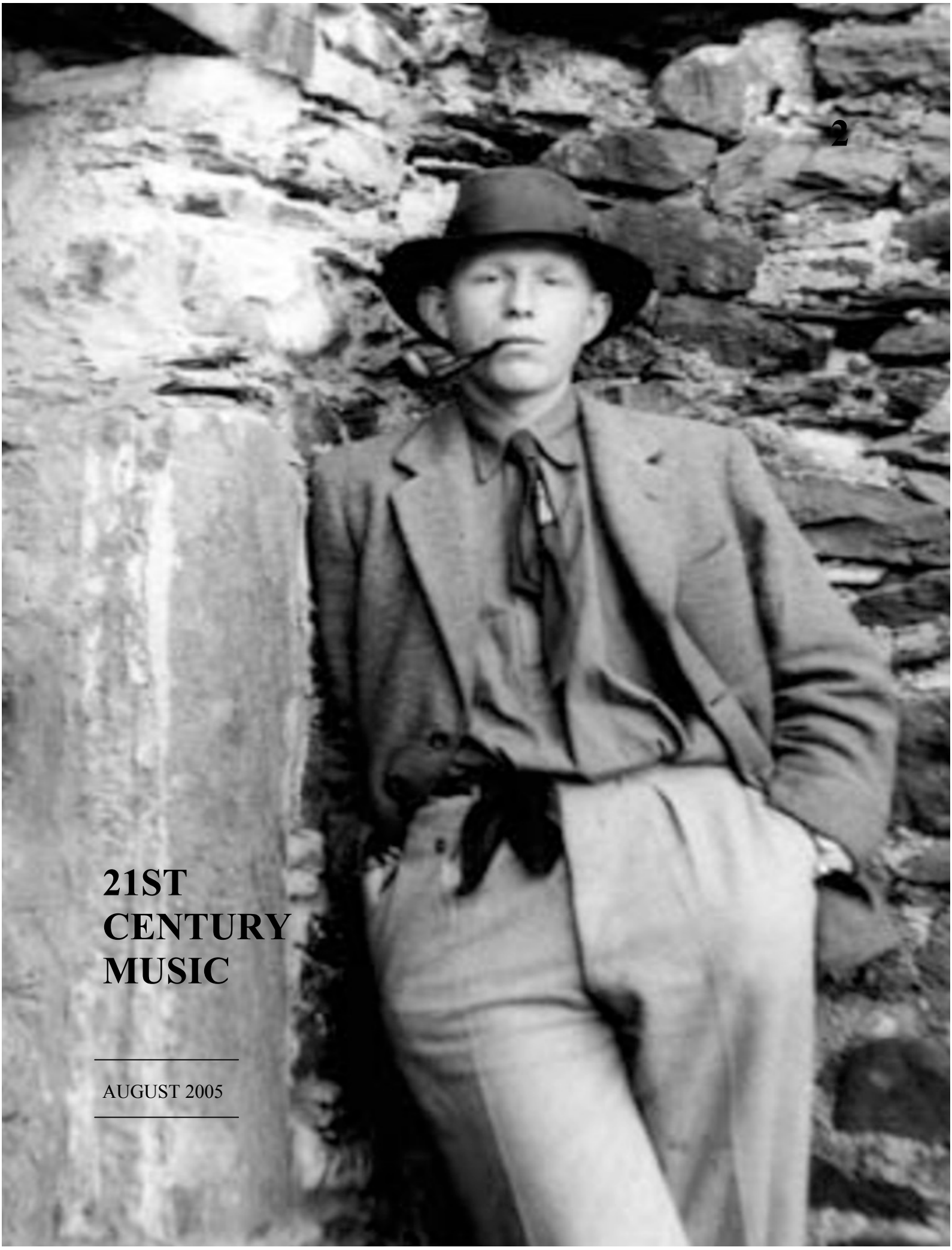

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21ST CENTURY MUSIC

AUGUST 2005

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21ST-CENTURY MUSIC is published monthly by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. ISSN 1534-3219.

Subscription rates in the U.S. are $84.00 per year; subscribers elsewhere should add $36.00 for postage. Single copies of the current volume and back issues are $10.00. Large back orders must be ordered by volume and be pre-paid. Please allow one month for receipt of first issue. Domestic claims for non-receipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Thereafter, the regular back issue rate will be charged for replacement. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed. Send orders to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. email: mus21stc@aol.com.

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21ST-CENTURY MUSIC invites pertinent contributions in analysis, composition, criticism, interdisciplinary studies, musicology, and performance practice; and welcomes reviews of books, concerts, music, recordings, and videos. The journal also seeks items of interest for its calendar, chronicle, comment, communications, opportunities, publications, recordings, and videos sections. Typescripts should be double-spaced on 8 1/2 x 11 -inch paper, with ample margins. Authors with access to IBM compatible word-processing systems are encouraged to submit a floppy disk, or e-mail, in addition to hard copy.

Prospective contributors should consult "The Chicago Manual of Style," 13th ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) and "Words and Music," rev. ed. (Valley Forge, PA: European American Music Corporation, 1982), in addition to back issues of this journal. Typescripts should be sent to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. e-mail: mus21stc@aol.com. Materials for review may be sent to the same address.

INFORMATION FOR ADVERTISERS

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21ST CENTURY MUSIC

August 2005

Volume 12, Number 8

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W.H. Auden as Muse

PHILLIP GEORGE

W[ystan] H[ugh] Auden (February 21, 1907, York, England - September, 29 1973) grew up in Birmingham in a professional middle-class family.

His first boarding school was St. Edmund's School (Hindhead), Surrey, where he met Christopher Isherwood (two and a half years older than Auden). At 13, he went to Gresham's School in Norfolk, where, in 1922, his friend Robert Medley first suggested that he might write poetry.

Soon after, he "discover[ed] that he ha[d] lost his faith" (through a gradual realization that he had lost interest in religion, not through any decisive change of views).

He played Caliban in a school production of William Shakespeare's The Tempest in 1922, and his first published poems appeared in the school magazine the next year.

In 1925 he went to Christ Church, Oxford, with a scholarship in biology, but he switched to English by his second year. Friends he met at Oxford included Cecil Day Lewis, Louis MacNeice, and Stephen Spender; these four were commonly though misleadingly identified in the 1930's as the "Auden Group" for their shared (but not identical) left-wing views. Auden left Oxford in 1928 with a third-class degree.

He was reintroduced to Christopher Isherwood in 1925; for the next few years Isherwood was his literary mentor to whom he sent poems for comments and criticism. Auden probably fell in love with Isherwood (who was unaware of the intensity of Auden's feelings) and in the 1930s they maintained a sexual friendship in intervals between their relations with others. In 1935-39 they collaborated on three plays and a travel book.[

From his Oxford years onward, his friends uniformly described him as funny, extravagant, sympathetic, generous, and, partly by his own choice, lonely. In groups he was often dogmatic and overbearing in a comic way; in more private settings he was diffident and shy except when certain of his welcome. He was punctual in his habits, and obsessive about meeting deadlines, while choosing to live amidst physical disorder

From 1935 until he left Britain for the United States early in 1939, Auden worked as freelance reviewer, essayist, and lecturer, first with the G.P.O. Film Unit, a documentary film-making branch of the post office, headed by John Grierson. Through his work for the Film Unit in 1935 he met and collaborated with Benjamin Britten, with whom he also worked on plays and song cycles (On This Island, 1936).

***

Recordings of Britten's collaborations with Auden during this period include:

Benjamin Britten. Hymn to St. Cecilia, Spring Symphony, etc. Monteverdi Choir, John Eliot Gardiner. 1997. Deutsche Grammophon.

Benjamin Britten and Lennox Berkeley. Auden Songs. Della Jones, Philip Langridge, 1998, reissued 2003.

***

Auden and Isherwood sailed to New York in January 1939, entering on temporary visas. Their departure from Britain was later seen by many there as a betrayal and Auden's reputation suffered.

In April 1939 Isherwood moved to California, and he and Auden saw each other only intermittently in later years. Around this time, Auden met 18-year old poet Chester Kallman, who became his lover for the next two years (Auden described their relation as a "marriage" that began with a cross-country "honeymoon" journey).

In 1941 Kallman ended their sexual relations because he could not accept Auden's insistence on a mutual faithful relationship, but he and Auden remained companions for the rest of Auden's life, sharing houses and apartments from 1953 until Auden's death. Auden dedicated both editions of his collected poetry (1945/50 and 1966) to Isherwood and Kallman.

In 1940, he joined the Episcopal Church, returning to the Anglican Communion he had abandoned at thirteen. His reconversion was influenced partly by what he called the "sainthood" of Charles Williams, whom he had met in 1937, partly by reading Søren Kierkegaard and Reinhold Niebuhr; his existential, this-worldly Christianity became a central element in his life.

In 1940-41, Auden lived in a house in Brooklyn Heights which he shared with Carson McCullers, Benjamin Britten, and others, and which became a famous center of artistic life.

***

Benjamin Britten's Paul Bunyan (1941) is a "choral operetta," with book and lyrics by W. H. Auden.

Britten and Auden had moved to the United States to escape the war in Europe; this operetta is something of a capsule summary of the history of their new home. It begins with a chorus of trees and geese and progresses to the arrival of lumberjacks organized by Paul Bunyan. By the second act, some of the lumberjacks have become farmers and by the end of the show, they are all members of industrial society.

The plot draws upon Auden's knowledge of the Eddas and begins with a creation story that uses the same idea of a giant

being awakened by a primordial cow. Although Auden's tone is tongue-in-cheek, he seems to have intended the libretto to fill a gap in the American national consciousness and provide a national epic for them. The lukewarm reception that the work received may well have been due to the presumption of an Englishman writing the "missing" American national epic. The plot also places the hero into a broken marriage and has him preside over the systematic destruction of natural resources for profit. These were also potentially uncomfortable themes to place before an American audience at the time.

The music is based on a wide variety of American styles, including folk songs, blues and hymns.

It premiered at Columbia University in 1941 to largely negative reviews. Britten revised the operetta in 1976, removing two numbers (Inkslinger's Love Song and Lullaby of Dream Shadows) and composing a new finale for Act I. This is the version performed today, although a 1988 recording also includes the two deleted numbers.

A recent version -- conducted by Richard Hickox, with Peter Coleman-Wright, Susan Gritton, Kenneth Cranham, Royal Opera Chorus and Orchestra -- was recorded in 1999 on Chandos.

***

In 1941-42 he taught English at the University of Michigan. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1942, but did not use it, choosing instead to teach at Swarthmore College in 1942-45.

From 1942 through 1947 he worked mostly on three long poems in dramatic form, each differing from the others in form and content: For the Time Being: A Christmas Oratorio, The Sea and the Mirror: A Commentary on Shakespeare's "The Tempest" (both published in For the Time Being, 1944), and The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue (published separately 1947).

***

The Age of Anxiety: A Baroque Eclogue (1947; first UK edition, 1948) is a long poem in six parts, written mostly in a modern version of Anglo-Saxon alliterative verse.

The poem deals, in eclogue form, with man's quest to find substance and identity in a shifting and increasingly industrialized world. Set in a wartime bar in New York City, Auden uses four characters – Quant, Malin, Rosetta, and Emble – to explore and develop his themes.

The poem won the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry in 1948. It inspired Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 ("The Age of Anxiety") for Piano and Orchestra, and a 1950 ballet by Jerome Robbins based on the symphony.

***

In the summer of 1945, after the end of World War II in Europe, Auden was in Germany with the U. S. Strategic Bombing Survey, studying the effects of Allied bombing on German morale, an experience that affected his postwar work as a visit to Spain had affected him earlier.

On his return, he settled in Manhattan, working as a freelance writer and as a visiting professor at Bennington, Smith, and other American colleges. In 1946 he became a naturalized citizen of the US.

Auden's poems in the 40's explored religious and ethical themes in syncretist manner. In 1949 Auden and Kallman wrote the libretto for Igor Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress.

***

Igor Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress, in three acts and an epilogue, to a libretto written by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, is based loosely on the eight paintings and engravings of William Hogarth's A Rake's Progress (1733–1735), which Stravinsky had seen on May 2, 1947, in a Chicago exhibition.

It was first performed in Venice on September 11, 1951, with Elisabeth Schwarzkopf premiering the role of Anne Trulove and Robert Rounseville as Tom Rakewell. In 1957, it was a part of the first season of the Santa Fe Opera under the direction of John Crosby, who persuaded the composer to attend rehearsals. For the 1975 Glyndebourne Festival Opera production, sets and costumes were designed by David Hockney.

Recordings include:

Conducted by Igor Stravinsky, with Don Garrard, Jane Manning, Judith Raskin, Sadler's Wells Opera Chorus, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Sony, 1964.

Conducted by Robert Craft, with John Cheek, John Garrison, et al., Gregg Smith Singers, Orchestra of St. Luke's. BMG/Musicmasters, 1994.

Conducted by Kent Nagano, with Grace Bumbry, Jerry Hadley, et al., Lyon Opera Chorus, Lyon Opera Orchestra. Erato, 1996.

Conducted by Seiji Ozawa, with Donald Adams, Ian Bostridge, Sylvia McNair, et al., Tokyo Opera Singers, Saito Kinen Orchestra. Philips, 1997.

Conducted by John Eliot Gardiner, with Bryn Terfel, Ian Bostridge, Deborah York, et al., Monteverdi Choir, London Symphony Orchestra. Deutsche Grammophon, 1999.

***

In the 1950's and 60's many of Auden's poems focused on the ways in which words revealed and concealed emotions. During this same period, he also worked with the New York

Pro Musica early music group, and wrote two libretti for Hans Werner Henze and one for Nicolas Nabokov.

***

Samuel Barber's Hermit Songs is a cycle of ten songs for voice and piano.

Written in 1953 on a grant from the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Foundation, it takes as its basis a collection of anonymous poems written by Irish monks and scholars from the 8th to the 13th centuries, in translations by W. H. Auden, Chester Kallman, Howard Mumford Jones, Kenneth Jackson and Sean O'Faolain. The Hermit Songs received their premiere in 1953 at the Library of Congress, with soprano Leontyne Price and Barber himself as accompanist.

The ten songs of the cycle and the respective translators of each poem are as follows:

"At St Patrick's Purgatory" (Seán Ó Faoláin)

"Church Bell at Night" (Howard Mumford Jones)

"St Ita's Vision" (Chester Kallman)

"The Heavenly Banquet" (Seán Ó Faoláin)

"The Crucifixion" (Howard Mumford Jones)

"Sea Snatch" (Kenneth Jackson)

"Promiscuity" (Kenneth Jackson)

"The Monk and his Cat" (W.H. Auden)

"The Praises of God" (W.H. Auden)

"The Desire for Hermitage" (Seán Ó Faoláin)

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Lennox Berkeley's Five Poems by W. H. Auden, op.58, dates from c. 1960.

***

Hans Werner Henze's Elegy for Young Lovers (Elegie für junge Liebende) is an opera in three acts to an English libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman.

The opera was first performed in a German translation by Ludwig Prinz von Hessen at the Schwetzingen Festival on May 20, 1961, conducted by Heinrich Bender. The first performance using the original English text was in Glyndebourne, also in 1961. The Juilliard Opera Theater produced the opera in New York City in 1965, with the composer conducting.

Henze revised the opera in the 1980's, and this revised version received its first performance on October 28, 1988 at the La Fenice Theatre, Venice, with Markus Stenz conducting.

According to Ann Saddlemyer in her book Becoming George, the poet is partially based on W. B. Yeats, and his wife "George" (Georgie Hyde-Lees) was the inspiration for both the secretary and the woman with visions. The librettist Auden was a friend of Ezra Pound, who in turn was a friend of Yeats. David Anderson has noted that the poet also portrays Auden as well.

Robert Henderson has summarized the thesis of the opera as follows:

"Elegy for Young Lovers....is a bitter indictment of the Romantic notion of the artist as hero, feeding remorselessly on those around him both in the name of art and to satisfy his own monstrous and inhumanely egotistical appetites."

Auden and Kallman described this opera as their equivalent of Richard Strauss's Arabella.

The dedication of the opera is to the memory of Hugo von Hofmannsthal.

Henze quoted material from the aria My own, my own in his Symphony No. 5, completed in 1962.

A recording of excerpts from the opera (in German) -- conducted by Hans Werner Henze, with Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, Loren Driscoll, Liane Dubin, featuring members of the Radio-Symphony-Orchestra Berlin and the Deutsche Oper Orchestra Berlin -- is available from Deutsche Grammophon (1964).

***

Auden was commissioned in 1963 to write lyrics for Mitch Leigh's Man of La Mancha, but the producer rejected them as insufficiently romantic.

Auden acknowledged in 1964: "collaboration has brought me greater erotic joy . . . than any sexual relations I have had."

***

Hans Werner Henze's The Bassarids (Die Bassariden) is an opera in one act and an intermezzo, to an English libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, after Euripides's The Bacchae. It was first performed in a German translation by Maria Basse-Sporleder in Salzburg on August 6, 1966. Christoph von Dohnányi was the conductor, and the original cast included:

Kerstin Meyer (Agave)
Loren Driscoll (Dionysus)
Kostas Paskalis (Pentheus)

The first performance using the original English text, as well as the US premiere, was at Santa Fe Opera on August 7, 1968, with the composer conducting.

The opera was also given in London on September 22, 1968, and was revived at English National Opera in October 1974, with the composer conducting.

A noteworthy feature of the opera is its construction like a classical symphony in four movements:

I. Sonata

II. Scherzo

III. Adagio and Fugue

IV. Passacaglia

Henze has noted that he quotes from Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Matthew Passion and the English Suite in D Minor.

Auden and Kallman wrote of changes that they made to the Euripides original for the purposes of this opera.

The conflict in the opera is between human rationality and emotional control, represented by the King of Thebes, Pentheus, and unbridled human passion, represented by the god Dionysus.

At least three recordings are available:

Gerd Albrecht, conductor; Kenneth Riegel, Andreas Schmidt, Michael Burt, Robert Tear, Karan Armstrong, Ortrun Wenkel, William B. Murray, Celina Lindsey; Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra; 1986, Koch Schwann International.

Gerd Albrecht, conductor; Karen Armstrong, Kenneth Riegel, et al., Berlin RIAS Chamber Chorus, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra. 1992. Koch Schwann.

Christoph von Dohnányi, conductor; Loren Driscoll, Kostas Paskalis, Peter Lagger, Helmut Melchert, William Dooley, Kerstin Meyer, Ingeborg Hallstein, Vera Little; Choir of the Vienna State Opera; Vienna Philharmonic; 2003, ORFEOInternational.

***

During Auden's last years, his conversation became repetitive, to the disappointment of friends who had known him earlier as a witty and wide-ranging conversationalist.

In 1972, he moved his winter home from New York to Oxford, where his old college, Christ Church, offered him a cottage, but he continued to summer in Austria. He died in Vienna in 1973 and was buried in Kirchstetten.

***

Nicolas Nabokov's Love's Labour's Lost, with a libretto by W. H. Auden and Chester Kallman, was based on Shakespeare's play, and first performed in 1973.

***

Auden’s stature in modern literature has been disputed, with opinions ranging from that of Hugh MacDiarmid, who called him "a complete wash-out," to the obituarist in the Times of London, who wrote: "W. H. Auden, for long the enfant terrible of English poetry . . . emerges as its undisputed master."

***

Later settings of Auden include:

Ned Rorem. Poems of Love and the Rain, for voice and piano (1962-63), including Stop All the Clocks.

Russell Smith. Epitaph on a Tyrant.

Lisa de Spain. Their Lonely Betters. We're Late.

Joyce Suskind. The More Loving One.

Don Hagar. Leap Before You Look.

Binnette Lipper. As I Walked Out One Evening.

Don Stratton. Musee des Beaux Arts.

Beth Anderson. Lullaby.

John Lessard. Song for St. Cecila's Day, including I Cannot Grow.

All of the above later settings may be found on:

The Truth About Love: Music and the Poetry of W.H. Auden. Capstone, 2004

Chronicle

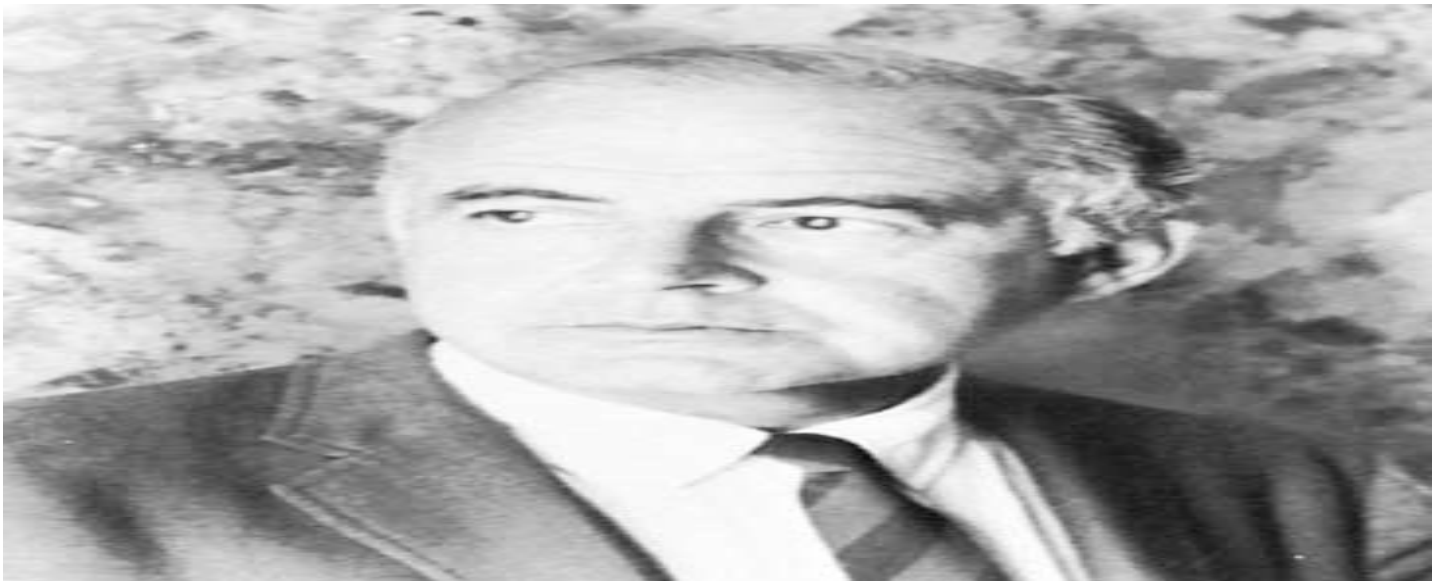
June 2

Alan Gilbert conducts the New York Philharmonic in Samuel Barber's Cello Concerto (Op. 22) and Henri Dutilleux's Mystere de l'Instant. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "[I]t was good to hear [Barber's] bracing music, especially in this smart, incisive, and elegant performance. The soloist was Carter Brey, the Philharmonic's principal cellist and a fine and brilliant artist. . . . Gilbert led a sumptuous account of Henri Dutilleux's Mystère de l'Instant for strings, cimbalom, and percussion. This work, from the late 1980's, is a series of short 'moments,' as its title implies. Apparently Messiaen was not the only French modernist enthralled by birds. Mr. Dutilleux writes that hearing an amazing array of bird calls inspired him to compose this piece. The ravishing music teems with clanking percussion effects that are somehow celestial, and shimmers with daringly thick yet lucidly scored string chord" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 6/4/05].

June 4

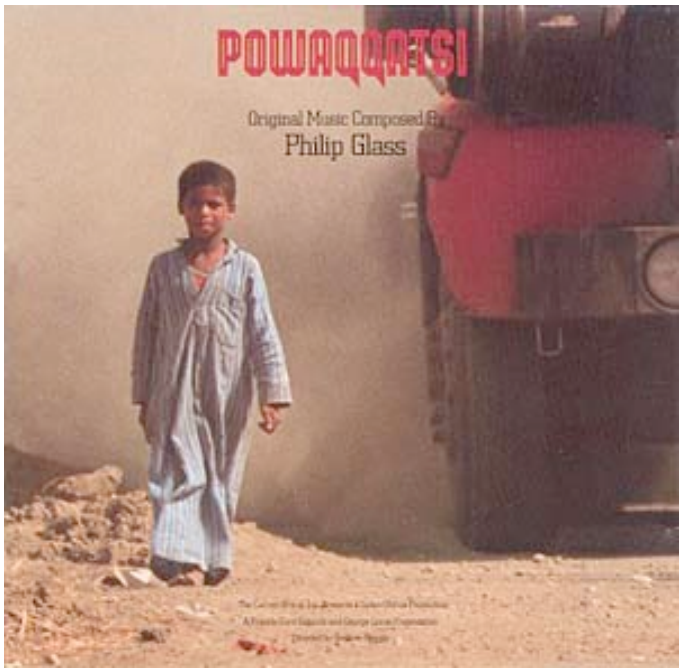
Mark Swed reviews the American Youth Symphony, conducted by Kent Nagano, in Naomi Sekiya's Manzanar. Los Angeles, CA. "Manzanar has some highly effective, dramatically cogent music by Sekiya in its opening section, which deals with the first generation of Japanese immigrants to America. She is a promising composer who came from Japan to study at USC and UCLA and now lives here. Benoit -- who led a trio of piano, bass and drums on one side of the stage -- broke in periodically with pop music of the period. Sekiya's score returns for the final section, about post-camp life, and the music becomes serious again. But here -- with the choruses (the Santa Monica Chamber Choir and the Manzanar Youth Choir) . . . -- Sekiya had the thankless task of attempting to tie up loose musical ends" [Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times, 6/4/05].

Philip Glass's Powaqqatsi (film by Godfrey Reggio). Rose Theater, New York, NY. "[When] Koyaanisqatsi [was released] in 1983, it was something new: a full-length work in which music and imagery were intertwined to make a polemical point about mankind's custodianship of the earth. Powaqqatsi followed in 1988, and Naqoyqatsi completed the Qatsi Trilogy, as it came to be called, in 2002. Each was devoted to different aspects of how humanity has fouled the planet . . . [J]ust about all of Mr. Reggio's points are made best in Koyaanisqatsi, the most lyrically beautiful of the three. Mr. Glass's music, though, changed greatly from film to film, and in each score he explored new ground. In Koyaanisqatsi, he moved from the abstractions of additive process, which yielded works like Music in 12 Parts and Einstein on the Beach, to what was then an uncharacteristically lush, even neoromantic sound. Accompanying Mr. Reggio's images of exploding housing projects, time-lapse cloud formations, sweeping desertscapes and crowded train stations was rich orchestral scoring, including some almost Wagnerian brass writing. At the other end of the trilogy, Naqoyqatsi added a plaintive solo cello line to the blend. Mr. Glass's innovation in Powaqqatsi was to draw on the modal melodies, tactile percussion and exotic timbres of world music. Given that much of the film focuses on Asia, Africa and Latin America, this made sense, and it made a refreshing change from the arpeggios, scale patterns and major-minor chord progressions that had become Mr. Glass's signature moves. Not that those elements are absent, but the African rhythms and the melodies inspired by Asian chant push the music in a new direction that Mr. Glass went on to further explore. The Philip Glass Ensemble played the score with a visceral punch, but what it offered was a reduction: in its current configuration, the group includes percussionists, three woodwind players and a handful of keyboardists who approximated the score's string and brass parts" [Allan Kozinn, 6/6/05].



June 5

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Charles Ives's Unanswered Question, Maurice Ravel's Daphnis et Chloe, and John Adams's The Dharma at Big Sur. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "Only four flutists sat before Mr. Salonen on the stage. The strings were at the back of the hall on the orchestra level, and the solo trumpeter, whose melancholy theme represents Ives's question, was in one of the balconies. For the performance, the hall's lights were dimmed so that only Mr. Salonen and the players could be seen. It was a gimmick, but for listeners willing to trust it -- that is, those who weren't calling out for more light or giving their winter hacking coughs a final outing -- it yielded an unusually lucid interpretation. The beauty and delicacy of the score's components were clearer than ever, but its sense of mystery was preserved as well. . . . The Dharma at Big Sur [is] a 2003 concerto for electric violin by John Adams. Mr. Adams has cited the writer Jack Kerouac and the composers Lou Harrison and Terry Riley as his inspirations here, as well as California itself, and what he has produced is a score that peers across the Pacific and draws on an array of Asian influences. Mostly, though, they are unspecific: the winding violin line sometimes sounds ragalike, but it isn't quite a raga; and the orchestral texture, particularly toward the end of the 30-minute piece, evokes the sound of a gamelan without fully using traditional gamelan techniques. There are Western influences in this stew as well. In the more outgoing second movement, the violin line runs through some showy Romantic concerto figuration. And in the more meditative opening movement . . . . Tracy Silverman gave an animated account of the solo line, and added a layer of showmanship . . . . Salonen led his players and the Concert Chorale of New York in a sweeping, rich-hued and often magnificently sensual account of Daphnis et Chloé" [Allan Kozinn, 6/6/05].



June 7

George Perle's 90th Birthday Tribute Concert. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "[His] 90th birthday was on May 6 . . . . But you know the drill: where composers' birthdays are concerned, any time during either the formal concert season in which it takes place (that is, starting last fall) or the actual calendar year, is fair game. And why not? . . . [S]everal recently recorded the works on the program [will be included on] . . . a two-CD set to be released in the fall by Bridge Records, an enterprising label that keeps music by living composers in the spotlight or, at least, the record bins. Mr. Perle, ill with a respiratory infection, was not on hand. In the battle over the place of tonality in modern music, Mr. Perle was firmly in the post-tonal camp, but his music has always been the antithesis of the arid academicism that plagued that school. In the Three Inventions (1962) and BassoonMusic (2004), all for unaccompanied bassoon, virtuosity, lyricism and humor jostle for attention. The music is so fluid and lively that it's easy to forget that writing a work -- let alone two -- for solo bassoon is a decidedly quirky thing to do. Steven Dibner, the associate principal bassoonist of the San Francisco Symphony, played them with an admirable warmth and dexterity. Most of the concert's first half was devoted to Thirteen Dickinson Songs a 1978 collection that treats this poetry not as primly formal, but as gritty expressions of live-wire emotionality. The vocal lines are full of leaps that take the ear by surprise, and no doubt do the same for the larynx. . . . Horacio Gutiérrez isn't particularly known as a new-music pianist, but Mr. Perle wrote his Nine Bagatelles for him in 1999. These pieces are short but full of character, and Mr. Gutiérrez played them dazzlingly. The program also included "Triptych" (2003), a thoughtful set of dialogues between the violin, played by Curtis Macomber, and the piano, played by Michael Boriskin. Mr. Boriskin also joined the Dorian Wind Quintet in a vigorous account of Mr. Perle's For Piano and Winds (1988) [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/9/05].

June 9

Riverside Symphony in David Crumb's Vestiges of a Distant Time and Arthur Honegger's Concertino. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "David Crumb . . . lives in Oregon. Mr. Crumb, inspired by visits to the sites of ancient civilizations, has written a haunting, eclectic score that toggles between an eerie light dissonance and harmonies that hint at antiquity without actually quoting antique styles. [The work has a] the trickiness of . . . frequent shifts in and out of diatonic tonality, and the . . . string and brass textures are in constant flux. . . Shai Wosner, a promising young pianist, joined Mr. Rothman and company for Honegger's alternately naïve and urbane Concertino (1924). . . . [The] Honegger was cleanly articulated and had a flexible, bluesy coloration" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/11/05].

June 14

Mark Swed reviews the Ojai Festival. Ojai, CA. "[T]hey had a more or less conventional program, at least by adventuresome Ojai standards. They did play the Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Wind Ensemble by Ingolf Dahl, a fondly remembered USC composer and former Ojai music director. Tart, expressive music, it was used here as a showpiece for its soloist, Joseph Lulloff, who approached every phrase as if it were a major crisis triumphantly overcome. . . . The Renaissance composer Josquin Desprez brushed elbows with Japanese composer Toru Takemitsu and Italian composer Luciano Berio. A highlight was Knussen's recent A Fragment of Ophelia's Last Dance, a wistful, quirky, personal remembrance of his late wife, Sue Knussen, who had been the education director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. [Peter] Serkin played the entire program (which also included Knussen's broadly ingenious Variations) as if he were channeling the deepest essence of Ojai's spirit. A knowing sun came out when he began re-creating Messiaen's bird song" [Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times, 6/14/05].

Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance. Mannes College of Music, New York, NY. "[N[ew music is a vast field nowadays, and Mannes's program, though varied, focuses mostly on the branches that abandoned tonality, from the Serialists to the Spectralists. There are exceptions, but the more consonant schools, including Minimalism and neo-Romanticism, are not much in evidence. The pianist Marc Ponthus, the flutist and composer Robert Dick and the violinist Rolf Schulte established that agenda firmly in the festival's opening concert. . . . Ponthus opened the concert with Pierre Boulez's Third Sonata, described in the program as a "work in progress," although given Mr. Boulez's penchant for radical revision, that could be said about many of his works. This one does seem unfinished, though: it draws heavily on Mr. Boulez's sense of sonority and on the contrast between rapid bursts of sound and sustained lines, but the completed sections don't have the dynamism of the Second Sonata. Mr. Dick, a flutist whose technical resources and imagination seem limitless, devoted his part of the program largely to his own fascinatingly idiosyncratic works. Re-Illuminations (1985), inspired by an African ceremonial piece Mr. Dick once heard on a recording, alternates between tactile percussive sounds and a simple, attractive melody couched in multiphonics, a technique that creates the impression of a chordal sound. He is even more picturesque in Eye in the Sky (1992), a haunting work for alto flute, built on bent notes and the evocation of a howling wind. And in Sliding Life Blues (2001), Mr. Dick demonstrated the considerable charms of the 'glissando head joint,' an attachment that lets him create swirling figures in which pitches slide into each other kaleidoscopically. He also gave a vigorous performance of [Toru] Takemitsu's Voice (1971), a work that requires vocalization -- everything from a whisper to a shout -- amid sharply angular flute lines. Mr. Schulte was at his best in Earl Kim's Caprices (1980), a set of short but vital character pieces. He also played Stefan Wolpe's Second Piece (1966) and Donald Martino's Fantasy-Variations (1962) with an intensity that largely overcame the dry writing" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/18/05].

June 15

William C. Banfield Gertrude Stein Invents a Jump Early On (libretto by Karren LaLonde Alenier), Virgil Thomson's Capital Capitals (1927), and Ned Rorem's Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters (1968). Symphony Space, New York, NY. "Neither Thomson nor Stein thought of Capital Capitals as an opera. The text evokes -- with typically Steinian wordplay -- the region of Provence through a conversation among Aix, Arles, Avignon, and Les Baux. Thomson's vocal setting is for four male singers accompanied only by a piano. The conversation becomes a garrulous debate about the various landscapes, cuisines, peoples, and customs of the four cities. . . . Three Sisters Who Are Not Sisters is Stein's homage to mystery tales. . . . Scored for five singers (here Mr. Uhlemann, Mr. Vickers, Jody Sheinbaum, Karen Rich and Hai-Ting Chinn, all excellent) and piano (Mara Waldman), the music uses an extremely lucid language of rich, chromatic harmony and pungent dissonance. . . . Banfield['s] . . . score is lightly jazzy and prone to lyrical outpourings"[Anthony Tommasini, 6/17/05].

June 17

Benjamin Britten's Gloriana. Loretto-Hilton Center, Webster University, St. Louis, MO. "In more than 50 years on the British throne Queen Elizabeth II has shown scant interest in opera. So it is paradoxical that one of the major events of her coronation ceremonies was the 1953 premiere by the Royal Opera at Covent Garden of Benjamin Britten's Gloriana, an elaborate three-act work about the first Queen Elizabeth, with a libretto by William Plomer based on Lytton Strachey's book Elizabeth and Essex. The premiere was a crushing disappointment for Britten. Many in the gala audience of royals, diplomats and government officials found the whole thing quite dull. The real opera buffs were up in the gallery, including the young Colin Graham, today an esteemed opera director. Mr. Graham recalls that Gloriana thrilled the folks in the nosebleed seats. Despite some heralded revivals since, including an English National Opera production that played at the Metropolitan Opera in 1984, a production directed by Mr. Graham, Gloriana has never shaken its reputation as a miscalculated work requiring enormous performing forces. Consequently there was great anticipation when the Opera Theater of St. Louis announced a production for this summer directed by Mr. Graham, this enterprising company's artistic director. "Gloriana" opened here . . . and proved fully the success the company was hoping for. This seems to be the summer of Gloriana in America; the Des Moines Metro Opera will present it in July. If nothing else, the Opera Theater's colorful and lavish production -- with 19 solo roles, a chorus of 38, a boys choir of 15, 6 onstage trumpeters, 8 dancers and some 200 costumes (by David C. Woolard) to capture the late-16th century era -- should banish the idea that Gloriana is a problematic work. . . . Britten . . . understood that a ceremonial piece should be musically accessible, which it is. It's also uncannily sophisticated. This production, conducted with urgency and sensitivity by the Britten champion Steuart Bedford, conveys the work's ambiguity and musical richness. Even in the opening fanfares, which last just minutes, Britten gives you music to grapple with. Brassy flourishes alternate with restlessly quizzical, harmonically tart passages in the strings and winds. When the queen's steadfast counselor Sir Robert Cecil cautions her that ruling involves the art of prevarication, his statements are accompanied by intertwining melodic lines for reedy winds that seem at once meandering yet wily -- prevarication made musical. But the glory of "Gloriana" comes from Britten's skill at evoking Elizabethan music -- dances, masques, lute songs and airs, all processed through his modernist sensibility to create wrong-note chords, irregular phrase lengths, slippery tonalities. Despite the stirring public scenes, whole stretches of Gloriana, especially the private moments with the queen, have the intimacy of chamber opera" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 6/20/05].

June 18

Kent Nagano conducts the premiere of "Regarding Executive Order 9066," a composition for orchestra, mezzo-soprano and narrator by Garry Eister. Los Angeles, CA. "The premiere will be part of a benefit concert for the San Luis Obispo Youth Symphony, the orchestra in which his participation persuaded a teenage Nagano, who grew up in Morro Bay, to exchange his surfboard for a baton" [Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times, 6/12/08].

New Paths in Music Festival. St. Peter's Episcopal Church, New York, NY. "Raminta Serksnyte's Concerto for Six . . . is based partly on Lithuanian folk themes, but is also influenced by jazz, evident in its lithe alto saxophone and trumpet lines, and by raga, which contributed repeating and expanding rhythmic cycles. . . . Mystery . . . is . . . a driving force in [Algirdas] Martinaitis's Music of the Last Gardens, in which constant shifts in timbres and balances create a kaleidoscopic texture. Its most striking features are a flighty oboe line, played over a tympani figure, and a carillon theme that restores a measure of sobriety at the end of the work, just after an exuberant semi-improvisatory section. The third Lithuanian work, Osvaldas Balakauskas's Concerto for Oboe, Harpsichord, and Strings, is a neoclassical score with hints of minimalism in its finale. . . . [Carlos] Marecos's Start Your Motors, and Row [is] a score with a propulsive opening movement and a meditative finale. But there was also much to admire in Nuno Corte-Real's Concerto Vedras, a vital and often lyrical work in three movements, and in Luis Tinoco's Antipode, an orchestral score in which powerfully rhythmic sections and quieter, sustained writing provide the opposition suggested in the title [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/20/08].

June 20

Institute and Festival for Contemporary Performance: Elliott Carter. Mannes College of Music, New York, NY. "These days, and certainly since his 95th birthday, in 2003, Mr. Carter's music has been everywhere, and not only in new-music concerts. It may be that this ubiquity has upped the ante for new-music groups. If the Met Orchestra can include his rugged Variations for Orchestra in a Carnegie Hall concert, after all, the least a new-music festival can do is devote a full program to his work. That was what the Mannes College of Music did . . . . Carter's . . . Piano Sonata (1945-46), though etched in bold rhythmic and harmonic gestures, retains firm ties to the past. There are stretches of Lisztian monumentalism (those big, punctuating chords), brief hints of Chopinesque gracefulness and even a hefty segment of supremely rational Bachian counterpoint. By the time of the Duo (1973-74), for violin and piano, such links have been decisively hacked away, leaving an acid-tinged harmonic language and textures that avoid opulence. But in the Triple Duo (1982-83) Mr. Carter reconfigured his style again, this time allowing for a current of humor within the tart, high-energy scoring. . . . Virtuosity was . . . a crucial force in Triple Duo" [Allan Kozinn, 6/22/05].

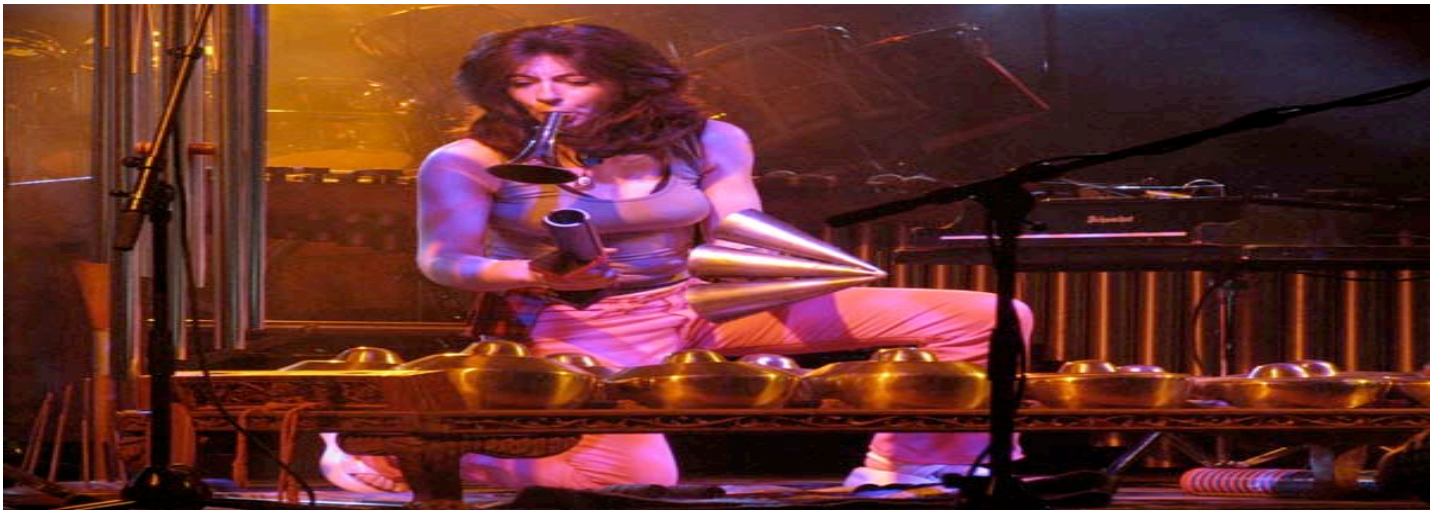
June 22

Lorin Maazel conducts New York Philharmonic in Gustav Mahler's Symphony No. 6. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "[D]eeply impressive and continuously exciting[, t]his symphony has been dubbed by some the "Tragic." But the tragedy is defiant, not pitiable, and that is the quality Mr. Maazel conveyed in this incisive, radiantly colorful and never maudlin performance. The work essentially hews to the four-movement classical structure. Yet the music has a narrative subtext, though Mahler was always ambivalent about ascribing stories to his symphonies. . . . In the opening movement, a crazily insistent march, Mr. Maazel focused on making everything lucid, energetic, full of character and accurate. His tempo had drive, but it was held in check just enough to allow the musical intricacies to come through. By coaxing the players into crisp articulation of the accents that proliferate in the thematic lines and rhythms, Mr. Maazel brought to this march a jumpy, jerky surface quality that kept you off guard. . . . The middle movements of the symphony are a Scherzo and an Andante, originally conceived (and published) by Mahler in that order. But he had second thoughts and reversed the order in a later published edition. Still, he dithered and never settled the question. Most conductors perform the Scherzo first. Mr. Maazel started with the Andante and made it seem the only choice. After the relentlessness of the first movement, the pensive, soulful Andante was a welcome balm. This in turn gave more freshness to the Scherzo -- a bitter parody of the first movement's march. The epic finale had breadth and urgency. . . . [T]he bucolic music comes back, this time, as performed here, in some unhinged, dissipating state. Imagine a Star Wars character being slowly vaporized. Mr. Maazel can be a cool interpreter. But that coolness, combined with his musical exactitude, prevents his Mahler from seeming melodramatic . . . . Clearly, he should keep the Mahler coming" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 6/24/05].

June 26

Free for All: Evelyn Glennie: Minimal Recital. Town Hall, New York, NY.

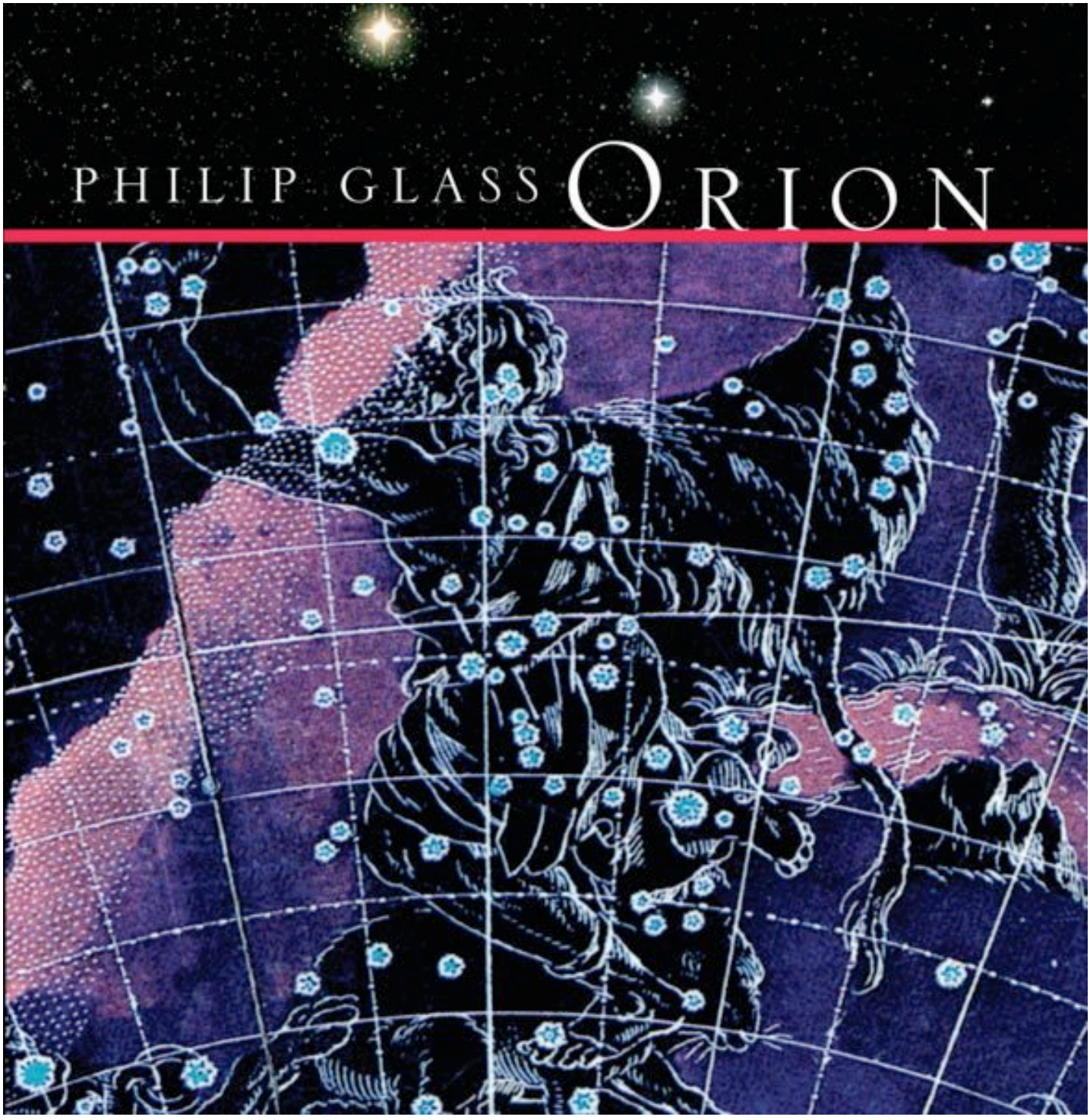
"It wasn't that the program was short or unsubstantial; what Ms. Glennie meant was that instead of working her way through a stage packed edge to edge with every imaginable percussion instrument, as she usually does, she concentrated mainly on one, the marimba. Even so, she used other instruments in two of the seven works on the program. In an extended improvisation based on Keiko Abe's Michi, for example, she struck, bowed, shook and blew into a dozen or more oddly shaped drums and metal objects before returning to the marimba for a beautifully textured, graceful expansion on Ms. Abe's score. The program also included Prim, a solo snare drum work by Askell Masson, an Icelandic composer. A snare solo might seem an unpromising prospect, but Mr. Masson, who has also written a snare concerto, provided an engrossing exploration of rhythmic patterns, dynamic expanses and even the subtle melodic possibilities that the instrument offers. And Ms. Glennie, as always an energetic and intensely focused performer, made the work's rolls, rhythmic patterns and hard thwacks into something both musical and dramatic. That, of course, is what she's famous for, and listeners who think of percussion as an instrumental class not quite as musical as strings, winds or keyboards learn quickly to think again. This time, only the Masson and Abe works hammered that message home, since the rest of the program was the marimba, one of the most conventionally musical instruments in the percussion arsenal. Ms. Glennie used a five-octave model, which gave her rounded, almost liquid-sounding bass tones and tightly wound treble timbres, and a graduated range of sounds between those extremes. And she chose works that used that full palette as well as a broad range of dynamics and timbres. She offered Fluctus, Nebojsa Zivkovic's brisk, bright study in polyrhythms, as a curtain-raiser, and showed a gentler, more jazz-tinged side of the instrument in Mathias Schmitt's urbane Six Miniatures. In another of Ms. Abe's works, Memories of the Seashore, Ms. Glennie produced a gracefully undulating, dreamy sound. And she drew on the instrument's more extroverted character -- to say nothing of her own virtuosity with hands full of mallets -- in Toshimitsu Tanaka's Two Movements and Leigh Howard Stevens's Rhythmic Caprice [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 6/28/05].



June 27

Mark Swed reviews Philip Glass's Orion. Los Angeles, CA. "Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of this project is just how much the guest musicians seem to be extensions of their instruments and yet at ease in Glass' sphere. Mark Atkins played the didgeridoo. He's appropriately large, sports a walrus mustache, and blowing into his long tube he added a new but appropriate bass burble to all the other bass burbles of Glass' sound world. Foday Musa Suso, dressed in billowing black-and-white checks and playing the kora (a 21-stringed lute) and nyanyar (an African fiddle), brought a quiet majesty, and Glass almost disappeared.

The affable Brazilian percussion trio, Uakti, were, on the other hand, seemingly happy to give percussive understatement to Glass' music. What did give powerful hope were the small moments. To hear the ensemble's soprano, Lisa Bielawa, sing in counterpoint to [Wu Man]'s pipa or [Ashley MacIsaac]'s fiddle, to hear Jon Gibson's emotional clarinet accompaniment to Arvanitaki's song, was to discover flashes of deep communication. It was also a nice touch for Glass to include interludes in which didgeridoo met pipa, Cape Breton violin jammed with nyanyer, Brazilian percussion interacted with sitar" [Mark Swed, Los Angeles Times, 6/27/05]



Recordings

Thomas Ades. Piano Quintet (2001). Arditti Quartet, with the composer at the piano. EMI Classics. "Thomas Adès . . . is an excellent conductor in a wide range of repertory. Esa-Pekka Salonen recently told me that during a meeting last year with his fellow conductor Simon Rattle, Sir Simon observed, 'You know, Esa-Pekka, it's a good thing for us that Tom decided to become a composer.' . . . You can't help hearing resonances of Classicism in the new work. . . . Mr. Adès's one-movement, 20-minute quintet is structured in a surprisingly strict sonata form. All the main themes are essentially tonal and hauntingly evocative of the Classical tradition. But once stated, the themes are subjected to harmonically radical manipulations. The work begins with a repetitive riff for solo violin, like some fractured remnant of a Schubert chamber piece. As the other strings pick it up in staggered sequence, the focus is fascinatingly thrown off. The piano enters as if from another piece, playing a sweetly tonal theme that gets stuck in its own repetitive riff. If you get a sense of different things happening simultaneously in different time signatures and different keys, this is sometimes exactly the case. The development section builds with typically Adèsian wildness until the mood suddenly shifts, and the music turns delicate, with soothing choralelike themes in the piano and softly questioning strings. When restated in the frenetic recapitulation, the main themes are almost unrecognizably transformed. The performance is mesmerizing" [Anthony Tomassini, The New York Times, 6/12/05].

Poul Ruders. Piano Sonata No. 2. Thomas Ades. Bridge. "Adès's stunning performance of the formidable Piano Sonata No. 2 [was] recorded live at the Aldeburgh Festival in England in 2001" [Anthony Tomassini, The New York Times, 6/12/05].

Carl Ruggles. The Uncovered Ruggles. New World Records. "Born in 1876 to a whaling family on Cape Cod, Ruggles pursued music, in the words of Virgil Thomson, 'without qualms about failure, poverty, disapproval, or what-will-people-say.' If Ruggles is underappreciated today, it's partly his own fault. Completing compositions went against his grain. He left most scores in sketchy disarray, published only eight works and spent his last decades more involved with painting than with music (He died at 95). For all his stubbornness, Ruggles often caved in and turned to pragmatic musicians to help him put his fragmentary scores into some sort of performable shape. One he frequently sought for such aid was the pianist and editor John Kirkpatrick, who was also a devoted colleague of Ives. An engrossing new recording . . . -- featuring the excellent pianist Donald Berman -- should contribute significantly to the understanding of this composer. Mr. Berman, a musician with a scholarly bent who studied with Kirkpatrick, won critical acclaim for two earlier recordings, both called The Unknown Ives (from Composers Recordings and New World). They presented premiere recordings of unpublished works and new critical editions of Ives. The Ruggles release also offers several first recordings of unpublished sketches, mostly transcribed or realized by Kirkpatrick, who likened the process of assembling scores from Ruggles's fragments and sketches to 'stringing pearls.' Mr. Berman gives searching and authoritative accounts of 10 solo works. He also accompanies the soprano Susan Narucki in four restless songs and the violinist Daniel Stepner in a volatile piece titled Mood. Ruggles's musical upbringing was unconventional: he learned as much from playing violin in theater orchestras during his teens as from studying composition at Harvard. He emerged with a wildly distinctive voice: aggressively modern, highly chromatic, densely polyphonic, indebted to the early atonal aesthetic of Schoenberg. As the noted English critic Wilfrid Mellers once wrote, Ruggles, in his craggy music, sought freedom from 'tonal bondage ... from conventionalized repetitions, from anything that sullied the immediacy and purity of existence -- even more remorselessly than Schoenberg.' The piano works offered here, especially the astounding Evocations: Four Chants for Piano, mostly evolve in long spans of organic, heaving, intertwining contrapuntal lines. The pervasively somber mood is sometimes relieved by a touch of wistfulness or delicacy. Avoiding overt drama, the music grabs you with its inexorable sweep and mystical fervor. But don't expect to hear a steady rhythmic tread in March or an oom-pah-pah in Valse Lente. The songs are utterly strange yet strangely haunting. It's good that Mr. Berman included Exaltation, a melancholic but sweetly tonal hymn. Ruggles composed it in 1958 in tribute to his beloved wife, Charlotte, who had died the year before. Charlotte had long asked Ruggles to compose a hymn for her. Did this rugged New Englander have a secret soft spot?" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 6/19/05].

Writers

MARK ALBURGER is an eclectic American composer of postminimal, postpopular, and postcomedic sensibilities. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, an award-winning ASCAP composer of concert music published by New Music, conductor, oboist, pianist, vocalist, recording artist, musicologist, theorist, author, and music critic. He has recently embarked on a project to record his complete works (130 opus numbers) over the next 11 years.

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

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

PATTI DEUTER is Assistant Editor of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC and a Bay Area pianist.

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

MICHAEL MCDONAGH is a San Francisco-based poet and writer on the arts who has done two poem/picture books with artist Gary Bukovnik, *Before I Forget* (1991) and *Once* (1997), the former being in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Berkeley Art Museum, and the New York Public Library. He has also published poems in journals including Mirage, and written two theatre pieces -- *Touch and Go*, for three performers, which was staged at Venue 9 in 1998; and *Sight Unseen*, for solo performer. His critical pieces have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Review of Books, 3 Penny Review, California Printmaker, Antiques and Fine Art, The Advocate, High Performance, and In Tune. He writes for The Bay Area Reporter and heads the Bay Area chapter of The Duke Ellington Society. He co-hosted nine radio shows on KUSF with Tony Gualtieri with whom he now shares a classical-music review website -- www.msu.edu/user/gualtie3 -- which has also been translated into Russian and appears in Intellectual Forum.

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 Korenchendler, 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.

HARRIET MARCH PAGE is Artistic Director of Goat Hall Productions: San Francisco's Cabaret Opera Company, as well as soprano, librettist, monologist, and Associate Editor of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

MARK PETERSEN is a composer, pianist, singer, music director, and Seattle Correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. He has degrees in music from Weber State College (B.A.) and North Texas State University (M.M.). Five of his works are published by New Music Publications (San Rafael, CA).

ERLING WOLD (b. January 30, 1958) is a San Francisco based composer of opera and contemporary classical music. He is best known for his later chamber operas, especially *A Little Girl Dreams of Taking the Veil* and his early experiments as a microtonalist. Although he rejected religion in his teens, he returned many times to religious themes in his works, including many of his operatic works, and his Mass named for Notker the Stammerer commissioned by the Cathedral of St Gall. His earliest music was atonal and arrhythmic, but the influences of just intonation and the music of the minimalists led to the bulk of his music being composed in a variety of tonal genres. He was attracted by the theater and much of his music is either directly dramatic or is based on dramatic rather than purely musical structures. Wold is an eclectic composer who has also been called "the Eric Satie of Berkeley surrealist/minimalist electro-art rock" by the Village Voice. He composed the soundtracks for a number of films by the independent film director Jon Jost.