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March 2004

Volume 11, Number 3

MARK GRESHAM	Howard Shore	1
MARK ALBURGER	Alasdair Neale's America	2
	Terry Riley in the 70's	4
CONCERT REVIEW	Requiem for a Weighty Chorus MARK ALBURGER	8
CHRONICLE	Of January 2004	9
COMMENT	What Is Art Music? ORLANDO GACINTO GARCIA	10
WRITERS		11
COVER ILLUSTRATION		

Gollum (from Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*)

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HK BAPTIST U
POKFULAM U
Mark Francis
HUMANITIES INDEX
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Howard Shore

MARK GRESHAM

The gob-smacking symphonic event of the summer has arrived, as composer/conductor Howard Shore -- whose 60-plus film credits include *Silence of the Lambs*, *Philadelphia*, *Ed Wood*, and *After Hours* -- brings to life his multi-award-winning music for Peter Jackson's cinematic trilogy *The Lord of the Rings*. Shore conducts four performances with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus from June 3-5, 2004.

I spoke recently with Howard Shore by phone from London, as he shared a few thoughts about how he runs *Rings* around film to concert stages.

GRESHAM: Why did you decide to create *The Lord of the Rings Symphony* from the film score and tour it as conductor?

SHORE: For the sheer joy of playing music live. A lot of composing is done in quiet solitude, and I'm out doing recordings certain parts of the year. But the pure fun of playing music on a concert stage with some of the great orchestras of the world ... that's the thrilling part of it! That's an enormous amount of music to condense down to a single concert-length work. It's actually 11 hours for all three films, including the extended versions. John Mauceri [conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra] helped me to edit the 11 hours to two hours, which is the concert piece.

GRESHAM: Glancing at the program, it would appear at first to be a large narrative tone poem. Why do you call it a "symphony"?

SHORE: A symphony takes you on a journey from one world through many, and then returns you. As Bilbo says, "It takes you there and back again." So it is a descriptive piece and narrative, but it is a symphony in that development of journey and leitmotifs [musical themes associated with specific characters, places and objects].

GRESHAM: Is conducting in concert much different than conducting on a soundstage?

SHORE: In the studio, you're doing a few minutes of recording at a time. It's very detailed -- a lot of stop and go. It's somewhat of a rehearsal atmosphere. You're preparing the orchestra for "the great take." On the concert stage, it's pure performance, bringing the music to life. There's a different kind of linear feeling to it.

GRESHAM: Annie Lennox recorded "Into the West" for the soundtrack. Word is that Norwegian vocalist Sissel, who is singing it in these concerts, is not trying to imitate Lennox, because they have very different voices; instead, with that limpid, flexible, liquid voice of hers, Sissel has found a way to "make it her own."

SHORE: Of course, you would hope that! It was a dream come true to have Annie sing the piece. She was the artist that [*Rings* screenwriter] Fran [Walsh] and I completely wanted to work with to do "Into the West." But Sissel captures it in a live performance in a beautiful, amazing way. She brings the audience right to her.

GRESHAM: If the concert piece is conceived as a "symphony," what about the complete film score?

SHORE: The [film score] was created to describe a world five to six thousand years ago. I wanted it to have a sense of history, of antiquity, as if the music had been "found" and miraculously fit Peter Jackson's amazing film. To do that, the voices were extremely important. And if you're writing 11 hours of music, you need a very good architecture. So I looked to opera for form and structure -- not anything specific, but in concept. The film score is written in an operatic sense, and it's truly done in an older style of epic filmmaking where the music plays at the heart of the story. When you see a great opera, it all feels very "of a piece," you feel it "as one," and this was the idea behind the writing. It was something I did with the three screenwriters. Once we had that concept, the tale grew in the telling and the music did as well. It's not something you do on your own. You have to collaborate, working with good artists. My work with Peter -- we just had a great collaboration and a great friendship. That's really all that's required: a good trust. And people overlook that, I think. The only way we created the movie is with a real fellowship in a sense, and I think it shows. There's real heart to it.

Howard Shore conducts the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, the Gwinnett Young Singers, boy soprano Daniel Dalpiaz, and vocalist Sissel. Thurs.-Fri., June 3 and 4, 8 p.m.; Sat., June 5, 2 and 8 p.m. Symphony Hall, Woodruff Arts Center, 1280 Peachtree St. \$22-\$48. 404-733-5000. www.atlantasympphony.com.

Alasdair Neale's America

MARK ALBURGER

Alasdair Neale is Music Director of the Marin Symphony, and Principal Guest Conductor of the New World Symphony. Additionally, he directs Idaho's Sun Valley Symphony and maintains a busy guest conductor schedule. He has programmed a number of contemporary composers, including John Adams.

I lunched with Alasdair Neale at Noonan's Restaurant in Larkspur, CA, on March 10, just after he was filmed for a short interview on area television.

ALBURGER: You've been busy.

NEALE: Yes! I'm heading to Rhode Island now, and then I'll be back here for the Marin Symphony again.

ALBURGER: What are your principal gigs these days?

NEALE: Well, Marin, of course. Plus I'm the Principal Guest Conductor of the New World Symphony --

ALBURGER: The Florida group that Michael Tilson Thomas runs?

NEALE: Yes! Plus I conduct the Sun Valley Symphony.

ALBURGER: As in Idaho?

NEALE: Yes!

ALBURGER: That's a beautiful area.

NEALE: Yes! I like it so much that I went up there for New Years, even though I don't ski! It's a nice variation from my normal routines, and very relaxing. I stay with friends who have an amazing compound, like something out of *The Shining!*

ALBURGER: Wow! So you're three main groups are in California, Florida, and Idaho.

NEALE: Plus I'm doing a fair amount of guest conducting, including with the New York Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony.

ALBURGER: Your professional association with Michael Tilson Thomas continues to be important.

NEALE: Michael has definitely been a mentor and a friend! I met him in 1989.

ALBURGER: Was he connected with your getting the San Francisco Symphony Youth Orchestra position?

NEALE: Actually, not. Herbert Blomstedt was the San Francisco Symphony Music Director back then, and he called me.

ALBURGER: How did he hear of you?

NEALE: Through my work on the East Coast. I conducted the Yale Orchestra for three years.

ALBURGER: You studied there as well, didn't you?

NEALE: Yes. I received my MMA in 1986.

ALBURGER: How was the orchestra?

NEALE: It's a very fine undergraduate orchestra.

ALBURGER: Did you study conducting at Yale?

NEALE: Yes. With Otto Werner Mueller.

ALBURGER: Who's been at Juilliard as well. What was he like as a teacher?

NEALE: Sternly Germanic and strictly technical!

ALBURGER: What was the most important thing you learned from him?

NEALE: That clarity of stick technique is essential.

ALBURGER: So you're not of the "expressive hands" school in the old Leopold Stokowski tradition.

NEALE: Oh, one can be expressive and clear -- there's no contradiction!

ALBURGER: Certainly! So to California from Connecticut, and to Connecticut from Britain.

NEALE: Yes, I'm Scottish. I was born in Surrey, England, but moved with my family to Edinburgh at a young age.

ALBURGER: How young were you when you began music?

NEALE: I started playing recorder at 7, and was banging around on the piano as well. I studied flute at 9 and cello at 12. The string and wind background is a very unusual combination for a conductor.

ALBURGER: Which do you prefer playing?

NEALE: Both!

ALBURGER: When did you start conducting?

NEALE: I was conducting in high school at 14., and soon after the youth orchestra in Edinburgh. Astoundingly enough, Donald Runnicles was a student at my high school, shortly before I arrived!

ALBURGER: Uncanny! And much later you conducted across the street from each other in San Francisco, when you led the SFS Youth Orchestra at Davies Hall while he conducted at the War Memorial Opera House just across Grove Street.

NEALE: We both live in San Francisco, and I still have dinner occasionally with his wife Liz and him.

ALBURGER: So just about your whole career, you've known each other, but not really worked together?

NEALE: Right. So, then in 1977, at 15, I joined the National Youth Orchestra of Great Britain.

ALBURGER: You must have continued conducting in college.

NEALE: Yes, at Cambridge.

ALBURGER: And then how to Yale?

NEALE: I went to Yale on the strength of a recommendation of a friend -- Steven Thomas -- who said I should study with Mueller.

ALBURGER: What was your reaction to America?

NEALE: Very positive -- 20 years later, and I'm still here! I admired the openness and friendliness of the people. Now I'm on my way to becoming a U.S. citizen, maintaining my status with Great Britain as well. The U.S. government doesn't encourage dual citizenship, but they don't forbid it, either.

ALBURGER: What proportion of your time has been in the West?

NEALE: Six years on the East Coast, and approaching 15 years on the West. My three years as a graduate student at Yale was work toward a doctorate. After graduating with a master's I succeeded Leif Bjarland at Yale, who took the SFS Youth Symphony position. So he was my predecessor as well in San Francisco!

ALBURGER: Intriguing! What were your first impressions of San Francisco?

NEALE: Such a fantastic, romantic city! I remember being on the freeway, and coming to "Hospital Curve," which gives the first view of the skyline. Heavenly! And the whole Coast is beautiful, including that stretch in Northern Marin where John Adams has his vacation home.

ALBURGER: I'll have to track him down! So first you worked under Herbert Blomstedt.

NEALE: Yes, for six years, from 1989 to 1995.

ALBURGER: What was he like to work with?

NEALE: Blomstedt is a tremendous musician, warm and supportive. He was building the orchestra that he inherited, and Michael continues to do so.

ALBURGER: I have fond memories as well of Edo de Waart having John Adams as Composer-in-Residence, composing Harmonium and other fine works.

NEALE: John did some great stuff back then, and continues to do so to the present. His recent *El Nino* is a masterpiece.

ALBURGER: Love that work! Hearing it for the first time on the radio, it caused me to drive all the way to Sacramento, rather than getting off the freeway to eat -- I just had to hear the end of it!

NEALE: The San Francisco Symphony is still John's band.

ALBURGER: It's good that Michael has been giving him commissions as well. And speaking of Michael, how did the two of you meet?

NEALE: It was an interesting time. We met in San Francisco a few months after a Pierre Boulez master class, which we had both attended. I conducted the Cleveland Orchestra in Olivier Messiaen's *Chronochromie* and Claude Debussy's *Jeux*. It was intensive! My relationship with Michael was good from the start, and has been enormously rewarding.. I still remember back to conducting the Gustav Mahler *Symphony No. 2* ("Resurrection") with the SFS Youth Orchestra! It was a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

ALBURGER: Wow! And now you're juggling Marin Symphony with another MTT-affiliated orchestra: The New World Symphony.

NEALE: Yes, and the Sun Valley group, which is a phenomenal orchestra. We do 16 programs, with only one rehearsal per concert (hour-long programs, and about a two-and-a-half hour practice). It's electric! Every concert is free, thanks to very generous donors.

ALBURGER: And speaking about moneyed audience. Marin?

NEALE: It's been three years now, and we've experienced a lot of growth with the orchestra. We've definitely reached greater level of excellence and excitement, and the public is caught up in it -- they get it!

ALBURGER: What's next for the group?

NEALE: As always, I'm trying to create a varied and exciting series. Stay tuned!

Terry Riley in the 70's

MARK ALBURGER

I first met Pandit Pran Nath, or Fakir Pran Nath, or Guruji (as he was called by his students) in 1970 at the International Airport in Los Angeles. He was coming in on a flight with La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela to do some concerts in L.A. and later to come to San Francisco to stay with me and perform at Mills College. He was about the first person off the plane, which I was meeting. I greeted him, and we stood together waiting for La Monte and Marian to disembark. I remember standing there for a long time and him being very silent. We went to the Grinstein's house in Los Angeles where we were staying. Years later, when Pran Nath would tell this story of our first meeting to other people, he would always say he came off the plane, but I didn't recognize him. That used to puzzle me, and I would always say, "Oh, no, you know I came up and greeted you and we stood together." Later I came to understand that what he probably really meant was he recognized me as his student -- possibly even from a former lifetime he recognized me. I think that was his meaning. . . . I can recall the first time sitting with him in Los Angeles in 1970 and being so amazed that someone could create such a vast amount of colors and emotions with his voice. It was so powerful to sit right next to him, and have all these frequencies absorbed into your own body. I had been interested before that in electronic music -- the different kinds of sounds that could be done acoustically, and the varieties of timbres that could be created. When I heard his voice, it seemed like he had been able to put all of this spectrum of sound into his voice. It was like a great actor who can play any kind of role. Essentially that's what you have with raga. Ragas are filled with sets of emotions which run the gamut of human experience. A person has to be a consummate actor to be convincing and to actually put into place these emotions in such a way that everyone feels these emotions very deeply. When he would sing, the raga would manifest in the walls. So that even after he left the room, you would still be hearing the raga [Riley, "Reminiscences," 1, 3].

Terry Riley, with La Monte Young, began intense formal study with Pandit Pran Nath in 1970.

I was living in North Beach at this time -- in a loft in North Beach. So that was kind of like a very important meeting for me -- Pandit Pran Nath. Like a cosmic experience meeting him. I felt like we'd had several lives together, or something, before. Just before that, actually, I was starting to study tabla and starting to think that I wanted to study formally Indian classical music, because I had been flirting with it for years. . . . I was very interested in just intonation.

So it was about time, by the time I met Pandit Pran Nath, to really make a commitment to Indian classical music. . . We were all invited to perform in the south of France, and I was also invited back to Sweden to perform at their museum of modern art. I had a European tour lined up. So we all went together to the south of France to perform and then, after my tour of Sweden and Scandinavia ended, I went to India to meet Pran Nath. . . . I went from California to Europe, took a tour of Europe, and then went to India. . . . I wanted to go see Pandit Pran Nath -- to reconnect with him. He asked me to come there and study with him. It looked like a golden opportunity, so I dropped everything I was doing at the time and went directly to Delhi. . . . I stayed there six months the first time, which was a very intensive kind of study period for me with the music. I had a chance to get lessons every day and get exposed to a lot of musicians [Terry Riley in Alburger, "Shri," 15].

I went to India in September of 1970 to begin studies with Pandit Pran Nath, Fakir Pran Nath. I had taken initiation with him -- formal initiation, which means becoming a disciple -- the previous May in San Francisco, and decided to really pursue my studies in Indian classical music at this time. I arrived in Delhi during the monsoon. It was pouring rain. His little house in Kailash Colony had an alley in front which was under about two feet of water, because of the heavy rains that had been falling. So I rolled up my pants and carried my suitcases through the water to get to his house. I waited there all day. He was out teaching and his family greeted me. Of course, I didn't speak Hindi and they didn't speak much English. I waited around for him to come. He finally came that evening quite late and, with hardly a greeting, walked into the house. I was standing out in the front. He was never one for too many formalities, especially when he was younger. Things would just begin with him -- sometimes with a very important point of business without any kind of introduction. . . .

Later in the morning, he would start teaching me, giving me a lesson -- something to work on. At this time, I was an absolute beginner. He was very patient going over phrases again and again, so that they would be imprinted on my memory. Then he brought in a tabla player who would come in to accompany my lesson. Right away a student started learning to sing with the rhythmic structure. And that would go on. I would practice with the tabla player, the lesson that he taught me. . . .In 1970, my first trip to India, Pran Nath invited me to go with him to Dehra Dhun, to spend several weeks living in the temple and practicing. Swami Narayana Giri gave him a room, which was on the very top of the temple.

Deradun is right at the foothills of the Shivalya range, which are the first big mountains that rise out of the upper plains of India. You can see these mountains from the roof of the temple. The city of Mussoorie, which is quite a famous city in India, is situated 7,000 feet above this temple. From there you can see the lights of Mussoorie at night. We practiced in this room for many hours each day. I was given lessons there. During the day when Pran Nath was gone, I would stay and practice on the roof, with this fantastic view of Mussoorie and the surrounding mountains. Swami Narayana Giri would prepare meals for us with his own hands. And there was a great feeling of love in the temple, between Swami Narayana Giri and the young children that would come to do the Arati ceremony at night. He was like a father for them all.

Several times while I was there, as it was the end of the monsoon season, there were great storms that would rise up. The little room that we had on the top of the temple didn't have any windows, so the rain would come crashing in, and we'd have to try to protect the tambura and our bedding. As it was, I caught a cold when we were on this trip, and Pran Nath went out and brought back a little piece of charas and said, "This is good for the cold. You take this." I also think he thought it was good for the concentration of the music we were studying. To get deeper into the notes. . . .

When we went to Hardwar (the holy city in the north of India on the Ganges), along the bathing ghats, there were people making bang. We would sometimes drink bang and then go sit and sing by the side of the river, the holy Ganges. . . .

The ride to and from Shirdi from Bombay was really harrowing. We went in a taxi -- it was La Monte Young, Marian Zazeela, Pandit Pran Nath, and I. We saw numerous trucks turned over on the road from accidents, and also on the way back. When we got back to Bombay, everybody was praising Sai Baba for delivering us safely. Just at that moment we were rammed from behind very hard by another car. We all laughed at the irony and got out of the cab -- hailed another one [Riley, "Reminiscences," 1, 4, 5].

Returning to California, Riley held an associate professorship in composition and North Indian classical music at Mills College, Steve Reich's alma mater, from 1971 to 1980, abandoning composition for virtuoso keyboard improvisation.

After I had studied about a year and a half [in India], I was invited by Bob Ashley to come to Mills. . . . I had met Bob [in New York]. I didn't know him very well, but he somehow got the idea that I should be there. He knew I had been based in San Francisco, off and on. And so I went.

They didn't invite me to teach Indian classical music, but, when they asked me what I wanted to teach, I said, "You know, this is what I am really interested in now." So I taught. I got brought in the back door. . . . And then I also asked them to hire Pandit Pran Nath as a teacher. . . . I was there about ten years. . . . I would have keyboard improvisation classes, composition classes, but mainly I was interested in teaching Indian classical music [Terry Riley in Alburger, "Shri," 15-16].

Persian Surgery Dervishes (1971), in the model of *A Rainbow in Curved Air*, is an improvised keyboard work, but even more heavily influenced by Indian music due to Riley's first-hand exposure to Kirala-style singing and ongoing association with Pandit Pran Nath. The roots of the composition can be traced to *Keyboard Studies*. Indeed, the later work is a natural outgrowth of the former via the opening motive C-Eb-D-F-G, the first four notes simply being a transposition (F-Ab-G-Bb) of *Untitled Organ*.

This two-handed jam features patterns and cycles uncannily not unlike Philip Glass's keyboard music of the period (the focus on Eb-D-F recalls insistent D-Eb-F patterns in *Two Pages*, while a descending G-C ostinato reflects a related G-F-C from *Northstar*) -- perhaps natural parallel due to the cyclical structures and the pedagogical practices of Indian music. Riley's take on the influence, however, is considerably freer and more virtuosic. The passages often spin by at dizzying speeds, yet, at the same time the music reflects both more of an Eastern spirituality and a Western popular music sensibility: descending *Rainbow* flourishes and bluesy licks. The structure of *Persian* also shows more of an insider's understanding to sonic arts of South Asia in the progression from low, relatively slow alap-like gestures, toward faster and more elaborate improvisations, featuring the use of ending patterns to delineate points of reference. Riley's enthusiasms for five-beat patterns and extended tala cycles seem harbingers of future endeavors.

Two recorded performances of *Persian Surgery Dervishes* are now offered on the same Shanti CD package: one of an April 18, 1971 performance in Los Angeles, and the other from a May 24, 1972 concert in Paris. Both are blazing feats of high-energy quiescence featuring drones, cyclic ostinati, metrical tricks, call-and-response, augmentation, diminution, and almost Bach-like suspensions -- yet each is reflective of time and place. The Los Angeles performance is rough-hewn and brawny, with particularly crabbed, gnarly fingerwork toward the end. The French performance is very Philip Glass, almost neoclassical in its purity.

Originating from the same theme, both built on a C D Eb F G Ab Bb C scale, and on bars with five and four beats -- sometimes even six or seven -- or multiples (the longest being forty beats) (the longest being forty beats) with an echo of the same suspension, the two interpretations of "Persian Surgery Dervishes" seem very different from each other, due to both the variations and the atmosphere they generate.

In the first Los Angeles recording, after a dense and absorbed beginning, during which the low register is insistently stressed, the acceleration of the rhythm evokes the typical dances of the ancient Persian dervishes whose frantic whirling allowed them to reach a state of unconsciousness which brought about transcendental ecstasy. Brief, slow moments emerge between one moment and another on a leitmotiv of liturgical resonance, pauses in sound which permit a concentration of energy before the music begins again in a vortex . . . as relentless as the beating of a heart. In the second, recorded in Paris, there is, on the other hand, serenity and mediation. The brighter passages do not in the least disturb the deep quiet which runs through the whole interpretation effortlessly freeing an intense emotion. Opening the western sensitivity to the fascination of sound figures which are repeated at regular intervals over long periods of time, Terry Riley has created an original musical form, based on what might be called a principal of evolutive reiteration [Caux].

Also dating from around this time is *Music for "Le Secret de la Vie"* (1973), a theme and variations for soprano sax and keyboard.

. . . I taught . . . for over ten years and that was pretty much my life, which revolved around practicing Indian music and teaching privately and at Mills in Oakland while living up here [in the Sierra Nevada at Shri Moonshine Ranch] [Terry Riley in Edward Strickland, *American Composers*, 108, 120].

I moved here [to Shri Moonshine Ranch] in '74. I was commuting. . . . I'd just go down [to Mills College] once [a week]. Sunday night, I'd go down. I'd come back Wednesday night. . . . [Mills is] a beautiful place to work and teach, but salary wasn't one of the big features. . . . [T]he people I was teaching with and the atmosphere there [were wonderful]. And the fact that I was pretty much left alone to do what I wanted to do. The Chairman of the Music Department (who had hired everybody from Milhaud on) was a wonderful director and a very visionary person. She knew how to administer the school and let the artists actually do the teaching and create the program. She knew I was teaching Indian music and she knew I was doing a lot of unorthodox things, but it also was drawing students in. She was very happy to see that there was life there - - it was really lively [Terry Riley in Alburger, "Shri," 17].

Descending Moonshine Dervishes seems to take its title from three separate sources, the first in reference to Pandit Pran Nath, as alluded in poem by the composer (November 9, 1975, Paris).

The descending Moonshine Dervishes
for Guruji

the descending form is Your form
wearing me as the ripples on Your blanket
waves reflecting while Your figure approaches

i can never remember You as You pass
through here dissolving all memory
rays of past and present
intersecting now

Your gift always surpassed
humble requests who could not imagine
eyes scanning the lids of Maya before

shall i take my pencil and write you down?
You laughed of course
and said
why not? this takes time
you know?

i could never understand
why you take such an interest

so many times
i forgot
to say
thanks
until realizing
it's not only
for what i call me
You do this
[Terry Riley, *Descending Moonshine Dervishes*]

The *Moonshine* may be considered a triple entendre of the mysticism of actual moonshine, the ecstasy associated with early American "moonshine" alcohol, and Riley's at-that-time newly-purchased property on Moonshine Road in the Yuba River country of California's Sierra foothills. The homestead soon was dubbed "Shri Moonshine Ranch" ("Shri" the Indian designation for "Lord") and became a calm center for Riley's active life.

[Pandit Pran Nath] often told me when we were touring together in Europe, "First we must go pay our respects to God." So we would go to a cathedral, if there was one in the town, before we performed. In India it would be the temple, or the mosque. But always going to get blessings before you performed was very important to him. During the first fifteen years or so that I was a student and disciple of Pran Nath's, he led a very solitary life and liked to have a simple routine each day. He saw very few people. People would come to visit, but for very brief visits. He was mainly involved with his own practice and his composition. He was a splendid composer and composed many, many very beautiful compositions, which he shared with us. He spent long hours trying to create these compositions -- trying to perfect their shapes [Riley, "Reminiscences,]

While Riley ascribes to a general spirituality rather than a commitment to any formal religious orientation, the Sufi tradition -- the mystical branch of Islam -- has clearly been important to him, as two of his post-Guruji albums include the designation for devotees, "dervishes," and the composer continues to perform in mosques (a series of performances at the Fairfax mosque in Fairfax, CA, for one) and with musicians associated with Sufism (Steve Coughlin, Bill Douglass, and Mihr'un'Nisa Douglass, among others).

Riley uses a modified Yamaha YC 45D organ to which variable resistors have been added to facilitate tuning in just intonation. The output of the organ is split into two channels with one part being recorded then played back a fraction of a second behind the other. This permits a live performance in stereo and an interplay between the two parts. There is no pre-recorded material. The music is largely improvised around a predetermined mode or scale upon which are composed certain fixed themes, layered passages of melodic figuration, examples of polyphony (inversion, retrograde, etc.), and polymetric juxtaposition over a fixed rhythmic cycle [Notes to Riley, *Descending Moonshine Dervishes*].

From the days of the second-hand harmonium of *Untitled Organ* and the generically appellationed electric organ, electric harpsichord, and rocksichord of *A Rainbow in Curved Air*, *Poppy Nogood and the Phantom Band*, and *Persian Surgery Dervishes* -- "*Descending Moonshine Dervishes*" naturally follows the equipment-improvement path with its Yamaha YC 45D. A notable feature throughout this equipment pilgrimage, however, is Riley's decided preference during this period for both organs and electric keyboards manifesting reed-like sounds, almost a carry-over from *Dorian Reeds* and *Poppy*. An even more strikingly new feature in *Descending* is the use of just-intonation, evolving naturally from the composer's association with La Monte Young (whose *Well-Tuned Piano* was well underway) and Pandit Pran Nath. Other Indian features which may be notated are the use of "gats" ("certain fixed themes" or "compositions"), layered melodic figuration, and polymetrical juxtaposition over set metrical cycles. The present Kuckuck (Germany) album now boxes 2 CDs in the same package: *Descending Moonshine Dervishes* with the slightly later *Songs for the Ten Voices of the Two Prophets*.

A music reminiscent of *Descending Moonshine Dervishes* may be found on the CD re-issue of Riley's *No man's land* (Plainisphere), entitled *The Sri Moonshine Intercontinental Blues*, which was recorded live at the Great American Music Hall in San Francisco on June 21, 1984. A miniature at 15'50", when compared to *Descending* numerically-inverted 51'48", the music is augmented by the addition of Krishna Bhatt on sitar and Zakir Hussein on tablas to underscore the Indian influence.

My most concentrated work yet . . . some of the finest and most inspired moments I have ever felt in a studio [Terry Riley in Gardner, "Notes to Riley's *Shri Camel*"].

Shri Camel (Lord Camel) (1976) is a four-movement improvisatory suite. As in *Descending Moonshine Dervishes*, the piece is performed on a Yamaha YC-45-D electronic organ that has been tuned in just intonation and modified by computerized digital delay; but here, despite liner notes to the contrary, the effect is much more intonationally alarming, almost gratefully "out-of-tune" at times for the even-temperament-dependent crowd.

Terry Riley. *Shri Camel*. Selections and Timings

Anthem of the Trinity	9:23
Celestial Valley	11:30
Across the Lake of the Ancient World	7:25
Desert of Ice	15:10

Shri Camel was commissioned by Germany's Radio Bremen in 1975, and given an early-version premiere in May of 1976. This is apparently Riley's first multi-movement work since his early days, with individual movements considerably shorter than earlier essays. Movements both multiple and brief will be a hallmark of later works.

Recorded in 1977 but not released by CBS Masterworks until 1980, *Shri Camel* is a composition of deep spirituality which appeals to those who can appreciate the subtleties of just intonation. After the initial adjustment to the tonality (a sonic shifting of gears with suggestions of African, Asian, Ivesian quarter-tone piano, Native American, and Partch 43-tone music) the piece opens up into a meditative world of rich harmony and counterpoint -- as many as sixteen tracks in "Desert of Ice."

Shri Camel was the third release of Columbia's "three-record deal" with Terry Riley, and would have been America's first exposure to the composer since *A Rainbow in Curved Air* and, with *In C*, only the country's third example of Riley's output as a whole. The new album would have represented again a decided shock for those only familiar with the two aforesaid compositions and not the intervening works.

Additionally from the benefit of a later perspective, a fascinating comparison can be made of the opening music of *Shri* -- "Anthem of the Trinity" -- with its later incarnation as "Blue anthem" in *No man's land* (1983). The music's bluesy return shows the possibilities inherent in its initial incarnation: Riley's jazz background proves not completely camouflaged by layers of Eastern garb.

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Concert Review

Requiem for a Weighty Chorus

MARK ALBURGER

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy, in Gabriel Faure's *Requiem* and Arthur Honegger's *Symphony No. 2*. January 21, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

"...but what I really want to do is direct" can be true at the Symphony as well as in Hollywood.

Pity the poor symphonic choral director. All that work rehearsing the chorus, then at the moment of truth, the baton is handed over to an instrumental director -- and sometimes one from out of town!

That was the case on January 21 at Davies Hall, when Vance George's San Francisco Symphony Chorus performed a stunning rendition of Gabriel Faure's *Requiem*, under guest conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy. Oh yes, the Orchestra was there as well, but this is such a signature choral work that the instrumentalists must be content with second billing, although an honorable one, in this rich rendition featuring two harps, organ, and non-divisi violins.

Secondary as well are the vocal soloists. And in this case, they were indeed seconds (the scheduled artists Barbara Bonney and Gabriel Suovanen were both ill!) -- but in name only, as soprano Nicolle Foland and baritone Brad Alexander both turned in solid performances, the latter having been called up for active duty only that afternoon.

But it was the Chorus that defined the music: lush, rapturous, filling the hall with celestial strains. This may be the most sensuous, serene, and spiritual requiem in the repertory, avoiding bombast and drama, yet dramatic all the same. It would be hard to imagine a better choral rendition this side of the pearly gates.

The final offering, the one that provided the initial draw turned out to be an aesthetically appropriate repellent, in Arthur Honegger's *Symphony No. 2*, one of several mid-century wartime pieces that caused more of a stir in its day than in the present. Still, this acerbic essay for strings has its pithy interest, and the final chorale with obbligato trumpet is stirring. One almost wishes at this point that a chorus would burst forth from the heavens -- oh, yes, that happened later in the evening...

Chronicle

January 7

California EAR Unit. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

January 12

Guy Livingston as George Antheil. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

January 23

Contemporary Opera Marin, conducted by Paul Smith, presents Mark Alburger's *Diocletian*, and music of Marsha Burchard. College of Marin, Kentfield, CA. Through February 1.

January 25

David Lang's *Are You Experienced?*, *Sweet Air*, *Short Fall*, and *the so-called laws of nature*, performed by the San Francisco Contemporary Players. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA. "'Hello,' says a narrator, 'I'm David Lang.' On Monday, that statement was true -- Lang, who lives in New York, took part in the performance -- but the score calls for any speaker doing the piece to introduce himself as David Lang. 'I know you were looking forward to hearing this piece,' he goes on, 'but something terrible has just happened. While we were busy setting up, someone crept up silently behind you and dealt a quick blow to the side of your head.' And with that, the music sets off on its jangly, evocative course, tracking the percussive clangor and intermittent serenity of being knocked out cold. . . . There is a jittery dance, culminating in an explicit nod to [Jimi] Hendrix: a feedback-ridden cadenza for electric tuba . . . the so-called laws of nature [is] a 35-minute triptych for four percussionists. The first few minutes of each section proved enticing, but Lang himself wrote the most trenchant critique of this music in *Are You Experienced?* when an early theme makes a surprise reappearance. 'I remember this music,' the narrator says. 'It's nice, but -- we've heard it already. So let's get on with it' [Joshua Kosman, San Francisco Chronicle, 1/29/04].

January 26

Xtet. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Comment

What is Art Music ?

ORLANDO JACINTO GARCIA

The music world can seem a bit confusing. Twenty-five years ago what was considered the Western Art music canon consisted of music from either Antiquity or the Renaissance through the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and into the 20th century. The music called by many in the general public "classical" music was relatively well defined in so far as the composers and their works. Today, this repertoire is not the only music deemed as relevant. Especially in post-modern times where categories are being redefined, it is easy for many to assert that a tango, a rock tune, and a Beethoven symphony are all the same except perhaps for the musical parameters that define the style. This can have its positive as well as negative ramifications. The positive perhaps being that all types of music are understood as having similar importance, the negative that everything is considered in many ways as being the same.

Given the current post-modern climate how does one define and/or understand different forms of musical expression. Are questions of style merely enough to describe different types of music? In my view there are much more than just stylistic parameters to consider when trying to understand music in the beginning of the 21st century. What are these additional concerns? I believe that there are differences in function and in the type of experiences that different types of music generate, that can be generally understood and discussed. Given the limitations of space, the following are general notions not to be considered as all encompassing or complete but instead as some concepts that may help to clarify the situation.

To begin with, popular, ethnic, commercial, etc., music can be generally understood as being functional (i.e., it has relatively obvious and direct social functions) and some of the music from the Western Art music tradition does not (i.e., it exists primarily for its own sake). Historically functional music has generally been created to communicate with a large number of people while non-functional music has been devised to be consumed by a smaller number often somewhat versed in its musical language. Examples of functional music include (1) songs that recount historical, political, and socio/cultural events, (2) music for celebrations and rituals with or without dance and (3) music written with the express purpose of generating large sums of money. The target audience for this music was and still is usually a large group of people. Although important, these are simplistic notions and distinctions, that need to be and will be clarified shortly.

Much non-functional music has origins as functional music. A good example of this is Western sacred music which had the task of inspiring worshippers to come close to their deity.

Later the main purpose for many of the composers of this music became pleasing the royalty commissioning it (some of whom were musicians themselves). Its value at times increased, based upon the composer's ability to create a more abstract and complex experience for the patron and court. In the past, composers of non-functional music often created functional music as well to supplement their earnings. This phenomena is rarely seen in the 20th century. As the system of patronage more or less ended, the more abstract music was left standing as absolute music, generally speaking, with little if any function except to exist for its own sake. Since it was not understood by or written for the masses it was, for the most part, not economically viable. In the 20th century institutions such as governments and universities became the supporters of this work. This music, heard by smaller numbers, was and is often revered for its potential to elicit powerful reaction by audiences; both for and against it. Similar examples can be found in the other arts.

The simple and limited historical explanations of functional and non-functional music presented above are relatively obvious although often ignored by those discussing music in post-modern times. Although to some extent generalized and simplified, I believe that they raise some important notions that can help understand some of the differences between a tango, a rock tune, and a symphony by Stravinsky. At the same time that they are of importance, these notions are not enough by themselves to help categorize and/or fully understand the music that exists today.

In addition to the differences in the historical functions of music, there is perhaps the more important concept of the experiences that different types of music generate. These differences in the responses they elicit, may best be understood by examining works in the other Arts and the responses which they generate. For example, the experience one has when reading a work by Michael Crichton or Mickey Spillane is not the same as the experience one has when reading James Joyce or Borges. One is not better than the other but their works definitely generate different responses. Novels by the first two writers usually include great story telling and can be quite enjoyable. The books of the latter two are much more abstract and generate a very different intellectual and emotional experience (pleasurable for some and not so for others). Reading books by the latter several times is often necessary to capture all of the details as well as some of the more abstract concepts presented.

A similar analogy can be made when examining visual art. The experience one has while viewing a fairly representational seascape watercolor painting by Carolyn Blish is not the same as the experience one has when viewing *Guernica* by Picasso. The watercolor may be pleasing to the eye and may even make an excellent addition to ones living space. The Picasso however could be very troubling given the abstract imagery and surrealistic depiction of horrific events.

Repeated viewing is often necessary to understand it and including it in ones living space may or may not be of interest. As in the first example, these experiences are not better or worse; just different.

A similar case can be made for music. The experience of hearing the music of Michael Jackson, Julio Iglesias, Madonna, or a tango by Gardel is not the same as the experience of hearing Stravinsky's *Symphony of the Psalms*, Berlioz's *Symphonie Fantastique*, or Ginastera's *Cantata para America Magica*. The first group of works may move one to dance, sing along, or converse with a friend at a bar, while the latter generally does not. With the Stravinsky, Berlioz, and Ginastera works, repeated listening may be required to assimilate and react to the music, while this may not be the case with the first examples. Again one group is not better than the other; rather the responses to the works and the experiences one has are very different.

In general, what do these experiences have in common? The latter in each of the examples is probably more abstract than the former (i.e., more removed from concrete experiences of reality and every day life). Does this necessarily make one experience better than the other? Probably not, since although a more abstract experience might seem more substantive to some it can often create much discomfort. A discomforting response could cause the individual to close out the work that is evoking the experience (a common reaction to the unfamiliar). At the same time having the greatest acceptance by mass audiences does not necessarily mean that something is worthwhile. On the contrary, there are many instances where mass acceptance implies that what is being accepted is very banal and of little worth.

What is the implication of this view? First, style is not the determining factor when defining what Art music is or is not. Rather to some extent the functionality of the music and more importantly the experiences generated by it are. Some would ask what about jazz? My response would be who do you mean? -- late John Coltrane or any Kenny G -- and what kind of experience does their music generate for you? The same for some rock and pop musicians? Do you mean Michael Jackson or Brian Eno? What about the functional music that Mozart, Haydn, et al wrote? Are things black and white? Of course not, and there are plenty of issues to continue to discuss. Some genres and works will be difficult to explain but that is what makes talking about music so interesting.

Lastly, a brief word about the label Art music. While some of the more sensitive find that it demeans other music by implying that one is high art while the other is not, it should be noted that the word Art music comes from the word Art song applied to some of the songs in the 19th century as a way of differentiating them from other songs of the time. The term was also used as a way of separating these songs from the notion of the "Art of Music." This does not mean that it is superior to other music, simply that it is coming from the Art song tradition (analogous to the visual art of the time).

While I find that the terms serious or classical music are irrelevant when applied to Art music, I do not have a problem with the terminology that grew out of the notion of Art song. This being said, the nature of mass marketing has made the term "classical music" the term of choice for the general public whether they are talking about Bach or Stravinsky.

What I propose in this brief article is not meant as an ironclad test for categorizing music, but rather an attempt to deal with a phenomenon that in my opinion clearly exists. It is also my desire to give musicians some philosophical concepts to consider when discussing different types of music. As young man I had the great fortune to study philosophy. If I learned anything at all while studying this subject it is that while one can never know the truth, one can try and come close to it. This is what I am attempting to do with the notions put forth in this brief article.

Writers

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