Mind*, in that it keeps reiterating the middle E in different ways. It sets up patterns and varies them. It's a light-hearted piece. The E never quite goes away -- you hear it in different ways, in different contexts. The piece is short enough that you don't get tired of it. I haven't figured out the title for the big piece. I want to do that beforehand, because I am finding that these suggestive titles keep me in line. I try to follow the expectations that I set up with the title, and it keeps me from going too far afield.

MOORE: The impression of a some viewers of modern art is that this is exactly what goes on with a work of modern art, that it is framed around the concept encapsulated in the title.

HAGERTY: I'm never sure which comes first, or whether they are serious about their titles, although I guess in my last few titles I haven't been too serious either. *High Octane*, that's not too serious, but it sets up a challenge -- you don't write anything that isn't.

MOORE: Are there other new projects?

HAGERTY: Chen Zimbalista is also conducting a string orchestra. He studied the cello, so he is comfortable and familiar with strings. This is in Tel Aviv -- a professional group, playing a lot. He and I think it might be a lot of fun to have a concerto for percussion and string orchestra, and this fits in with my new rule of writing pieces for people that will play them. I have started a project of writing intermezzi for viola and piano, which I write in a 19th-century idiom. I love the instrument, and I sometimes have romantic themes come to mind which I can't use anywhere else. So I collect those, and so far I have written two that I am very happy with. I have a cantata for soloists, chorus, brass and strings on texts of T.S. Eliot, called "O light invisible", a series of songs for tenor and piano trio on texts of Wallace Stevens. Other pieces in progress are a set of *Winter Scenes* for chorus, strings and orchestral bells. So far I have used texts by Wallace Stevens, T.S. Eliot, and W.H. Auden. That piece is mostly done. Another piece is for two pianos which will be called *Companion Piece* just like the piece for two flutes. I want to write a lot of duets, and will just use that title. This is *Companion Piece No. 2*. And there is a symphony for double orchestra, that's started, and I don't know whether I will finish it. It was very useful to write it as far I have. I might just take it apart and use it for other pieces.

MOORE: Useful how?

HAGERTY: In terms of orchestration, antiphonal writing, an extension of my harmonic language.

MOORE: How about *Companion Piece* [a flute duet premiered in Rio de Janeiro in April 2002]. I was struck by the 17th-century character of the last movement, built on a ground bass, F-G-A-B, and the progressive variations on that. What were the sound ideals for the first two movements? The harmonic content of the second movement is also striking.

HAGERTY: The conceit of the piece is that it was written for two people who are very fond of each other, but live far apart. The first movement is antiphonal, and the players play back and forth at each, and make some rhapsodic statements that are later combined. It's also evocative of bird-song, and there's some slow music with not much happening where I leave it up to the players to create a hushed feeling of communing over a distance. It's not harmonically oriented, but use melodies that were buried in *High-Octane*. In the second movement the players move closer together, but not together. In the Tchaikovsky *Pathétique*, there is a very interesting antiphonal effect, where he writes parallel thirds and sixths, but the upper and lower notes hocket back and forth, so neither violin section is playing the melody or harmony, but rather these more interesting melodies which put together make an unexpectedly coherent line. Harmonically, it's an updated suspension series on which I was building the harmony, but you don't hear that in the individual line, since as in the Tchaikovsky, the individual lines don't tell the story. The last movement does harken to the idea of the ground bass. For whatever reason, a set of variations is a very satisfying way to end a piece, and I think it provides a reward for the listener. The first two movements were challenging, and it's conclusive to have a final movement with a repeated idea. But as you know it gets interrupted with a ritornello. There's an alternating eighth-note figure which is prominent, and you can't tell if it is background or foreground. It's a question, and the piece concludes with the players each taking one note of it. To the extent that the two players, or the two people, achieve union, it is only to ask a question together.

# Concert Reviews

## Exquisite and Unsatisfying

EDMUND KIMBELL

Westminster Choir of Westminster Choir College of Rider University. March 22, Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago, IL.

The Westminster Choir's March 22 concert at Fourth Presbyterian Church in Chicago at was the final leg of an eight-day, five-city Midwestern tour. Understandably, the performers were fatigued and perhaps not at their peak. Nevertheless, even making these allowances, the performance was unsatisfyingly shy of being truly inspiring and transcendent, especially given the choir's reputation.

The program comprised a sampler of mostly 20th-century secular and sacred choral masterworks by Francis Poulenc, Olivier Messiaen, Arnold Schoenberg, Benjamin Britten, Samuel Barber, Gian-Carlo Menotti, and Charles Ives. While the variety was impressive, the smattering of individual movements from larger cycles left a vague sense of deprivation and non-fulfillment.

Unfortunately, the same was also true of the performance. The singing was indeed full-bodied and incisive. The choir's blend and intonation, even in harmonically dense passages, was superb, although occasionally some chords -- for example in the two selections of Poulenc's Lenten motets -- did not immediately tune properly.

But back to the praiseworthy elements: the legato singing was some of the most seamless ever produced by a choir, while the diction was generally clear and understandable in all three languages presented (Latin, German, and English). Although again, there were a few stray American vowels in the foreign languages which did not even match across the whole choir.

However, the sound throughout the concert was homogenized, pasteurized even, and hence bland. There was almost no variation of tonal quality to mirror the different subjects and emotions of the different works, a fact which was paralleled, perhaps caused, by the lack of expression on the performers' faces. Not until Ives's *The Circus Band*, towards the end of the second half of the program, did the performers become animated, and even then, the rendition was somewhat ponderous, lacking the sense of frolic and salacious mischief suggested by Ives' own text which he had added to his rearrangement of an earlier march.

The same problems prevailed in the piano accompaniment, whose own intricacies were played too subordinately to the double chorus. Perhaps opening the lid even partially would have remedied the balance troubles, but it would still not have brought about a rich and satisfying musicality. Too many notes were merely tossed off or glossed over rather than savored. And in the three Ives selections, *Evening*, *Serenity*, and *The Circus Band*, which required four-hand accompaniment, there were ensemble problems, with several chords not being played absolutely together.

Some of the blandness of the performance may be attributed to the virtually identical tempi adopted for each work. Although nearly every work on the program was written in a moderate or slow tempo, almost no variation or gradation was attempted even within the works by conductor Joseph Flummerfelt.

Thus, as already mentioned, supposedly livelier pieces, such as Ives's *The Circus Band*, came across as heavy-footed and graceless. Similarly, extended, ethereal moments were stodgily terrestrial. If any composer of any century, but especially the 20th, can be said to portray the infinite of the divine, it is Olivier Messiaen, yet this performance of his *O Sacrum Convivium* lacked the sense of timelessness, a lack increased by the sopranos' inability to sound disembodied and effortlessly float soft, high notes.

There was a similar lack of transparency in the section of the program entitled *21st-Century Partsongs*. In Barber's *To be Sung on the Water*, the aquatic tone-painting which the composer so carefully crafted did not emerge at all. The rippling effect of the recurring three-note motif to the word "beautiful" had no magic, while the repeated pronunciation of the same with a "d" was simply careless. In the third work in this group, there must surely have been some significance to the choice of the word "madrigal" in the title *Twelfth Madrigal* from Menotti's *The Unicorn, the Gorgon and the Manticore*, yet it was not apparent from the performance.

The keynote and longest work was Arnold Schoenberg's *Friede auf Erden (Peace on Earth)*. Although the work in earlier times was termed "unsingable" or "unperformable," the Westminster Choir admirably belied these appellations by presenting a near-perfect rendition of the flexible exploration of distant key-relationships and striking dissonances. However, the performance stopped there without bringing out the passion and poignancy of the text and music. The repeated refrain "Peace, peace on earth!" which Schoenberg heightened dynamically and harmonically, received no particular emphasis. Brash, shrill loudness substituted for passion, while in the final soft refrain, there was no sense of apotheosis.

Gerald Custer's *Innisfree* (2000), a setting of a poem by Yeats, is pleasant and dulcet, with considerable unison writing over piano arpeggios with occasional mild dissonances. As Oscar Wilde described a cigarette, "the perfect type of a perfect pleasure. It is exquisite, and it leaves one unsatisfied. What more can one want?"

## Berio Takes his Turn at Turandot

DAVID BÜNDLER

Los Angeles Opera premieres a version of Puccini's *Turandot*, with new ending supplied by Luciano Berio. Los Angeles Opera. June 14, Dorothy Chandler Pavilion, Los Angeles, CA.

The unfinished scores of many composers -- including Mahler, Mozart, and Mussorgsky -- have attracted ambitious composers like magnets. So it's odd that no one has tried his or her hand at crafting a new ending for Puccini's *Turandot* since Franco Alfano did his quick and dirty wrap-up in the months following the composer's death in 1924. If ever a score cried out for more dramatically satisfying finale, this is it.

When Placido Domingo took the helm of the Los Angeles Opera two years ago, he attracted lots of dollars for his many pet projects, one of which was a partnership with Luciano Berio to settle some old scores.



Next season, LA Opera will premiere Berio's new orchestration of Monteverdi's *Coronation of Poppea*, but it was the world premiere of Berio's new *Turandot* ending that offered the beginning of a beautiful friendship. Puccini dropped out at point where the slave girl Liu dies, and Berio's contribution is roughly 20 minutes of concluding music and action that tries to resolve her pointless tragedy and the inexplicable redemption of a bloodthirsty Princess Turandot through Calaf's love.

It's a thankless job and it's nice that someone finally tried to redo it. Berio went back to Puccini's old manuscript, paying especial attention to the composer's notations (for instance, a comment in the margins "with a great influence of *Tristan*"). His orchestration is a vivid combination of romantic Puccini-isms and more up-to-date Berio touches -- but nothing out of character with the two hours of music that precede it. Familiar themes abound, though not as gushy as Alfano's admittedly gorgeous settings.

The problem is that it still doesn't work dramatically. Turandot is less of a pushover in this version, and her final conversion is not so much triumphant (as in Alfano's version) as it is wary and uncertain (as if Calaf's real name were Bluebeard). Director Gian-Carlo del Monaco (the son of one of opera's great Calafs) has smartly left Liu's corpse onstage to haunt the two would-be lovers and his blocking is full of deep psychological brooding; at one point, Calaf kisses the dead slave girl, which is ripe with suggestion. But all he has to work with is a resolution that's as much of a non sequitur in Berio's version as it was in Alfano's. A dream *Turandot* ending might do more to play off the Yin-Yang of Liu and Turandot than either of these versions. At least we can still imagine this fairy tale in our own dreams. Conductor Kent Nagano could have used a beefier orchestra and chorus, but the principal cast -- Audrey Stottler (Turandot), Franco Farina (Calaf), Hei-Kyung Hong (Liu) -- sang splendidly. The first two and a half acts were fine as well.

## Topsy Turvy Jenufa

### DAVID BÜNDLER

Long Beach Opera presents Leos Janacek's *Jenufa*. June 15, Carpenter Performing Arts Center, California State University, Long Beach. June 15.

It's been about 100 years since Leos Janacek put the finishing touches on his first operatic masterpiece, *Jenufa*. A production by the Long Beach Opera, presented on June 15, may well have been the work's first performance in the Los Angeles area and it was a tour de force. The stars were aligned for this one -- a brilliant cast headed by newcomer Lisa Willson (Jenufa) with veterans Katherine Ciesinski (Kostelnicka) and Kathryn Day (Grandmother Burya), a mighty little orchestra conducted by Andreas Mitisek and the striking visuals of a production team led by two very young women. It was partly for financial reasons that Long Beach Opera executive director Michael Milenski hired his daughter Isabel Milenski to direct (she had to bring it in under budget or else...) and her school chum Darcy Scanlin as designer.

As a visual point of departure, Milenski and Scanlin based the look of their production on some stark but vivid Lithuanian photography of village life as seen through the high pitch perspective of a powerful zoom lens. The gimmick was that we saw all of the action from above in a bird's eye (or satellite's eye) view of the world.

The two enormous bunkhouses of the town mill were turned on end so that the audience looked straight down onto the roofs and practically into the chimneys. At the opening curtain, Jenufa (pregnant by her flaky lover Steva) was seen falling to earth (the rear of the stage) in slow-motion and the dark of night. It was a breathtaking spectacle.

*Jenufa* is the romantic story among Janacek's great middle period trio of operas (*Katya Kabanova* being the tragedy and *Excursions of Mr. Broucek* the comedy), though it's a dark, verismo view of romance based on an 1890 play by Gabriela Preissova. Boy meets girl. Boy knocks up girl. Boy dumps girl. Girl gets baby. Boy's jealous stepbrother slashes girl's face. Girl's stepmother drowns baby. Girl and slasher live happily ever after.

Sung in English without the wonderfully gnarly consonants and clipped vowels of the Czech language, the musical flavor was nevertheless colorfully folkloric, urged along by Janacek's churning modernistic motor rhythms in the orchestra. Ciesinski was a sputtering volcano of guilt and emotion (if she weren't a singer, she'd still be a great stage actress). But the truly momentous find among this cast was the jealous slasher Laca sung by Roy Cornelius Smith, a powerhouse tenor whose specialty is the music of Kurt Weill. His is a name to watch. As darkly as this show began, it ended with Jenufa and Laca bound up in a big kiss with a blinding sunrise flaring up behind them. A musical and dramatic triumph from start to finish.

## Music for Strings, Percussion, and Contrabassoon

### MARK ALBURGER

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in the premiere of his *Urban Legend* (with Steven Braunstein), plus Béla Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Béla Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta* calls for an unorthodox assemblage of instruments, but Michael Tilson Thomas's *Urban Legend* goes one better, substituting the sublime for the sepulchre. To wit, contrabassoon. Both pieces were heard during a San Francisco Symphony subscription concert on October 2 in Davies Hall, with the composer-conductor at the helm.

The soloist was Steven Braunstein, who brought fleetness and mirth to this unlikely instrument. As in Igor Stravinsky's "Duetto" from *Pulcinella*, when the trombone has a loud voice and the double bass has "hardly a voice at all," so here -- where the doughty, dogged, down-and-dirty horn was no match for the combined, kicky forces of strings and percussion. This was a Bernstein-and-Gershwin meet Bartók-and-Sibelius essay, and the results were intriguing.

The Bartók received a spirited reading as well, and in all these years since it was premiered in 1937, the work has not lost its edge and fire. The surreally technical fugue made a telling effect and was followed by the blazing folk rhythms of the second movement. The definitive night music, with weird glissandi and isolated percussion fragments sets the stage marvelously for the demonstrative finale -- at times surprisingly leisured in this engaging rendition. Bartók's spare, classical sense of orchestration made its case along with marvelous call-and-response effects from the antiphonal strings.

# Record Review

## Give Us Barab?

DAVID CLEARY

Seymour Barab. *Music of Seymour Barab*. Kleos Classics.

The content of *Music of Seymour Barab* (Cleos Classics) displays a hefty disparity between craft and vision. Seymour Barab clearly possesses a fluidly polished compositional technique. Attractively gauged scoring and the ability to smoothly turn a melodic phrase, as well as a willingness to unobtrusively employ meter changes and unusual harmonic twists (the latter grounded firmly within a bedrock functional harmony idiom) are abundantly in evidence. But your reviewer searched in vain for something indicating the ability to put all this in service of anything beyond a style study

All three of the works heard here sound exceedingly derivative. *Dances for Oboe and Strings* is pure neoclassic Stravinsky, strongly reminiscent of such items as *The Fairy's Kiss* and *Danses Concertantes*, while sadly managing to whittle away the rhythmic edge that makes this Russian master's music so compelling. Regrettably, the effect is bucolic and overly sweet. Barber, Britten, or Rorem could have written the tenor and chamber ensemble piece *Moments Macabres* -- and in the process have imbued much more of its bizarre poetry's bite into the music. Barab's choice to let the text carry nearly all the responsibility for any undercurrent of edginess in the work is not a fortunate one. The largest selection presented, *Cosmos Cantata* for soprano, tenor, baritone, and chamber ensemble, sets a substantial text by Kurt Vonnegut. With the exception of a few very modest influences, such as neoclassic Stravinsky in "O Cosmos," Bernstein in "As in Life," and the occasional Broadway styling, this is music that could have been written by most any capable generic composer active during the latter part of the 19th century.

Performances are excellent. Soloists Margaret Astrup (soprano), Richard Holmes (baritone), James Roe (oboe), and Frederick Urrey (tenor) all do a first-class job, ably backed by the Manhattan Chamber Orchestra (Richard Auldson Clark, conductor). Sound and editing are fine.

## Bell Tones

DAVID CLEARY

Elizabeth Bell. *The Music of Elizabeth Bell*. MMC Recordings.

Elizabeth Bell's career is one of patient, courageous perseverance despite hardships -- a story likely not unusual of women her age in many disciplines, musical or otherwise. Despite having youthful urges to compose, she encountered significant discouragement from doing so by her various teachers until finally getting the chance to pursue graduate study at Juilliard. Composition mostly went on hold for her again following matriculation, after which time she married and raised a family. Divorced 22 years later, Bell returned to the New York area and resumed her career in earnest; in addition to fattening her portfolio of pieces, she co-founded the group New York Women Composers and wrote music criticism.

Many composers who came of age in the 1940s and 1950s found themselves heavily influenced by Bartók's music. Judging from the works heard on *The Music of Elizabeth Bell* (MMC Recordings) Bell's fascination with the Hungarian master's oeuvre has been a lifelong one, most obviously evident in the *First String Quartet* (1957). Twisting counterpoint that is atonal (though not serially based), fast repeated note gestures, arch form constructs, and similar traits inform the work. Bell's *Symphony No. 1* (1971) shows additional influence of the more dissonant elements of Prokofiev and Shostakovich, while the mixed quartet *Perne in a Gyre* (1984) hints at Messiaen on occasion.

One can say many positive things about the contents of this CD. Bell's orchestration is well gauged regardless of medium, her harmonic language is handled with consistency, and her fast movements exhibit a good bit of energy. And she does not neglect large-scale structure, though the formats employed are sometimes quite traditional. Regrettably some problems must be noted as well. Bell's sense of foreground shape often comes off as amorphous, lacking provocative melodic or gestural shape. And the harmonic language, while consistent, does not usually exhibit a sturdy sense of local direction or middleground underpinning. The piano concerto *Andromeda* (1993) is a case in point: here, much of the melodic material sounds colorless and is sequenced aimlessly rather than developed. In brief, this is music very long on solid craft but a bit short on distinction.

Performances are generally good; the Moyzes Quartet and pianist Eleanor Elkins play especially well here. The Seattle Symphony Orchestra, ably led by Gerard Schwartz, is only the occasional ensemble glitch and violin section passage scramble short of perfection. The Slovak Chamber Players favor wide violin and clarinet vibratos which are a bit off-putting, though it's possible this effect may have been called for in *Perne's* score (there are also numerous passages directing the players to execute quartertones and glissandi of varying kinds). Sound quality varies from good on the string quartet to a little stuffy in *Perne* to somewhat distant in the orchestral selections. Editing is mostly fine.

## Birtwistle Is Some Work

DAVID CLEARY

Harrison Birtwistle. *Refrains and Choruses*. Deux-Elles.

*Refrains and Choruses* (Deux-Elles) offers a welcome collection of Harrison Birtwistle's shorter works for small wind groupings with and without keyboard accompaniment, as well as some brief solo piano pieces. A number of these selections, some quite obscure, are otherwise unavailable on CD. The music here spans a broad time frame of nearly 50 years; it's very good, if highly eclectic stuff

Much of the reason the latter description holds has to do with Birtwistle's stunningly wide ranging influences. One encounters frankly tonal music mirroring Satie (much of the piano selections qualify here, such as the *Gymnopédie*-like *Berceuse de Jeanne* [1984], *Sad Song* [1971], and the early *Oockooing Bird* [ca. 1950]) and dissonant items displaying Varèse-style grit (such as the brief solo piano entry *Hector's Dawn* [1987] and the wind quintets *Refrains and Choruses* [1957] and *Five Distances* [1992]).

This last also spatially spreads its ensemble members in the manner of Henry Brant and utilizes some elements of aleatory. Some of the duos for keyboard and wind instrument make even more wholehearted use of postwar indeterminate techniques: the clarinet/piano selection *Linoi* (1968) for example demonstrates a loose coordination between the two instruments and in the middle of the work asks the pianist to improvise a vigorous strummed accompaniment on the strings. *An Uninterrupted Endless Melody* (1991), for oboe and piano, is even more conceptual, having the oboe freely intone a deliberately cyclic line without clear beginning or end over a piano backing that can be chosen from three possible versions—and proceeds to repeat the process through a three movement context. Stravinsky's practical neoclassic ethos gets updated in *Duets for Storab* (1983), scored for two flutes. And music from pre-Baroque eras also leaves its mark prominently. *Hoquetus Petrus* (1995), for two flutes and piccolo trumpet, shows that Birtwistle knows this stuttering Medieval technique intimately well (though one hears Varèse rather than Machaut in the pitches chosen). And the otherwise Stravinskian *Chorale from a Toy-Shop* (1967) is scored, in best Renaissance manner, for whatever five instruments can play the particular parts that comprise the work. In a class by itself is the pointillistic duet *Verses* (1965) which overlays a clarinet line with debts to Olivier Messiaen upon a Milton Babbitt oriented piano texture.

What surprises most is the fact that it all sounds like music written by the same composer. Like Ligeti, Birtwistle somehow is able to project a distinctive voice that does not rely on an inimitable harmonic language to impart uniqueness. And Birtwistle's structures here, while never referential to anything from the Baroque through Romantic periods, contain a convincing inner logic of their own.

Performances are first-rate all the way. The British based Galliard Ensemble (a wind quintet consisting of Kathryn Thomas on flute, Owen Dennis on oboe, Katherine Spencer on clarinet, Helen Simons on bassoon, and Richard Bayliss on horn), joined by guests Mark Law (piccolo trumpet), Robert Manasse (flute), and Richard Shaw (piano), play this challenging music splendidly. Sound and editing are excellent. This disc is very highly recommended.

## 20th-Century Piano Dance Woman

### DAVID CLEARY

Gloria Cheng. *Piano Dance: A 20th-Century Portrait*. Telarc.

Gloria Cheng's *Piano Dance: A 20th-Century Portrait* (Telarc) often charming release can be seen as a broad ranging compendium of 20th century dance-derived piano encores. Twenty-three short entries, some being individual movements from larger pieces, appear. Composers included run the gamut from prewar to the present.

While the post-1950 selections tend to be rather weak on this disc, a few worthy exceptions should be noted, specifically William Albright's stylish, personable "Sleepwalker's Shuffle" from *Dream Rags* (1970), Leo Ornstein's heartfelt, sophisticated *Waltz No. 7* (1966), Philip Glass' warm, becoming *Modern Love Waltz* (1977), and Gyorgy Ligeti's obsessive, energetic *Hungarian Rock for Harpsichord (Chaconne)* (1978) arranged by the soloist for piano and synthesized piano.

Cheng's playing here is excellent, featuring sensitive melodic shaping, able technique, and a bright sound that nicely balances energy and taste. Production and sound are top-flight.

## Violaotearoa

### DAVID CLEARY

Timothy Deighton. *Viola Aotearoa*. Timothy Deighton, Viola. Atoll.

Found on Timothy Deighton's *Viola Aotearoa* (Atoll) is a wide-ranging overview of recent music featuring viola written by New Zealand composers, presented by a formidably talented fellow countryman currently based on the string faculty at Penn State. Violist Timothy Deighton gives all these selections excellently; focused intonation, sure-footed digital technique, a nicely controlled bow arm, and a full, well-centered tone are hallmarks of his playing

The major must-hear is Anthony Watson's splendid *Sonata for Solo Viola* (1969). There's nothing here to suggest clear derivation from standard sonata models -- in fact, one might think on cursory glance at the movement labels that a suite designation would be more appropriate. But there's sufficient substance and seriousness of purpose that the title makes sense. The first and third movements, both brief recitatives, contrast profoundly, being by turns big and showy, then soft and tender. Sandwiched in between is a sawing, nihilist, almost ugly scherzo of gripping intensity. Taken together, these three initial entities provide a surprisingly suitable counterweight to the sizable finale, an angular dance shot through with howling glissando swoops that drops clear hints to music of preceding movements just before coming to a close. The harmonic language is serial with somewhat tonal leanings emanating from Bartók's oeuvre -- and sounds strikingly individual. Judging from this powerful work (and others, such as the three string quartets), its composer's tragic death in 1973 at age 39 -- suicide following personal and career setbacks placed within the context of alcoholism -- was a terrible loss to his country's emerging new music scene.

*Pacific Rock*, for solo viola by Martin Lodge, with its busy, brawny perpetual mobile gestures interlarded with sliding figures, clearly demonstrates the influence of Watson's composition—going so far as to quote a snippet from the aforementioned work near the end. The center of this brief entry, with its intentionally cramped range and microtonal bends, is meant to evoke traditional Maori singing. It's a good, concise listen. Anthony Ritchie's *Viola Concerto* (1994), tonal though often not triadic in sound (usually employing pandiatonic techniques), betrays the influence of many predecessors: Bartók and Stravinsky in the pervasive ostinato use, jazz (particularly in the often Gershwin-like finale), and film scores. Its lovely, yearning slow movement, cast in a clearly delineated ternary format, is irresistible.

Of the three duos presented, *Recitative II* for viola and percussion by Leonie Holmes proves the most memorable. It too contains a lot of ostinato writing, though the influence often heard here is that of Copland and Bernstein, especially in the bouncy syncopations of the outer sections of this single movement piece. The slow, atmospheric center of the work is fetching. Douglas Lilburn's *Three Songs for Baritone and Viola* (1958) is the product of a highly accomplished tonemeister whose music speaks with a confident voice. That being said, the jocular second movement unfortunately doesn't quite measure up to its brooding neighbors, being rhythmically rather square and a little too short to provide adequate overall balance. The brief *Duo Capriccio*, by Martin Risle, provides intensely furious material for its violin and viola pairing. Like the Ritchie, Lodge, and Holmes selections -- Risle's work also relies heavily on pattern figures... too much so, sorry to report. The piece tends to get caught up obsessively in the opening ostinato idea without imparting sufficient directionality or inflection.

## O Sound, Ever Different

### EDMUND KIMBELL

*O Light, From Age to Age the Same: Music of Eric DeLamararter, Leo Sowerby, Morgan Simmons and Aaron David Miller.* The Morning Choir, Chancel Choir, Children's and Youth Choirs and Tower Brass of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago; John W.W. Sherer, organist and director of music; Aaron David Miller, associate organist. The Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago, 126 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, IL.

With this recent release, the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago has not only resumed its welcome series of finely-crafted and highly enjoyable recorded performances, but is continuing its tradition of being an innovative and au courant leader in the field of contemporary religious music. This disc is a particularly valuable addition to a contemporary music collection because it presents quality American liturgical music by prominent yet all-too-often overlooked composers of the 20th century.

The performances on this disc readily live up to the high standard of musicality imposed by the composers represented. Throughout, the various choirs' meticulous attention to blend and nuance of phrasing is a delight to hear. Tower Brass manages the rare feat of delving deeply into rich sonorities and dynamics without ever blaring, while the blazing virtuosity of Drs Sherer and Miller on the Aeolian-Skinner Organ is simply astounding. Perhaps the one minor flaw of this release is the lack of any liner notes. In some attempt to assist the listener, I present some background to these significant composers and some details about the individual works on this disc.

Eric DeLamararter (c. 1880-1953) is remembered nowadays mostly for his organ works and choral anthems, most of which he wrote while serving as music director and organist of the Fourth Presbyterian Church of Chicago. Yet he was also a formidable force in American music as organist, conductor, composer, critic and academician. His many posts included assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the Chicago Tribune, the Universities of Missouri, Ohio, and Texas.

As if these duties were not enough, he was also a prolific composer. Nearly all his works, whether of larger scale for the CSO, or the vignettes presented here, received immediate popular and critical acclaim. Accessibility was a major factor in this popularity. Although DeLamararter occasionally incorporated dissonance or American popular idioms such as ragtime (in his *Third Symphony*, for example), his music is predominantly traditional. As he himself put it, the essential qualities of music are "beauty and nobility of thought and feeling, logic in architecture, and clarity of presentation."

His church music certainly met his musical ethic. Indeed, for years Fourth Church was a destination for church musicians seeking the best choral responses. The three works presented on this disk are equally effective. The anthem *God is Our Refuge* presents an instantly recognizable and readily-remembered jaunty refrain which is punctuated by chromatic tone-painting of the words "tho' the earth be troubled" and unison murmurings of fear, the whole contributing to an exultation of the protection by God. Similarly, his short organ works *A Stately Processional and Flourish*, are stately romps in classical ABA form in which DeLamararter seems to enjoy both delighting his audience and startling them with wry harmonic twists at cadential moments.

Leo Sowerby (1895?1968) proved to be an even more significant figure in American music than his mentor, for ultimately he explored every major musical form except opera. His *début* as composer came in 1913, when the CSO premiered his *Violin Concerto*. Other works followed fast, including his well-known *Comes Autumn Time*. This work actually has its origins in Fourth Church, having been written as a last-minute commission for one of DeLamararter's weekly Thursday noontime recitals: although Sowerby was at that time DeLamararter's assistant and alternated regularly with his boss in presenting these recitals, he first learned of the commission only when he read an announcement of the premiere in the paper that appeared the Sunday before the concert! Success followed upon success. Beginning in 1916, Sowerby received nearly yearly commissions from the CSO. In 1921 he was awarded the first American Prix de Rome, even though he had not even applied. In 1927 he became choirmaster and organist at St. James Cathedral in Chicago, where most of the music on this disc was written.

Although himself "unglamorous and nonmysterious" (as one of his students, Ned Rorem, remembered), his music is nevertheless uncommonly rich and complex. An unabashed neo-Romantic, Sowerby is in some ways a musical Frank Lloyd Wright. Long horizontal lines of rhapsodic melody are punctuated by pillars of complex detail. This wash of sound, with what some have called a tendency to chromatic superfluity and excessive length, owes much to Sowerby's early admiration of Max Reger, tempered by exposure to the slightly more transparent César Franck and Vincent D'Indy. Especially in his later works, Sowerby's harmony can be analyzed as based on ninth and even eleventh chords, but in unusual inversions, and frequently moving in parallel fourths and fifths. Certainly Paul Hindemith's contemptuous dismissal of him as the fourth B in music, "a sour B," is unfair. Relying heavily on Baroque forms like the chaconne, passacaglia or fugue, together with folk melodies or his imitations thereof, Sowerby's music often also appeals with its lively tempi, relaxed rhythms and easy singability. Indeed, he himself maintained that religious music "need rarely be mournful, and not frequently slow-moving. It certainly may be joyous, brilliant, or on occasion, ecstatic . . ." When Sowerby was constrained by textual lengths, as in the anthems on this disk, he produced what are probably his finest and most finely wrought works.

The first Sowerby work on this disk, *On the Sundays in Advent*, belongs to Sowerby's earlier style. One of a set of nine *Inviatories*, or introits, composed about 1928, it undoubtedly owes much to the great Russian choral tradition of Gretchaninoff and others which had recently been sweeping the United States. Octave doublings of soprano and tenor and alto and bass with frequent third parallels within, spun over long phrases that have a relatively narrow vertical compass, combine for an opulent effect.

In *Love Came Down at Christmas* Sowerby's lush harmonies prove sensitive and well matched to the pre-Raphaelite hot-house-like magniloquence of this poem by Christina Rossetti. Just as the poem increases in intensity over its three stanzas in its almost sensual adoration of the Christ, so Sowerby's setting grows ever richer, magnifying the effect by raising the tonality for each verse.

The title work on this disk, *O Light, From Age to Age the Same*, is perhaps one of the best examples of Sowerby's craft. Written specifically for the Morning Choir, it crams rich word-painting into a mere forty-five bars, during which each phrase, even word, is given its own dramatic device. As a side-note, Sowerby's care in presenting this piece was such that for this performance the Morning Choir learned the piece from facsimiles of Sowerby's own manuscript.

The two anthems *Now There Lightens Upon Us* and *The Risen Lord* are samples of Sowerby's utilization of baroque forms, specifically here the concerto grosso. In the former anthem, the ripieno is taken by the organ, although with ever-increasing chromatic complexity and once in the minor mode; while in the latter, the choir serves that function against the solo quartet. *The Risen Lord* dates from Sowerby's apprentice years at Fourth Church, and is consequently still simple harmonically.

*Eternal Light*, a later anthem (from 1958), is a lovely vignette which bears nearly all the characteristics described above: the five vocal lines move in often startling chromatic lines by frequent parallel fourths, touching on rich inverted ninth chords, that nevertheless all resolve to a simple tonic triad.

*I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* is again typical of early Sowerby. Written in 1920 (and hence for the services at Fourth Church), it is a purely neo-Romantic anthem in its harmonic and melodic structure, although a few descending chromaticisms on the words "moon by light" owe more perhaps to the blues of George Gershwin, with whom Sowerby had indeed worked, although he never publicized the fact.

The anthem *Come, Holy Ghost* is characteristic of Sowerby's later works, or indeed what the casual listener has come to expect of Sowerby's music. Based on the great plainsong melody for Pentecost, *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, this piece surrounds the listener with a relentless, shifting five-four choral quasi-fugue over a chaconne-like repetition of the plainsong in the organ.

Morgan Simmons served as organist and music director of Fourth Church from 1968 until 1996. Originally from Indiana, he holds degrees from DePauw University and Union Theological Seminary. He has also been active as composer, writer and editor in the American Guild of Organists and the Hymn Society of the United States and Canada.

His music is in a lightly contemporary idiom. Always anchored to a recognizable tonality -- which may change from beginning to end -- it is frequently based on parallel fourths and seconds. For melody he relies on actual or imitations of earlier popular church music that are often modified by a surprising though not unpleasant angularity. Many of his compositions, including *As the Wind Is Your Symbol* and *Response for Transfiguration Day*, are encapsulations of these devices, in the form of responses of only a few bars in length which are used at key points in the service, usually as introits or benedictions, or after the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

His longer anthems *New Songs of Celebration* and *Psalms 47*, the latter of which was dedicated to the Morning Choir, are similarly constructed. With their catchy dotted rhythmic figures, choral arrangement of voices and frequent imitation between groups of voices or instruments, they owe much to the 20th-century English idiom. As if to emphasize the Fourth Church's long musical heritage, Simmons has based *Psalms 47* on the jaunty "fuguing" tune *Paris* by "the father of American music," the eighteenth-century American composer William Billings. These two anthems are made more thrilling by the dramatic flourishes of the brass, whose frequent parallel seconds and fourths magnify their penetration through the relatively tonal choruses. His *Hosanna* is a lively rondo for children's chorus and organ which echoes Leonard Bernstein's "America" from *West Side Story* in its syncopated alternating ascending and descending lines.

The *Organ Prelude on a Melody of Sowerby* is an expansion of a Sowerby anthem *Eternal Light* (also on this disc). It begins as a direct quotation of the first phrases, then elaborates and adds additional harmony to the middle section, finally returns to a restatement of the closing phrase of the anthem with one striking change: curiously, Simmons does not resolve the final chord, but leaves the dissonant second in the alto voice suspended.

Aaron David Miller is the most recent virtuoso performer-composer in the Fourth Church tradition, having held the post of Associate Organist during the 1999-2000 season. He studied organ and composition with many renowned artists, including McNeil Robinson, Michael Farris, Russell Saunders, David Schrader, David Higgs, Samuel Adler, and Joseph Schwantner. He is particularly noted for his performances of early organ music and his improvisations, a fine example of which appears on this disc. At the same time he is busy as a composer. One of his early works, *The Ruins of Ayre* for percussion ensemble, was awarded a composition endowment by the Eastman School. His *Concerto for Two Organists* was premiered and recorded by the Zurich Symphony, and upcoming commissions include works for the National City Christian Church in Washington, D.C., and a dedicatory piece for the new organ at Grace Episcopal Church in Anderson, South Carolina.

His music is particularly popular and accessible because it is unabashedly tonal, neo-classical in form, with strong rhythmic flair. He also frequently turns to various historic devices and forms to guide his music. His *Advent Fanfare* for brass octet and organ is based on a popular Swedish fourteenth-century folk melody which today is known as *Prepare the Royal Highway*. In writing this piece, the composer was influenced by the renaissance master Michael Praetorius: entwined hemiolas give the brass passages a joyous rollicking and dance-like quality. The *Noël* for organ is written in the style of the delicate, slightly pompous rondos that were popular at the French court around the beginning of the 18th century.

The fiery *Laudate Dominum* is based on Claudio Monteverdi's setting of the same text. With its open, tonal harmony and percussive setting of the text it reminds the listener in places of the first movement of Igor Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, a similarly successful modern reworking of old material. A middle lyrical section of organ obbligato has an almost Mozartean flavor in its ease and tranquility, then the main theme returns with renewed vigor toward an abrupt close.

The lilting *Take My Life, That I May Be* is distinctly American in style, growing out of the rich yet open harmonies of Samuel Barber or Aaron Copland. The emphasis is on lyrical melody and counter-melody, with easily recognizable segments being amplified and elaborated as the passion of the text dictates. A restatement of the opening phrase, but with a resolution to a simple unison, makes a pacific and devout close.

# Chronicle

October 1

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in the premiere of his *Urban Legend*, plus Béla Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Eos Orchestra presents Philip Glass's *Galileo Galilei*. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, NY.

Death of Walter H[ubert]. Annenberg (b. 3/13/08), at 94. Wynnwood, PA. "[He was a] philanthropist, art collector and former ambassador to Britain who at one time presided over a vast communications empire that included TV Guide and the Philadelphia Inquirer. . . . Annenberg became one of the country's biggest philanthropists, giving away more than \$2 billion in cash. . . . Recipients included Israel, whose Emergency Fund received a contribution of \$1 million from him after the June 1967 war. . . . Raised as a rich man's son -- by the time of his birth his immigrant father, Moses, had already developed a profitable newspaper distribution business in Milwaukee -- Walter Annenberg multiplied his heritage many times over" [Grace Glueck, *The New York Times*, 10/1/02].

October 3

*Strangemusic*, with Kathleen Supové. Haim Chanin Fine Arts, New York, NY.

October 4

San Francisco Composer Chamber Orchestra in Frank Bunger's *Trombone Sonata*, Thomas Goss's *Cello Concerto*, Brian Holmes *Toy Piano Concertini*, Stan McDaniel's *Passing of the Master*, Lisa Scola Prosek's *Resonance*, Ric Louchar's *Two Arias*, Michael Cooke's *Pollock*, and Mark Alburger's *Bald Soprano Overture*. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA.

October 6

Performance and discussion of excerpts from Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's *Three Tales*. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY.

October 9

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Carl Ruggles's *Evocations* and Béla Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celesta*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

October 10

Elodie Lauten's *Mystery of the Elements*. Greenwich House Music School, New York, NY.

Juilliard Symphony in Stravinsky's *Fireworks*, Kousevitzky's *Double Bass Concerto*, and Rachmaninoff's *Symphony No. 2*. Juilliard Theater, New York, NY.

October 12

*Memorial Concert of Music by Donald Aird*. *Night Voyages, Dolor, Fiddler of Dooney, Four Handed Game*, The Silver Swan. The Crowden School, Berkeley, CA.

October 13

Death of Eileen Jackson Southern (b. Minneapolis, MN), at 82. Port Charlotte, FL. "[She was] a scholar of Renaissance and African-American music and the first black woman to be appointed a tenured full professor at Harvard University. . . . *The Music of Black American: A History* (1971) is in its third edition (Norton, 1997). She also compiled the *Biographical Dictionary of Afro-American and African Musicians* (Greenwood, 1982) and *The Music of Black Americans* (Norton, third edition, 1997).

In 1973, with her husband, Prof. Joseph Southern, she founded *Black Perspectives in Music*, the first musicological journal on the study of black music. She edited the journal until it ceased publication in 1990. She received a National Humanities Medal in 2001 for having 'helped transform the study and understanding of American music.' She also received the 2000 Lifetime Achievement Award of the Society of American Music. . . . [S]he studied piano and made her first concert appearance at age 7. . . . She graduated in 1940 from the University of Chicago, where she received a master's degree the next year. Her thesis was *The Use of Negro Folksong in Symphonic Form*. . . . In the 1950's she studied at New York University under the Renaissance music scholar Gustave Reese. She received her Ph.D. in 1961 with a dissertation about Renaissance music. It was published as *The Buxheim Organ Book* (Institute of Mediaeval Music, 1963). Dr. Southern went to Harvard as a lecturer in 1974 and received a dual appointment in Afro-American studies and music in 1976. She headed the department of Afro-American Studies from 1975 to 1979 and retired in 1987 as a professor emeritus" [Wolfgang Saxon, *The New York Times*, 10/19/02].

*Stefan Wolpe Festival*. *Sonata and Battle Piece*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Charles Wuorinen's *Haroun Songbook*. Guggenheim Museum, New York, NY.

October 14

*Speculum Musicae* in Arthur Berger's *Collage II* (with the composer, at 90, in attendance), Earle Brown's *Tracer*, Ralph Shapey's *Trio Concertante*, Barbara White's *Learning to See*, and Arthur Kampela's *Klang*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "*Collage III* . . . is a very attractive, light-filled sequence of movements for mixed sextet. Things tend to stop and then start up again, now puzzled by the intervening silence. The textures are beautifully imagined, the ideas darting. . . . [In] *Tracer* . . . mostly gentle and engaging things from trios of strings and woodwinds are put into the same space as rougher electronic sounds: scrapings, crunchings, scufflings. This performance was a fitting memorial to the composer's intuitive and unbound spirit. . . . Shapey . . . was another kind of spirit -- adamant, incorrigible . . . unbothered by practicality: this 12-minute piece needs a large percussion setup and a viola for the slow movement . . . But he knew what he was doing. The first movement is a battle between violin and percussion, with the piano hesitating over which side to join; the finale ends with all three players in spectacular wide chords, triumphant. . . . White . . . was a real discovery . . . and . . .

has a way of making straightforward quotations (from Varèse, Stravinsky and others) her own. There is something quite particular about her. . . . *Klang* . . . was very different: a hot rampage for amplified bass clarinet, percussion and harp, with some nice special effects on the last, like the groaning sounds made by rubbing a plastic ball on the soundboard. Then suddenly it all became tranquil and pretty" [Paul Griffiths, The New York Times, 10/16/02].

October 15

Death of Derek Bell (b. Belfast, UK), of a heart disorder (hypertensive cardiomyopathy), at 66. Phoenix, AZ. "[He was] the versatile harpist with the Chieftains, one of the most celebrated Irish traditional bands. . . . The Chieftains, led by Paddy Moloney, have been acclaimed for their role in the revival of Celtic music. Mr. Bell, a virtuoso of the Celtic harp, played the piano and electric keyboard as well as the oboe, English horn and hammered dulcimer. he was also a composer and a classical musician on several instruments. . . . A child prodigy who wrote his first piano concerto at age 12, he . . . appeared with symphony orchestras in Moscow, London, Budapest and Pittsburgh. At one time he was principal oboist and a horn player for the American Wind Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Bell did not add the harp to the instruments he played until the 1960's, when he was manager of the Belfast Symphony Orchestra and was recruited to tune its harp collection. He studied the instrument formally and went on to become principal harpist and second oboist of the BBC Northern Ireland Orchestra in 1965. he joined the Chieftains in 1972 and soon became an integral part of its quest to reclaim the tradition of Irish sounds. He also pursued a successful solo career while working with the band. In 2000, he was named a member of the Order of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions to traditional Irish and classical music. Mr. Bell is survived by his wife Stephanie, his mother, and two sisters" [Wolfgang Saxon, The New York Times, 10/24/02].

October 16

Death of musicologist Philip Brett (b. Edwinstowe, UK), of cancer, one day before his 65th birthday. Los Angeles, CA. "[He taught at the University of California at] Berkeley from 1966 to 1991. . . . Brett wrote extensively on the music of the English Renaissance and on Benjamin Britten. . . . Brett was one of the first scholars to take a frank look at gay themes in Britten's operas . . . He was a co-founder of the American Musicological Society's Gay and Lesbian Study Group in 1989 . . . In 1997, the society established the Philip Brett Award to honor outstanding musicological work in the field of gay and lesbian studies. . . . [J]ust as widely respected was his work on Renaissance music, particularly his painstaking work as editor of the complete works of William Byrd, which challenged the authenticity of many long-accepted scores. 'He was one of the great musicologists,' said Joseph Kerman, emeritus professor of music at UC Berkley. . . . He spent one year at UC Berkeley as a lecturer starting in 1962, returning in 1966 as an assistant professor. In 1991, shortly after becoming a naturalized American citizen, he joined the music faculty of UC Riverside, later becoming dean of humanities, arts and social sciences. In 2001, he became distinguished professor of musicology at UCLA. Professor Brett is survived by his companion, George Haggerty, chairman of the English department at UC Riverside. memorial concerts are planned at all thee UC campuses where Professor Brett taught" [Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle, 10/18/02].

*Americans in Rome*, with music of Kamran Ince. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

Steve Reich and Beryl Korot's *Three Tales*. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, NY. Through October 19. "*Three Tales* is a brave statement, coming as it does in the autumn of Mr. Reich's brilliant career" [Adam Shatz, The New York Times, 10/13/02].

October 18

Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, directed by Harriet March Page, conducted by Mark Alburger. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through November 3.

Brentano String Quartet in Charles Wuorinen's *Josquiniana* and Igor Stravinsky's *Concertino*. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

October 23

*Composer Portraits: Lee Hyla*, with Counter)induction. *Concerto for Piano and Chamber Orchestra No. 2* (1991), *Amnesia Variance* (1989), *Wilson's Ivory-bill* (2000), *The Dream of Innocent III* (1987), and *Pre-Pulse Suspended* (1984). "Hyla writes works that deftly blend expressionistic, complex contemporary atonal idioms with elements of avant-garde jazz, rock and even punk. . . . Hyla packs a lot into his raw, onrushing, vibrant 20-minute concerto . . . [with] a chamber ensemble that includes sinewy strings, a raucous bass clarinet and other reedy winds, a percussion section with sizzling drums, and a delicate hammered dulcimer. Clearly he is fascinated by all sorts of musical styles, which are echoed here: Elliott Carter, Stefan Wolpe, Cecil Taylor, rock. . . . [He] take[s] the sounds . . . fashion[s] them into a distinctive voice. Rhythmically the concerto takes listeners for a dizzying spin: sheer, hard-driving propulsion and darting, short-lived riffs give way repeatedly and elegantly to suspended passages of subdued, hazy bliss. . . . Wilson's Ivory-bill . . . [has] a scratchy field recording of the weird hoots and squaws of [the titular] woodpecker. . . . The text . . . is taken from the journals of the 19th-century ornithologist Alexander Wilson. . . . While American orchestras keep commissioning the same handful of tame Neo-Romantics, here is a truly original composer who at 50 has yet to gain the attention he deserves" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 10/28/02]

October 24

Death of playwright, performer, and lyricist Adolph Green (b. 12/2/14), at 87. New York, NY. "[I]n a six-decade collaboration with Betty Comden [he] co-author[ed] . . . such hits as [Bernstein's] *On the Town* and *Wonderful Town* and screenplays for *Singin' in the Rain* and *The Band Wagon*. . . . Ms. Comden and Mr. Green wrote the words for much of the Broadway show music written by Leonard Bernstein, Jule Styne, Cy Coleman, Andre Previn, Morton Gould, Saul Chaplin, and Roger Edens. . . . They appeared on Broadway in *A Party With Betty Comden and Adolph Green* in 1958 and in the revival, in 1977. . . . They were, as The Chicago Tribune noted in 1990, 'unchallenged as the longest-running act on Broadway. . . . They were never married and, according to statements they gave to interviewers, never even considered the prospect. Ms. Comden became the wife of a businessman, Steven Kyle, in 1942 (four years after she and Mr. Green embarked on their collaborative effort) and remained so until Mr. Kyle died in 1979. Mr. Green had two unsuccessful marriages before marrying the actress Phyllis Newman in 1960. . . . [I]n 1938 . . . a mutual friend named Judy Tuvim, soon to translate her name from Hebrew to English and become Judy Holiday, suggested that they all form a cabaret act. They did, and called it the Revuers. Because they had no money to pay for words and music, Ms. Comden and Mr. Green created their own, a singular instance in their relationship when they took full responsibility for the

music as well as the words. They opened at the Village Vanguard, a little place downtown owned by Max Gordon . . . A frequent visitor to the Vanguard in those days was a young Harvard graduate named Leonard Bernstein. He hung around so much, playing the piano for the Revuers and so obviously enjoying himself, that the customers thought he was Gordon's paid accompanist. . . . Bernstein . . . was an old friend of Mr. Green's, having met him at summer camp in 1937. Mr. Green . . . was trying to be a counselor. Bernstein, in between semesters at Harvard, was the camp's music counselor and undisputed music authority. . . . [I]n 1944 . . . Bernstein dropped by and asked if they would like to help him make a show of the ballet *Fancy Free*, which had been choreographed by Jerome Robbins and for which he had only recently written the music. . . . Their handiwork would ultimately be called *On the Town*. . . .

[T]hey craftily wrote themselves nice parts: Ms. Comden as Claire de Loon . . . and Mr. Green as Ozzie" [Richard Severo, *The New York Times*, 10/25/02].

October 25

Death of Richard Harris (b. Limerick, Ireland), of lymphatic cancer, at 72. "[He] starred as King Arthur in the film version of *Camelot* and more recently played Albus Dumbledore . . . in the first [two] Harry Potter movie[s]. . . . One critic said Mr. Harris had a face that looked like 'five miles of bad Irish country road. His face notwithstanding, he was asked to appear in . . . productions, including Arthur Miller's *View From the Bridge* in 1956 and Luigi Pirandello's *Man, Beast and Virtue* in 1958" [Richard Severo, *The New York Times*, 10/26/02].

October 27

John Adams's *Nancy's Fancy* performed by the Marin Symphony, conducted by Alasdair Neale. Veteran's Auditorium, San Rafael, CA. "John Adams's *Nancy's Fancy* [was] written for San Francisco Symphony philanthropist Nancy Bechtel. Neale should be applauded for continuing the tradition begun (though now lapsed) by Michael Tilson Thomas, in beginning a musical season with the work of a local, living artist (in this case, one of the most popular, performed, and important composers of our time). *Fancy* is a bit of footwork for brass, with percussion added at the eleventh hour (well, at a scant few minutes, more like the eleventh second). A post-minimalist retelling of the opening to Janacek's *Sinfonietta* comes to mind, with maybe a slight hint of the heroics of Aaron Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*" [Mark Alburger, *Commuter Times*, 11/1/02].

October 28

*Banned, Silenced, Persecuted: Composers and Writers Who Fled the Nazis*, with works by Theodor W. Adorno, Max Brand, Julius Buchwald, Georg Jokl, Erich Istor Kahn, and Ernst Krenek. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

October 29

Tom Waits's *Woyzeck* (after George Buechner), directed by Robert Wilson, with music by Tom Waits. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, NY.

## Writers

MARK ALBURGER began playing the oboe and composing in association with Dorothy and James Freeman, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick. He studied with Karl Kohn at Pomona College; Joan Panetti and Gerald Levinson at Swarthmore College (B.A.); Jules Langert at Dominican University (M.A.); Roland Jackson at Claremont Graduate University (Ph.D.); and Terry Riley. An ASCAP composer, Alburger writes for *Commuter Times*, teaches at Diablo Valley College, and is published by New Music. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, and has interviewed numerous composers, including Charles Amirkhonian, Henry Brant, Earle Brown, Philip Glass, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich, and Frederick Rzewski.

DAVID BÜNDLER is the pen name of Byrwec Ellison, a freelance writer and a Texas Correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

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

EDMUND KIMBELL is a countertenor and pianist based in Chicago. He has appeared with the Grant Park Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and has given recitals in the Chicago and San Francisco Bay Areas. His teachers have included Mark Crayton and Rebecca Weinstock (herself a student of Nadia Boulanger).

TOM MOORE is Music/Media Librarian at The College of New Jersey. He plays contemporary music in the Ronai/Moore Duo with fellow flautist Laura Ronai of the University of Rio de Janeiro; they have premiered works by Korenchandler, Oliveira, Ripper, Hagerty, White, Rubin and others. He also performs with baroque ensemble *Le Triomphe de L'Amour*. He studied flute with Sandra Miller and Christopher Krueger.