

# 21ST CENTURY MUSIC

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# A to Z:

## Interviews with John Luther Adams

MARK ALBURGER

John Luther Adams studied composition with James Tenney and Leonard Stein at the California Institute of the Arts, where his other teachers included Harold Budd, Mel Powell, and Morton Subotnick. Since that time, he has made his home in the boreal forest near Fairbanks, Alaska, creating a unique musical world grounded in the elemental landscapes and indigenous cultures of the North.

JLA, as he is often known, sat next to me at a Paul Dresher Ensemble concert on November 20 this past millennium. It seemed auspicious for us to meet for an interview the next day at his San Francisco hotel.

ALBURGER: How are you holding up?

ADAMS: I'm O.K. I wouldn't mind walking down the street and getting a little café.

ALBURGER: That sounds good, why don't we do that. Nice hotel -- anything like this in Fairbanks?

ADAMS: Ah, no, not quite...

ALBURGER: Are you still in Fairbanks? I notice you're now on the staff at Oberlin, too?

ADAMS: Yes, I'm there fall semesters.

ALBURGER: So you escape the solstice.

ADAMS: No, I actually make it back for the solstice. I wouldn't miss the solstice. We'll be back home December 12. Oberlin gives us a nice semester break, so we're not away from home for more than six weeks at a time.

ALBURGER: How long have you been doing the Oberlin teaching?

ADAMS: Just since last year.

ALBURGER: So this will be the second year.

ADAMS: I love it. The students are wonderful; the school is great. With all the travel, it's a bit much to fit into my life, so I don't know how long the arrangement with Oberlin will continue. But I love teaching.

ALBURGER: You've been teaching for a while.

ADAMS: Yes, I've taught on-again/off-again at the University of Alaska over the years (over the last two decades). They don't have a composition program there.

ALBURGER: Do you teach Theory? History?

ADAMS: I've taught 20th-Century Music History, Orchestration, Percussion. I even taught Music Appreciation a couple of times -- whatever they needed. But that was a very adjunct kind of arrangement. I did a semester at Bennington College a few years back and really liked that.

ALBURGER: That was when?

ADAMS: That was in '96.

ALBURGER: So you are one of these people upon whom Alaska has made the impact.

ADAMS: It's home. Yes, it's home, because I didn't really have home growing up. My dad was climbing the corporate ladder, and we moved every few years. So I grew up in sort of equally homogeneous suburban surroundings here, there, and everywhere -- interchangeable.

ALBURGER: Where was the birthplace?

ADAMS: I was actually born in Meridian, Mississippi. I lived there two months, but grew up over the South and the Eastern Seaboard, and I guess my most formative years (late grade school and junior high and high school) were in suburban New York City -- in northern New Jersey.

ALBURGER: What town?

ADAMS: Millburn, Short Hills. You're not a New Jersey boy are you?

ALBURGER: No, I'm originally from Pennsylvania. I can always use the line, "Oh, New Jersey, what exit?"

ADAMS: Yeah, truly.

ALBURGER: So if there were roots anywhere, they were in New Jersey, but...

ADAMS: I guess, but... how... you know... I don't... yeah... I'm not...

ALBURGER: We don't want to disparage New Jersey here now, do we?

ADAMS: Well, I'm definitely not Bruce Springsteen!

ALBURGER: Also, ah, Mill... what?

ADAMS: Mill...BURN. Or Short Hills -- you've heard of Short Hills.

ALBURGER: Short Hills. Well at least Asbury Park's got a coast.

ADAMS: Rrright. Rrright.

ALBURGER: There's a certain --

ADAMS: And it's kind of a real...

ALBURGER: -- charm there.

ADAMS: That working-class cachet. Our suburb was very snooty. We were still on the wrong side of the tracks at that point, but my parents were kind of upwardly aspiring.

ALBURGER: Your dad was climbing which corporate ladder?

ADAMS: Ah, the phone company, when it was THE PHONE COMPANY.

ALBURGER: My dad had similar roots in THE PHONE COMPANY, so I know of what you speak. Now, how old are you?

ADAMS: I am... How old am I? It's a good question. I seem to get this wrong, so I'm that old.

ALBURGER: Old enough to get your age wrong.

ADAMS: I think I'm 47.

ALBURGER: O.K. So we're just about the same generational --

ADAMS: 46... I'll be 47 in January...

ALBURGER: experience there...

ADAMS: So my Dad reached the top rung of his personal corporate ladder the year I left home, and of course he never moved again. But it was too late for me.

ALBURGER: So Short Hills / Millburn was where he stayed.

ADAMS: No, actually, he wound up in Atlanta.

ALBURGER: And by that time you were gone?

ADAMS: Yes.

ALBURGER: I know you went to California Institute of the Arts.

ADAMS: Yes, that was undergraduate work. That was very, very important to me. I was there in what I'm told was the golden era.

ALBURGER: Your teachers there were top-notch.

ADAMS: They were unbelievable.

ALBURGER: You had James Tenney --

ADAMS: James Tenney, Leonard Stein, Bill Powell, Morton Subotnick... [to a worker in the coffee shop] I would like a just a regular cappuccino.

WORKER: A regular cappuccino? You know, you can order right on the other side.

ALBURGER: Oh, we do. What do you do?

WORKER: I fix the drinks.

ALBURGER: O.K.

WORKER: What size?

ADAMS: Ah, a middle-sized, please.

WORKER: Two shots?

ADAMS: Yeah, on the dry side.

ALBURGER: Make that two.

ADAMS: Two cappuccini.

ALBURGER: So you went to Cal Arts directly from Short Hills.

ADAMS: Ah, I think we were back in Georgia at that point.

ALBURGER: Oh, so you finished up high school in Georgia.

ADAMS: I never finished high school!

ALBURGER: [laughs] You never finished high school!

ADAMS: [smiles] Yes, but we don't want to go into that.

ALBURGER: It's classified.

ADAMS: I was a bad boy.

ALBURGER: You were a bad boy.

ADAMS: Well, yeah. It was the 60's.

ALBURGER: Was it a bad boy "of music" -- was this an Antheil thing --

ADAMS: Sort of.

ALBURGER: -- or just "of life"?

ADAMS: It was sort of a bad boy of "whatever pretentious intellectual aspirations I had in my adolescent phase." It was the time, too. It was the zeitgeist, you know.

ALBURGER: The year would have been?

ADAMS: Ah, yeah.... hmm... '70... '69... My high school class would have been '69.

ALBURGER: But Cal Arts said, "No diploma? No problem!"

ADAMS: [smiles] Well, I got booted out of several of the best boarding schools on the East Coast, and the last one sort of said, "Well, look, you wanna go to Harvard, we'll get you into Harvard. You wanna go to Columbia -- wherever, just get out of here!" So I wound up at Cal Arts.

ALBURGER: Which boarding school was that?

ADAMS: Actually, it was in Atlanta -- a school called Westminster Academy. So I was there with the Coca-Cola kids and the Secretary of the Army's son, and all of that stuff: the ugly face of privilege.

ALBURGER: But Cal Arts was a definite good experience.

ADAMS: It saved my creative life. I hated Los Angeles. I have to say I still do. I was just down there for a wonderful performance, but... Nice place to visit...

ALBURGER: Was the recent performance with the [California] E.A.R. Unit?

ADAMS: No, actually. It was the Long Beach Symphony. They opened their season with a piece called *The Time of Drumming*.

ALBURGER: I've heard a piece of yours on a Canadian anthology -- what is it? MusicWorks?

ADAMS: Yes!

ALBURGER: It's a collaborative work with Native Americans...

ADAMS: Right. That's an excerpt from *Earth and the Great Weather*. I brought you discs.

ALBURGER: Great. Fantastic. And also, of course, the work last night, and neither of those pieces -- [a worker appears] We've ordered! We're waiting for the goods.

WORKER: Did they take your money?

ALBURGER: They took my money. So we're waiting... [smiles] we DEMAND our goods.

ADAMS: Yes, we do. We stand on our rights.

ALBURGER: -- neither *Earth and the Great Weather* nor the piece last night struck me as something the Long Beach Symphony --

ADAMS: Not exactly extroverted stuff!

ALBURGER: -- take up. But you do have that side, too? The "curtain-raiser / hail-fellow-well-met."

ADAMS: Well, you know...

WORKER: Your drinks are over here.

ALBURGER: They're over here. We've been on the wrong side of the counter every time.

ADAMS: We could sit outside.

ALBURGER: We could do that. That's no doubt a novelty at this time of year.

ADAMS: Yes, that doesn't happen often.

ALBURGER: How's this table?

ADAMS: What about the ashtray?

ALBURGER: I'll move it. Now that table over there is blessed with two.

ADAMS: Yes! This Long Beach piece may prove to be my only concert opener!

ALBURGER: You've written one more than I!

ADAMS: Writing a concert opener doesn't necessarily come naturally, but it was a happy accident. The piece is called *Sauyatugvik*. The English title is *The Time of Drumming*. You have perhaps only heard the spacious, introverted side of my work. There is another side, which is actually very explosive. I like extremes. I'm not much on the middle.

ALBURGER: The opening of the piece on MusicWorks, while ritual, is also rather demonstrative. There are pounding drumbeats.

ADAMS: Right.

ALBURGER: So I can imagine where you could go.

ADAMS: Yes. In *Earth and the Great Weather*, the piece from which those excerpts are drawn, which I will now give to you --

ALBURGER: Oh, thank you. Everything the Journal receives is reviewed. Sometimes it takes some time.

ADAMS: Great.

ALBURGER: Actually, perhaps it won't take much time for this CD to be reviewed, because we're just about at the top of the docket, and we go in alphabetical order sometimes -- so lucky you!

ADAMS: Excellent! Good deal! Occasionally that works in my favor.

ALBURGER: As "Alburger" I understand as well.

ADAMS: Well, yeah, but having a very famous composer with my name is sometimes problematic -- especially in this town!

ALBURGER: Can we put in a parenthesis right now? Let's talk about that briefly?

ADAMS: Yeah! Sure! I've known John since 1976. We'll have to get back to *The Time of Drumming*.

ALBURGER: Sure. But this could have been a trial, I imagine.

ADAMS: Well, I think it was. I don't remember when *Nixon in China* happened, but, by that point, I already had a couple of recordings out.

ALBURGER: And you were "John Adams" at that point?

ADAMS: I was simply "John Adams." I was not "John Luther," although that's what I was when my mother was mad at me!

ALBURGER: Yes, many of us had three names in those situations!

ADAMS: I've known John since 1976 when he was at the San Francisco Conservatory. We met after a concert of his at the house on Cole Street where he and Ingram Marshall (who was a friend of mine from Cal Arts) were living. *Nixon in China* happened, I already had a little bit of a reputation as "John Adams." In fact, there was a Stereo Review article in 1981. Eric Salzman did this piece, "Two John Adamses," with a picture of him and a picture of me, and we had just put out LP's at the same time. So I was really in a quandary. My wife loves to tell the story (which I won't!) about the camping trip on which we hashed through this over several days.

ALBURGER: Up in Alaska?

ADAMS: Yes. And I always thought that most people who used three names were terribly pretentious...

ALBURGER: No comment!

ADAMS: [smiles] ...but the only thing that struck me as more pretentious were people who changed their names to sort of stage names. So I felt stuck. And after I finally got over the hump -- I'd always hated my middle name, as most of us probably do --

ALBURGER: I think it's actually a cool middle name.

ADAMS: -- I started using it, and it made my mom and dad very happy, God rest their souls (they're both gone now), and now my friends even call me "John Luther" affectionately (not in anger!). It all worked out.

ALBURGER: Do you usually answer to "John" or "John Luther"?

ADAMS: "John." "John," but anything works. My students all call me "JLA." It's just down to initials now.

ALBURGER: Yes, I noticed that in the program notes.

ADAMS: People call me that.

ALBURGER: You're a company now.

ADAMS: Right.

ALBURGER: An acronym.

ADAMS: A label. The really nice thing that came out of it was that it helped me develop a little bit of a sense of humor about myself, about the whole career thing, which, having chosen to live in Alaska, I better have. Because, you know, that's not the easiest place from which to become rich and famous.

ALBURGER: Is it happening?

ADAMS: The rich definitely is not happening!

ALBURGER: The fame is to an extent. Because, quite honestly, I wouldn't be interviewing you if it weren't happening! We have heard of you!

ADAMS: [smiles] Look, I feel very, very lucky -- blessed, even -- to have the work that I feel I have to do, which I believe has developed slowly in its own time. Living in Alaska has had a lot to do with that. Not being in New York, not even being in San Francisco has allowed me --

ALBURGER: Your career has flowered having nothing to do with living in New York.

ADAMS: Yeah, it's true.

ALBURGER: There's hope for many of us then!

ADAMS: Yes, I think things have really changed, and are continuing to change. For the record, I love New York. It's my favorite city. San Francisco is right behind it.

ALBURGER: No. 2.

ADAMS: But I could never live in New York.

ALBURGER: Nor I.

ADAMS: I might be able to live here -- this is a pretty civilized place.

ALBURGER: It's too cold for me! Can you believe that?

ADAMS: Yes, I can!



ALBURGER: Marin County has this nice microclimate.

ADAMS: Oh, I know. I know. I love that microclimate and microtopography thing here in Northern California.

ALBURGER: You certainly have macrotopography up in Alaska.

ADAMS: We do, indeed, which is why I went there in the first place.

ALBURGER: And why did you? Was it indeed a case of the geography just taking you so much that you had to go? Or was it a job?

ADAMS: No, it was definitely the place itself. It was the geography. I think, at the time, it wasn't a fully conscious decision. But it was this deep, unspoken, inarticulate hunger that I had to find... home. To find hope -- not only in a geographical sense, but a spiritual sense.

ALBURGER: Many of us have to go through this.

ADAMS: I think its part of what we're going through (many of us individually, and, maybe, in some sense, collectively, too): what the deep ecologists would call, "reinhabitation" -- Trying to figure out who we are and where we live and how we inhabit place in the macro and the micro sense.

ALBURGER: So how did you get there from Cal Arts?

ADAMS: Oh, I left Cal Arts like I was shot out of a cannon! I just couldn't wait to get out of there.

ALBURGER: You didn't live in L.A., right?

ADAMS: Well, up in the Valencia area, which was sort of the edge of the desert then, but it's something else now.

ALBURGER: Oh, indeed it is.

ADAMS: But that was actually a time when the last California condors were still in the wild, and we were near the Los Padres [National] Forest, and I became fixated on the condor. So I think L.A. really did me a tremendous service and accelerated my growth -- albeit reactionary growth -- and sort of formulated a sense that I was a suburban and urban refugee and that I really did have to find home.

ALBURGER: Being in Valencia you were on the edge. On the one hand you had this vast wasteland of a certain kind of urban, and on the other hand you were near the condors --

ADAMS: Yes.

ALBURGER: -- and the national forests --

ADAMS: -- and the deserts.

ALBURGER: -- and respectable mountains and deserts and so on.

ADAMS: One trip to Death Valley during my student days was very, very important. So I think all of that... Well, I joke and say that Southern California made an environmentalist out of me. In fact, I was a professional environmentalist for a decade (a decade in which the term "professional environmentalist" was definitely an oxymoron), from the early 70's to the early 80's. I worked at the Wilderness Society in the Rocky Mountain West and then I went to work for the Alaska Coalition -- a coalition of environmental and labor groups who were fighting for the passage of the Alaska Lands Act, to establish the new parks and refuges and wilderness areas in Alaska.

ALBURGER: So you were part of that push.

ADAMS: I was indeed.

ALBURGER: Thank you.

ADAMS: I lobbied in Washington, D.C.

ALBURGER: That's fantastic.

ADAMS: It feels, in many ways, like, although my role was very small, one of the most tangible accomplishments of my life to date!

ALBURGER: Well, there is the music!

ADAMS: Well, yeah. But there's something so satisfying about knowing that some of these places, that I regard as sacred places, are safe. Then I went on to be, for several years, executive director of the Northern Alaska Environmental Center, and my wife, Cynthia, and I worked together in those days -- this was late 70's into the early 80's. I was leading multiple lives, at that time, living in a cabin in the woods with no running water, a mile from the road, still kind of commuting into Fairbanks every day to do the environmentalist thing, travelling all over the state and back to Washington, testifying and doing all sorts of things.

ALBURGER: Wow. There's a certain globe trotting aspect of your life.

ADAMS: Yes.

ALBURGER: Living in Alaska and yet continuing the wanderlust.

ADAMS: Which is not at all in my nature, really. I just want to stay home and do my work. Maybe it's some sort of 60's guilt, or something, but I feel a certain sense of service to those things in which I believe. Anyway, a long about '82, or so, my health really broke down. I got pneumonia and was just sickly for several years. I decided that someone else could take over the crusade, and no one else could do the music that I felt I needed to do. But it still took another seven or eight years before I got to more or less full time music. In that period I was in public radio. I was music director, and then program manager for KUAC, which is the public radio station at the University of Alaska. And then finally, for the last ten years, I've been somehow piecing it together here and there as a composer.

ALBURGER: So the initial move up would have been for the love of Alaska and also then your first job up there would have been as an environmentalist. And that year would have been sometime in the late 70's?

ADAMS: Well, I first went in '75, and then kept coming back and forth, and eventually moved to stay in '78.

ALBURGER: So '75 was just a visit.

ADAMS: Right. '75, '76, and '77 -- summers.

ALBURGER: Did you fly or drive the highway?

ADAMS: I've only driven the highway once!

ALBURGER: That's how many times I've driven it.

ADAMS: That's enough! And only one way!

ALBURGER: That's what I've done, too! Ever taken the ferry?

ADAMS: No, I've only taken the ferry locally in Southeast Alaska, but I've never gone all the way to and from Seattle.

ALBURGER: That's interesting. I was just a year later in visiting Alaska.

ADAMS: Is that right?

ALBURGER: In '76. The pipeline...

ADAMS: Oh, it was madness, absolutely -- especially in Fairbanks.

ALBURGER: Sure.

ADAMS: It was just crazy. Whew!

ALBURGER: I was in and out of Fairbanks.

ADAMS: So, as you know, Fairbanks is not the garden spot of North America!

ALBURGER: Well, no, not in some ways, it's true. But I found it an intriguing place.

ADAMS: It's a very extreme place.

ALBURGER: It is. It is. And that's not just the weather.

ADAMS: No, it's not just the weather. It's the economics, the socioeconomics, the demographics, the politics -- everything about it. It's not for the faint-hearted!

ALBURGER: And the residence a mile away from the paved road -- that was taken in the late '70's.

ADAMS: Yes, and finally in '89 Cindy convinced me to move out of the bog and up onto the hills. We're still out of town. We have a lovely spot up on the hills, facing south, looking at the Alaska Range.

ALBURGER: Which can be seen on a good day.

ADAMS: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Definitely

ALBURGER: They're quite far away.

ADAMS: They're 90 miles away, but they look as though you can touch them. They're just... They're my touchstone. You know, I come out in the morning and walk to the studio and look at those mountains and... It puts me in my place. Anything that I can do, or any of us human beings could do, I continually measure against those mountains.

ALBURGER: The mountains can give us that perspective. Alan Hovhaness has a similar relationship with Mt. Rainier out his window, and guess in my own modest way, I have that with Mt. Tamalpais.

ADAMS: Tamalpais is a very elegant and very powerful mountain.

ALBURGER: In its own way. So there you are, finally landing some teaching gigs at the University of Alaska, and then, of course, we're finally getting back to some of the pieces that you're writing, so we're looping back -- how's that?

ADAMS: Right! During that radio period, I was teaching part-time for the University, and also playing as timpanist in the Fairbanks Symphony and the Arctic Chamber Orchestra. I've been very, very lucky. I actually led trips in the Arctic for several years for environmental groups. I've been all over.

ALBURGER: You've been all over Alaska -- all the way up to Barrow.

ADAMS: Oh, all around the coast, yes. And the Brooks Range is really my place.

ALBURGER: I've only flown over it.

ADAMS: It's God's country. So we had the loose end with *The Time of Drumming*, which in a very odd way grew out of *Earth and the Great Weather*. *Earth and the Great Weather* is a full-length performance work. I hesitate to call it an opera. It's not yet an opera. There's talk of it being produced on a larger scale.

ALBURGER: More of an oratorio, so to speak?

ADAMS: Well, it has no singing! So I don't know what it is. All the text in five different languages (including two Alaska Native languages) is spoken or whispered or chanted.

ALBURGER: Chanted -- there you go.

ADAMS: There's talk of doing it in London and New York as an opera, for which I would add chorus and perhaps some vocal soloists as well. But, as it is now --

HOMELESS MAN: Please buy me a cup of coffee.

ADAMS: Um, let me see what I got here.

HOMELESS MAN: I'm trying to be cool about it. How's the coffee here?

ADAMS: Um, it's O.K. It's kind of burnt.

HOMELESS MAN: Ah, yeah.

ADAMS: It's... You know, it's Starbucks. That's their trademark.

HOMELESS MAN: Ha! Thank you, sir.

ADAMS: You betcha.

HOMELESS MAN: Ah.

ADAMS: Um, so --

HOMELESS MAN: Thank you.

ADAMS: You bet.

HOMELESS MAN: I'm going another place. This is so high.

ADAMS: I don't blame you. The coffee here is overpriced.

HOMELESS MAN: All right. All right.

ALBURGER: I may leave that in! That's great! I've never been shaken down during an interview!

ADAMS: I'm a real sucker. You gotta get me out of here before I give away my clothes!

ALBURGER: Good guy. You know, you were my charity case, so you get him.

ADAMS: Right! Exactly! What comes around, goes around. [wiping the table] Pardon my cappuccino fingers here.

ALBURGER: No problem. You want some more?

ADAMS: No, I'm good to go. Just trying to stay awake for a radio show [on KPFA with Carl Stone] this evening. So, anyhow, as you'll hear in *Earth and the Great Weather*, there is a lot of the very spacious, atmospheric, you might say "introspective" or "meditative" music. Strings...

ALBURGER: That side of your work was certainly gorgeous last night.

ADAMS: Oh, thanks. Thanks. That's a new medium for me. I still have some orchestrational issues to resolve with that piece, but I won't change a note. I just need to learn to use those instruments to their fullest capacity. It's a new experience for me.

ALBURGER: It sounded just fine to me!

ADAMS: I'm glad. I'm really glad. Thank you.

ALBURGER: And my ladyfriend was quite impressed as well.

ADAMS: Oh, good. Good.

ALBURGER: We were just transported.

ADAMS: Oh, excellent. Thank you. I was feeling a little bit insecure about it today, in that it was so different from everything else on the program.

ALBURGER: Oh no, I wouldn't worry about that at all. It made a nice contrast.

ADAMS: So, there's that side of my work, and then there's the percussive/explosive stuff. In *Earth and the Great Weather*, there are three big drum quartets.

ALBURGER: Hand drums and so on?

ADAMS: It started out as Eskimo drums. This piece began as a radio piece, which actually I produced here in San Francisco at a studio here, for a public radio series called *New American Radio*. It was a half-an-hour piece there. It grew to become a 90-minute whatever-it-is: opera in search of a home. But these drum pieces worked so well in *Earth and the Great Weather*, that I got the idea that I'd like to try some of the same rhythmic structures and try to transpose that energy into the world of tuned instruments and pitches. And I thought, for sure, that I would start by making a piece for two pianos four-hands, or some big crash-bang piano group. But opportunity intervened. I was composer-in-residence with the Anchorage Symphony, and they wanted a new piece to celebrate their 50th anniversary. So I leaped over the pianos and dived directly into the symphony orchestra -- triple winds, the whole bit.

ALBURGER: Had you had much experience with...?

ADAMS: Yes, I'd done a lot of orchestral music. But this was the only full symphony. A lot of my pieces are double winds, or even one-on-a-part chamber orchestras. I think the orchestra of the late 20th- / early 21st-century is the one-on-a-part orchestra.

ALBURGER: It does seem to be more that way.

ADAMS: And I love that medium. That's my favorite medium, and that's what I've been working in primarily the last couple of years -- three years. I've done three big pieces for that sized orchestra, from 17 to 40 players.

ALBURGER: This, on the other hand, is a symphony orchestra.

ADAMS: Yes, this is a symphony orchestra. It's only a ten-minute piece, but it makes a big noise. It's certainly not my most profound piece, but I make no apologies for it. It's a good piece.

ALBURGER: And it goes around. So this is the one that Long Beach played.

ADAMS: Last month. And we hope it gets some more currency.

ALBURGER: Sure. We've covered some of your geographical pilgrimage here, but what about that compositional pilgrimage? When did you start music, and how did it take over your life like this?

ADAMS: My dad was musical. He played trumpet, and sang in church choirs, and loved the blues and jazz and classical music. He was very ecumenical in his tastes. He listened to a lot of different kinds of music. So I got exposed to things early on, and I think, like many of my generation, a lot of my musical education was from recordings -- from LP's.

ALBURGER: Ah, yes, it is very true.

ADAMS: We were in many ways the first generation to have music available to us from around the world -- at our fingertips. I took trumpet in grade school, and tried different instruments, and I had piano lessons, but I never practiced. I'd rather play baseball, like Charles Ives, I guess!

ALBURGER: Did you play shortstop?

ADAMS: I played everything except pitcher and catcher. So, yes, I played shortstop, but not nearly as well as I guess Ives did. Wound up as an outfielder.

ALBURGER: No doubt left field.

ADAMS: [Smiles] I didn't really get passionately involved with music until early mid-60's: Beatles, rock 'n' roll. I played in a succession of rock bands.

ALBURGER: Percussionist?

ADAMS: I was the drummer.

ALBURGER: Right! Not percussionist, drummer!

ADAMS: Yes! And started writing songs. Had a couple of good bands. They got better.

ALBURGER: Any names?

ADAMS: No, none that you would recognize.

ALBURGER: No, no, no, I mean, just for a bit of amusement.

ADAMS: Oh well, I think the best name was Pocket Fuzz.

ALBURGER: Pocket Fuzz! See, inquiring minds want to know these things.

ADAMS: Yeah! Yeah! Pocket Fuzz. You know, we opened for the Beach Boys once --

ALBURGER: Whoa!

ADAMS: -- in New Jersey. Yeah, we were pretty good.

ALBURGER: It was major minor-time.

ADAMS: Yeah, exactly. But I pretty quickly grew bored with rock 'n' roll, and, to the extent I was aware of it as a life choice, I rapidly grew disinterested in it. And Frank Zappa, bless his soul, was one of my heroes as an adolescent.

ALBURGER: He was an inspiration to many as well.

ADAMS: My buddies and I would listen to *We're Only In It For the Money*, or *Absolutely Free*, or read the liner notes and read in the fine print: "The present-day composer refuses to die: Edgar Varèse."

ALBURGER: Right. Was that your Varèse connection?

ADAMS: Yes. We'd scratch our heads and say, "Gee, I wonder who this Varese guy is?"

ALBURGER: Varese guy! I had a music teacher who introduced me to Varèse, and he called him "Varaysay!" As a matter of fact, I went the other way -- I got interested in Frank Zappa, because I knew he liked Varèse!

ADAMS: Excellent!

ALBURGER: It goes both ways.

ADAMS: Versa-visa. So my good buddy from junior high, Richard Einhorn, a very fine composer --

ALBURGER: Richard Einhorn, sure!

ADAMS: We went to junior high school together.

ALBURGER: Now you do all these "Northern Light" pieces and he has *Voices of Light* --

ADAMS: Right! What's this "light" thing?

ALBURGER: -- his Joan of Arc work.

ADAMS: Well, we went to junior high school together. Richard always jokes. He was a drummer, too. He says he followed behind me and replaced me in the bands as I'd move on to other bands.

ALBURGER: So Richard was in Pocket Fuzz, too!

ADAMS: Yes! He says, "I'd join the band, and they'd promptly break up!"

ALBURGER: Did that say anything about his drumming?

ADAMS: No comment!

ALBURGER: Sorry, Richard!

ADAMS: He's such a great guy. We're very close friends; I love him. But Richard was the guy, I think, who was browsing in some New York record store and found the Varèse album.

ALBURGER: It was probably the old Columbia recording.

ADAMS: Yes.

ALBURGER: With *Poème Electronique* and...

ADAMS: Exactly. And the eyebrows! And the hair! And we said, "Oh, the mad scientist!" And we were off. And, of course, immediately that led to Cage, which led to Feldman, which led to God knows what else.

ALBURGER: Tipping point -- critical mass. Suddenly the doors open.

ADAMS: That was it. Two or three years later, there I was at Cal Arts studying with Jim Tenney and Harold Budd and Leonard Stein and Morton Subotnick and Mel Powell -- all these high-powered people around. It was just thrilling. And playing in the gamelan. And having John Bergamo with the percussion ensemble. It was wonderful.

ALBURGER: What was your first piece that you can look back on and say, "This was a piece"?

ADAMS: It's interesting. I actually think the first piece was one that is not in my catalogue, but to which one day I may go back and visit and add. I remember a piece that was probably inspired by Cowell's *Ostinato Pianissimo*. Cowell has been a major influence, ever since I read -- I told Kyle Gann "21," but I think I was 19 when I read -- *New Musical Resources*. And it blew my mind. It continues to blow my mind. But probably the first piece that I might claim is a piece that I did for John Bergamo and his students at Cal Arts called *Always Very Soft*. And it was for finger percussion --

ALBURGER: So you started with your introspective side.

ADAMS: Yes. And most of my pieces were miniatures: very spare. The difference between my introspection now and then is that now the introspection is very lush and sustained. And then it was more Zen-like.

ALBURGER: Do you think that Budd had any influence on that?

ADAMS: Oh, I think so. And Feldman. I heard the piece for four pianos when I was 16, and I thought I had died and gone to heaven. That took me to a place that Pink Floyd could never get me.

ALBURGER: But was the Pink Floyd side of rock an' roll an interest as well?

ADAMS: Oh, I think briefly that was an intense passion. Yes.

ALBURGER: Well, at this time of the year, where you make your home, now you're on the *Dark Side of the Earth*!

ADAMS: Exactly!

ALBURGER: So what's the earliest work in the catalogue?

ADAMS: The earliest work in the catalogue dates from a year later -- 1974. It's a collection, a cycle of pieces for piccolos and percussion and ocarinas, based on birdsongs: on the songs of native American birds, called, very originally *songbirdsongs* (e.e. cummings style).

ALBURGER: Was there any O. Messiaen in all of that?

ADAMS: I'm not revising history here. I had a vague awareness of Messiaen's bird pieces. I had never heard them and I assiduously avoided them for fear of influence.

ALBURGER: Sure. I wrote an opera on *Of Mice and Men*, and I avoided learning about Carlisle Floyd's version while I was doing the piece. Sometimes we have to protect ourselves.

ADAMS: I don't know. Maybe that's a young person's issue. But I didn't know the Messiaen pieces then.

ALBURGER: Interesting -- ocarinas even back then.

ADAMS: Well, that was for the mourning dove, which sounds exactly like an ocarina. And I would do the call, if I could do the cupped hand thing, but I can't. Peter Garland could do it!

ALBURGER: But he's too far away. He's still down in Mexico.

ADAMS: Right. He's in Mexico. So, yes, those pieces are the earliest pieces that I maintain in my catalogue.

ALBURGER: What does the rowdy side start? The side coming out of Varèse.

ADAMS: Same year. A piece, dedicated to Jim Tenney, called *Green Corn Dance*, for percussion sextet.

ALBURGER: I've heard of that.

ADAMS: I still love that piece. The first movement tempo marking is metronome equals whatever (72, I guess) and "Almost Funky." So it has a sort of flat-footed feel to it. It's from 1974. The second movement, I think, was probably influenced by Peter's early percussion pieces. We were classmates together at Cal Arts. I really admired his *Three Strange Angels* from 1973, the piece for bass drum, bullroarer, and piano. So the second movement of *Green Corn Dance* has that kind of (I hope) savage energy to it. The last section of the piece already has that multi-layered tempo stuff going on, which is still a major element of my music. So those are the earliest pieces: *songbirdsongs*, the quiet stuff; *Green Corn Dance*, the loud stuff.

ALBURGER: And *Green Corn Dance* -- is that an allusion to Native American culture?

ADAMS: It is. Exactly.

ALBURGER: So again, your interest --

ADAMS: Even then...

ALBURGER: -- is very consistent, even pre-Alaska.

ADAMS: It's true. Yes, even a year or two before Alaska.

ALBURGER: Am I going out on a limb in saying this was part of the search for roots, and part of the search for home -- being grounded in one's own country, going back just to see what this country is all about.

ADAMS: Absolutely. I think Peter had started publishing Soundings, which I believe to have been the successor to Cowell's New Music.

ALBURGER: Yes, right.

ADAMS: He started publishing it while we were students at Cal Arts, and one of the things that Peter was very consciously doing, which I think influenced and inspired some of our colleagues and me at the time, was a search for authentically American roots. For Peter, it was pre-Columbian cultures, which he started investigating.

ALBURGER: Is that why ultimately he moved south?

ADAMS: Oh, absolutely. And I think our teacher, Jim Tenney, gave all of us who worked with him at Cal Arts at that time, a real sense of connecting with that idiosyncratic, maverick tradition in American music from Ives, Ruggles, Varèse, Partch, Harrison, Nancarrow. Tenney was the one who, I think, first laid that out as some sort of continuity.

ALBURGER: Are the minimalists part of that non-conforming tradition?

ADAMS: They certainly...

ALBURGER: I know Glass avows to be part of this legacy of the mavericks.

ADAMS: In 1970, '71... In the early 70's, it felt very much like that. And I think, at its best, yes. Minimalism came from that very same spirit. It's become something else. I think it's the one part of that stream in American music that has enjoyed very mass-market, or commercial, success. And, in the process, a lot of it has gotten watered down. I still think it's a very important style, and I'm continually struck by how influential it is still with young composers. Many of my students at Oberlin are starting from minimalism, and building from there. And that's just fine with me. You could pick a lot worse places to begin.

ALBURGER: Indeed! What would be a worse position to start with?

ADAMS: Oh! Use your own imagination!

ALBURGER: Some things should be best left unspoken.

ADAMS: There was the total serialism, or late serialism, or post-serialism: every note determined.

ALBURGER: That hasn't been much of a part of your experience, has it? Being at Cal Arts and given your interests...

ADAMS: No, it hasn't, but it would have been, had I gone to Columbia.

ALBURGER: It certainly would have.

ADAMS: That was the heyday of it.

ALBURGER: Yes, it was.

ADAMS: And those, actually, were my two choices.

ALBURGER: One side of the Hudson River and the other -- as portrayed in that New Yorker cartoon

ADAMS: Way far. New Jersey and beyond.

ALBURGER: The war of aesthetics. My solution was to keep to small schools, where there just wasn't quite as much adherence to any tradition!

ADAMS: Which I think is a very good choice. And I think in part, after Cal Arts, that was maybe one of the elements that perhaps drew me, and certainly kept me in Alaska. That feeling that I could keep a little distance from any particular ideology, and have time to discover.

ALBURGER: Joseph Haydn, out there in Esterhazy: "I was forced to be original." He didn't have any extraneous influence. Even Ives ceasing to listen to "contemporary music."

ADAMS: Yes. And so even if we replicate or repeat history without knowing it, I think that's fine. I value this kind of approach to the music. That illusion, at least, that we can discover it, or invent it -- reinvent it -- for ourselves, which was, of course, what Harry Partch was all about, what Henry Cowell was all about. And I think that's really the defining element of whatever that tradition in American music may be.

ALBURGER: Is it possible that in our search for roots -- geographically and musically -- what we find turns out to be simply part of an historic tradition of people searching for roots, and finding their own approaches. If there are any traditions or roots, they are that of the mavericks: the individualists, yet within a culture at the same time.

ADAMS: Yes, exactly. That's what's interesting to me: how community and culture grow from individuals. We're not just talking about the rugged individualist here. And even though I live in one of the last bastions of rugged individualism (and believe me, that has a real downside), I don't think ultimately this is all just about individuals.

ALBURGER: It's also about communities.

ADAMS: Yes, we have to have our individual vision quests, or whatever. We have to rediscover things for ourselves, but...

ALBURGER: Yet vision quests happen within a community.

ADAMS: They certainly do.

ALBURGER: In certain Native American traditions, the vision quest was a communal experience of going out individually.

ADAMS: Even though music may come to an individual and from a very private place of origin, it is ultimately a gift to all of us: to the community.

ALBURGER: In a sense, your vision quest has been an extended one of... how many years now in Alaska?

ADAMS: 25 years, yes.

ALBURGER: And while the roots of who you are today as a composer were certainly established by the time you were at Cal Arts, perhaps you would agree that your music has flowered in Alaska and has developed in its own way. I wonder if you could speak about how your music has developed since your first arrival in the north.

ADAMS: Well, I hope it's always developing -- always beginning. I feel, in the last few years, it's just begun to come into its own. I like to think that the music is now becoming itself. It has less and less to do with me, or my ideas about it. The music always knows more than I do.

ALBURGER: Are you letting the sounds be sounds, perhaps?

ADAMS: Well, that certainly is a major lesson from Uncle Morty, that we're all trying to learn.

ALBURGER: And the other uncle, Johnny.

ADAMS: Yes, indeed. So I think letting the music come into its own is a great gift, and it's what makes being a creative artist worthy of a lifetime's devotion. This is why we can look forward to giving everything we have for as long as we have it, to this art. It's a spiritual path. And it's also a discipline at which (unlike that of baseball players) we can look forward to getting better and better as we get older.

ALBURGER: That's encouraging, isn't it?

ADAMS: We have at least the possibility of getting better and better at what we do, and learning more and more about the art. Lou Harrison once said in his *Music Primer* (this is the arch environmentalist, Lou Harrison): "Always compose as though there were an unlimited paper supply!" I think we also have to imagine that there's unlimited time. That there's always time, and that we're always just beginning. R. Murray Schaefer, the Canadian composer/acoustic-ecologist, has a wonderful radio piece called *Music in the Cold*. The last lines of that are so wonderful, so powerful. He says, "I will build a new culture, fresh as a wild animal. It will take time. It will take time. There will be time." So, for me, it's taken time to just let this music find me. I like to imagine, at least, that it's a music that perhaps I couldn't have discovered any place else, and that it really took these 25 years for it to happen. So at 40-whatever, I feel like I've just started.

ALBURGER: Where do you think the music is heading next? What's on the horizon besides Alaska's wonderfully low setting and rising sun?

ADAMS: I hope the music will continue to become more itself. And part of what that means, I think, is that there are fewer and fewer extramusical references.

ALBURGER: Interesting, and yet so much of your music, of course, has had references to your new roots -- your found home.

ADAMS: Yes. But now I'm less interested in telling a story. I'm not interested so much in even painting pictures with music. But I'm hoping to discover a music which is a presence: that we can, for 20 or 40 or 60 or 70 minutes, inhabit -- an enveloping presence which has something like the fullness, the wholeness of an ecosystem. A beautiful place, where we can just step outside of time and culture, and know is an illusion (but what a wonderful illusion) and just listen. I'm trying in a conscious (and I hope not self-conscious way) to remove myself from the music. I don't have the same discipline that John Cage did, but I'm hoping more and more to remove my own hand from it. I guess it comes full circle here. As the music becomes less and less about Alaska, I think in a certain way, it becomes more and more Alaskan. I don't know if it makes any sense!

ALBURGER: I don't know either. But it's a wonderful thought anyway!

ADAMS: I want the music to be a wilderness. If I can remove myself as composer as much as possible from that wilderness and just let the place be itself, then any other listener and I can enter into it on our terms, and have our own experience. I love Mahler; I love Bruckner. I recognize that Mahler is probably the greater composer, whatever that may mean, but I love Bruckner more. Because Bruckner was not about Bruckner. Bruckner was somehow about transcending himself. Certainly there are wonderfully transcendent moments in Mahler. But it always comes back to feeling autobiographical, or narrative, or somehow about that 19th-century struggle of the individual artist against all odds.

ALBURGER: Right. You don't hear that in Bruckner.

ADAMS: You don't hear that in Bruckner.

ALBURGER: Instead, that spirituality and transcendence.

ADAMS: That, and even naiveté. I think in some way the piece I wrote for the Paul Dresher Ensemble is a naive piece. There's not much in it. It's all laid out there, in a very formalist way. That latter trait is an inheritance from Tenney, actually, who was a rigorous formalist, who speaks of form as "an object of perception," which is in a way related to early minimalism -- certainly to Steve Reich and process pieces: the idea that form can be so transparent that you know from the beginning -- from the first sound -- what the last sound is going to be, and what the arc of the piece is going to be. So you can let go of that, and perceive the overall form, but pay attention to other things: to enter into the music in a different way. Most of my music is rigorously formal. Most of the time it's audible, and other times it's not audible. But I want it to be rigorously formal and ravishingly sensual at the same time. Why can't we have it all?

ALBURGER: Why not. Of course, yes.

ADAMS: I guess if you made me choose, I'd go with the sensual, but we don't have to choose. But the formalism is sometimes very obvious. In *Clouds of Forgetting / Clouds of Unknowing*, the layout is almost schematically formal. In fact, the one unfavorable review that I've read of this disc says, "It's very, very beautiful. But it's too involved with the 'singular masterpiece,' and doesn't the composer know that 'the composer is dead.' We're not about making masterpieces anymore. The composer is now metaphorically the guy who sits in the back room of the bar, playing solitaire and rolling dice."

ALBURGER: Thank you for imposing your artistic credo on us!

ADAMS: Whatever! I love any review in which I learn about what I'm trying to do. Negative and positive reviews are very useful. But it's interesting that that review takes *Clouds* to task for being "too formal." And a negative review of *Earth and the Great Weather*, which is equally formalist, took it to task for being devoid of form.

ALBURGER: Well, we know these critics!...

ADAMS: "I can hear no apparent form in this piece."

ALBURGER: 20TH-CENTURY MUSIC in some ways continued on from Nicolas Slonimsky's *Music Since 1900*, doing a Chronicle by month and year of what happened in the very late 20th century. I suppose if no one else will, perhaps we'll have to update his *Lexicon of Musical Invective*, as well.

ADAMS: Absolutely.

ALBURGER: We've heard these crazy stories.

ADAMS: I could contribute a few! Couldn't we all?



## ...And Judith Lang Zaimont

...and JEFF DUNN

The following interview was conducted on April 2, in the foyer of the San Francisco Hilton and later at the Spinnaker Restaurant in Sausalito.

ZAIMONT: Composers may like to think that art is a lens -- in other words, that the piece of music that comes out is some perfected version of what they originally heard. What I've learned, from years of performing and also chatting with audiences before and after exposure to a brand new piece, is that art is more of a mirror than a lens ... Thank goodness that music is meant for more than just a one-time-through existence!

DUNN: So how do you see this with respect to your music? Do you want to get a particular interpretation imposed on your audience, or do you just do what speaks to you, and hope for the best?

ZAIMONT: Are you talking about the composer/performer interchange, or are you talking about the piece itself? Because sometimes a piece of music can be misunderstood by a performer, and the audience reaction does not come in to the mix of reactions as one worth pondering by the composer after the fact.

DUNN: Assuming the performer does get it right, what is your concept of "communication" with the audience assuming it gets through that lens of the performer? Is that something you want to achieve, a certain "communication"?

ZAIMONT: Yes, most certainly. I'm not just spinning my wheels in private for myself and putting it on public display. Are you asking, "Is my music about something?"

DUNN: Not program music, necessarily -- what do you want audiences to get out of your music?

ZAIMONT: You might take a look at the number of my pieces that hold "absolute-music" vs. "non-absolute" titles. Very little of my music has "absolute-music" titles. My first symphony does, my brand-new piano sonata does (it's just called *Sonata*). Maybe those are a little bit more of statements in a rhetorical sense. But lots of my other music has titles that are meant to be a window into the piece. The new string orchestra piece I'm just finishing up now has three movements in it -- I don't think you could rightly call it a symphony, but you could certainly call it absolute. The first movement is an essay, the slow movement is second, and the third is an up-tempo item, kind of complicated. But I don't call them "Movement I," "Movement II" -- different movements have independent titles, and the whole piece is called *Remember Me*, because it's all about memories.

DUNN: The Women's Philharmonic is going to play the *Elegy* movement tomorrow.

ZAIMONT: Yes. That piece was just given in New York

DUNN: How did the audience like that?

ZAIMONT: I was told they liked it very much; I didn't get to the New York performance. It's being recorded on my new CD for Arabesque -- all orchestral music.

DUNN: Is *Elegy* for anyone in particular, or just ...

ZAIMONT: Yes, actually it is. It's for my aunt, who died at the very early age of 63, after a long illness. The piece is about what a vibrant and an opinionated person she was! But it's great to deal with opinionated people; they let you know right away where you stand. She and other members of the family came to Philadelphia to hear my symphony, the one that was done by the Philadelphia Orchestra, and she spoke to me afterwards, and she said she didn't really like the piece. She liked my conversation with the audience, but she didn't like the piece. It was too... There were too many things in it so that I guess she couldn't factor in an acceptable way for her to understand it. That was wonderful, to find out that somebody did not like it. She also said she'd welcome the chance to hear it again, which is what composers like to hear.

DUNN: I think that's what an ideal piece is: one that you want to hear again. There's something in it you like the first time, but there's so much you want to come back and hear.

ZAIMONT: Speaking about the *Elegy*, I then wrote in her memory a piece that's not perhaps emblematic of a lot of my other music. A lot of my music is high energy with very specific angular-rhythmic materials. *Elegy* is all flowing, long, long overlapped phrases, and since my aunt was one-half British, I gave the whole thing a British sound. There are ways to orchestrate or certain sonorities that you can use that will evoke a British ...

DUNN: Do I hear some Vaughan Williams in there?

ZAIMONT: Absolutely, yes. The *Fantasia* is one of my great favorite pieces, as is the *Last Springtime* by Grieg.

DUNN: What are your goals when you're speaking to the audience?

ZAIMONT: Generally the object of that kind of session is to make the composer a human being, a human presence. If there are things that are important enough for me to get up and say to the audience about a piece, maybe that helps to guide the listening.

DUNN: So you don't think a piece is something that goes on a pedestal and it doesn't matter who wrote it, it's just got to ...

ZAIMONT: A sound object? It needs to stand on its own as a piece of art. I'm not saying you need to know anything about me as a person in order to know my music, or in order to gain full exposure to it. It's got to be intrinsic and complete within the piece.

DUNN: Is that all music is? Can you learn more about the personality of the composer from the music in addition to the intrinsic side?

ZAIMONT: For some listeners it's very helpful as a way in.

DUNN: Do you agree with psychiatrists who try to figure out Wagner from his music rather than his writings?

ZAIMONT: There are certain aspects of the personality that are in a piece, but sometimes the public work that people do, their art or their writings, are not at all reflective of their personalities. So there can be this disconnect between the person and the work produced. The piece must stand on its own.

DUNN: It seems to me most composers are continually seeking challenges.

ZAIMONT: I've been writing music 30 years. And at the time I was emerging from my schooling, the prevailing style was not tonal, if not definitely 12-tone. Much was a type of music that didn't pay all too much attention to the flow of time. In other words, it was the music of the moment, the sound of the moment. How sounds relate over long stretches of time was of less importance than the sound of the moment. Being a pianist, I had some difficulties with these concepts. I tried very hard in school to write the music of the moment and then stopped writing -- after I finished up at Columbia -- for about six months. I put my own house in order, jettisoning some of the message that was coming from the institutions of music at that time about the necessity to write major statements, if not masterworks. There was a lot of pressure to make sure that your statement was substantive. I simply decided I'd put all that away, I'd write music I liked to listen to, and so I started back in the very late 60's writing extremely tonal music, and it was texted music, too. Now, I have no capacity as a singer, in college I sang in the tenor section! I never studied voice. But I was writing texted music because words had been a strong element in my teachers' music. I studied with Jack Beeson at Columbia, and before that with Hugo Weisgall at Queens College. And I wrote the most tuneful music one could want. The very first piece I wrote, in 1969, is still in publication, and still in the repertoire. There are high school choruses and college choruses that are still singing that.

DUNN: The first piece you wrote or your opus one?

ZAIMONT: I don't have opus numbers.

DUNN: In terms of "worthy of getting an opus number" as opposed to stuff you wrote as a kid, say...

ZAIMONT: That 1969 piece would be the first worthy one. And the amazing thing was that all this music went into repertoire right away. Some of the early pieces even won prizes.

DUNN: This was in your early 20's.

ZAIMONT: Yes.

DUNN: So you weren't a Mozart writing symphonies when you were five or so?

ZAIMONT: Absolutely not! I was performing as a pianist. You know what the interesting thing was? My sister and I, virtually throughout our teens, were together as a professional duo piano team. We toured the whole country, we recorded, we performed, there were several new pieces written for us.

DUNN: Were these your ideas or your parents'?

ZAIMONT: I asked for piano lessons at the age of four, with my mother, who was our teacher until Doris and I went to Juilliard Prep in New York -- at age 11 or 12. So coming back to this poem music, texted music, well, naturally, it evolved. I'm kind of a complex individual and the music became more complex as it went on. Text, particularly, was interesting to me and a lot of texted music -- this is all the way through the very early 80's, and the music was (some of it) not quite tonal by this time -- but it still seemed to have the attributes of approachability in the audience's frame of mind. Maybe they were evolving, I was evolving, performers were evolving!

DUNN: It doesn't have to be tonal to be approachable.

ZAIMONT: True. That's very true. But my music was always dramatic, as well. It would never stay in a single mode of discourse for a long while, it would change and sort of tap the listener on the shoulder and say "you need to be an active listener for this. This is not something that will wash over you." None of my music has ever done that: the sort of thing you can tune in or out. My music doesn't do that.

DUNN: So you're not in the ambiance school?

ZAIMONT: [Smiles] No, and the term post-modernism is a good one because it's a way for me to say what I am not, I'm not a post-modernist. I think the stance that comes with the term "post-modern" is some disengagement with the materials. Irony seems to be essential for art that calls itself post-modern. And that's not in my music. What I am doing is putting in place the actual, original stuff. Does that even cohere?

DUNN: Yes, and I don't hear any irony or post-modernism in your work.

ZAIMONT: No, there is not. Not in any note I've ever written.

DUNN: But there are different kinds of post-modernism.

ZAIMONT: Yes. To finish the chronology here, a lot of my early music was texted, some of it was for piano, very little of it was for other instruments. The two enormous song cycles for three players -- *The Magic World* of 1979, and *From the Greatland* of 1981 or 82, I think -- have a lot of sections in them of music that is still quite dramatic. The next useful development happened in 1984. I came back to teaching at Peabody (I'd been off for a year) and almost immediately lost about forty percent of the hearing in my left ear. That was a shock! And again I stopped writing for about five months -- it was terrible to get in the classroom and not be able to hear my students, not to hear questions, but this wasn't an interim period that I could just allow to be as long as it need be. I had commissions and commitments. So I was struggling to figure out what was I going to write or how was I going to write. I decided, at that time, that something changed the course of my hearing, not only my actual hearing but in my inner ear hearing as well. I started writing instrumental music and it turned out to be equally dramatic, but maybe a little less clearly reaching to an audience. It was a little bit more of my own private voice. And here again was a great, great surprise to me. The very first piece I wrote with this hearing loss was *Dance/Innerdance* for -- what was it, a commission for the Huntington Trio? -- lute, oboe, and cello. That piece went on to win two prizes and has been performed many times. So I was, due to circumstances that I had no control over, redefining myself somewhat as a composer. And I realized I love instrumental music, and did not have to have piano in all of my music.

DUNN: What caused the hearing loss. Do you know?

ZAIMONT: Oh, yes. An early onset otosclerosis. I went in for an operation, and, when I woke up the next morning, I couldn't hear birds. And I haven't heard them through natural hearing ever since.

DUNN: So, are you sympathetic with Beethoven?

ZAIMONT: Oh, very. Very. Although I don't put my head down on the piano desk to listen just to vibrations to know where I am. It's been a stimulus to letting my inner ear lead me. And one of the most interesting things that happened was I became ever more interested in architecture, musical architecture in my pieces. You can get away with not thinking about that overtly when you have a text as a spine for your form. You can play with the text, you can do repetitions, you can pull out key words to set things up, you can set a line three or four times in a row with a different reading and the music keeps advancing, but the text itself stays where it is. So considerations of form were not in the forefront in this earlier period of texted music. But once I was writing instrumental music, the issue of motive as a generator, and the question of enhancing my developmental skills came to the fore. I wanted to keep my music interesting on a moment-to-moment basis, too. So in other words, the work needed to be fascinating from a sound standpoint, that is, making sure that it had the listener's attention. And the word I use is "fascinating" -- nothing routine -- and therefore that meant that any kind of regular scansion of phrases needed to be tweaked and needed to be personalized. Every attribute of a piece of music I went into and worked on to personalize. And right around this time as well, because I had a commission for two orchestra pieces in 1985, I stepped back and did about a four-month study of orchestration on my own: a self-study. I'd never played in an orchestra, being a pianist, and so I worked on orchestration. It was a good study; it served me in excellent stead. But, to speak a little bit more about form (because form is of immense interest to me), it seems to me a lot of composers nowadays put that on the back burner. Form to many seems to be just what the piece is once it is finished: form as the sum of the parts. But I never found that approach to be a satisfactory way to deal with form.

DUNN: I agree with you. Being an editor, about two-thirds of the new pieces that I hear I'd say should be cut ...

ZAIMONT: Yes. Exactly so ... I've been noticing, especially in the last ten years, that I've been innovating with respect to form. I have pieces that in my mind are very remote cousins of sonata allegro only because of the mix of elements that are in them. May I speak about my new piano sonata from this aspect?

DUNN: Sure.

ZAIMONT: This is a three-movement piece, it's just under forty minutes long. The piece is called *Sonata*. But the movement titles are in Italian also. The first movement is called "Ricerca," the second movement is "Canto," and the last movement is "Impronta Digitala." "Ricerca" doesn't have anything to do with the traditional use of the term..

DUNN: Oh! I was going to ask ...

ZAIMONT: Only, well, maybe in the root of the word, which has to do with "to seek" or "to search out" or "to seek over and over again." "Ricerca" actually means "research" in Italian. And what I was doing in that piece was, in that movement, disguising one single motive which dominates the whole movement, the movement itself is probably, possibly 14 minutes long -- it's a big movement. Many different kinds of touch are required in order for the music to come in place. It is a vast, vast canvas which is a kind of modified sonata-allegro form, with a reverse presentation of the theme areas in the recapitulation. So out of the development, you're in area two, and then the last thing you hear is area one again. Did I know that it would have this form when I began composing the piece? No, but I did once I realized that the materials of theme one and theme two were actually related -- there's a rising and falling interval, in a very, very different kind of music, quite different tempi, quite different textures. Following this realization, I knew that I had solved my formal problem. To me, the most interesting part of this movement is the development section, which is a huge center. So "Ricerca" is "to seek and seek over again," to search out or to seek again. And also to do research upon, which means to study up. So I studied up on my own core materials for the movement. Second movement, "Canto"...

DUNN: Don't you have to study up on your core materials to do a decent development?

ZAIMONT: Oh, yes, very much so.

DUNN: To see what potential lies in your material?

ZAIMONT: Yes. And do I have scads of scratch paper with little arcane markings on them that get discarded after a piece? Yes.

DUNN: That's so important. That's what I was saying about editing. And I really like what you're saying about every piece -- every part of a piece --- has to be interesting ...

ZAIMONT: Yes! You can't let it leave your desk until everything's been examined!

DUNN: Just because you explain it, saying "well, this is the opening theme" or "this is the retrograded version" -- there has to be an *interesting* retrograded version, not just ...

ZAIMONT: Yes, exactly so. It can't just be the humdrum. It can't just be that the form justifies the music, meaning that following the traditional form makes the piece have substance. It doesn't work that way.

DUNN: Right. There are some lesser composers who come up with very nice themes, and then they can't develop them. The themes just don't go anywhere.

ZAIMONT: You're quite right. Every aspect of a piece needs looking at. That's why in preparing my pieces for publication, I originally give the copyist just the pitches and rhythms and exact tempo markings. Then the piece comes back, after it's all been proofed and corrected from those aspects, and then the marks get layered in. So that I'm required to review a document many, many times before it goes out into the world, to make sure it's as close to precise as I can get it. And the same kind of editorial work I certainly emphasize in working with my students. They need to keep scrolling the piece before their inner ear and eye as it is developing to make sure it's shapely, to make sure it's justifying its length, to check and see if any section is too short or too long, because you cannot have a piece of music that's like the old vaudeville sequence of acts: two minutes of interesting stuff followed by two minutes of interesting stuff followed by another two minutes of interesting stuff. A piece structured like that doesn't grow and resonate as a complete entity if you have sections that are just a sequence of presentations. One section can't be something that completely supplants what's just been heard. And everything that's yet to come is influenced by what we have already experienced in the piece.

DUNN: That's right. Absolutely.

ZAIMONT: Coming back to the *Sonata*, the second movement is "Canto," and it's a kind of rumination or appreciation. Imbedded in this movement, in four different places, unequally dispersed, is a scherzo made out of completely different materials. But this borrowed Beethoven material is never quoted whole.

DUNN: You start getting post-modern when you quote him ...

ZAIMONT: No, no, no, no! No!

DUNN: I said "start," I didn't say you "would be" post-modern. That's how post-modernism started

ZAIMONT: Yes, yes --

DUNN: It's the attitude towards the quote that ...

ZAIMONT: -- takes the thing as a found object, but I'm not doing that. I'm doing this because I ... I ... well ... this piece is part of my soul.

DUNN: O.K. Your soul is a song.

ZAIMONT: Yes. In fact, twice in my life I've dreamt pieces of music and they were both songs.

DUNN: Dreamt the entire piece?

ZAIMONT: Yes, and then I had to get up the first thing the next morning and write the piece down.

DUNN: I've had dreams where music will come to me. But half the time I write the music down and I realize it is Gershwin or somebody! Sometimes the pieces are original, though.

ZAIMONT: That's something we should talk about, too: that word, "original." Where does that factor in? The changing nature of music over the last 30 or 40 years...

DUNN: I don't think anything ... nothing is totally original.

ZAIMONT: The final movement is "Impronta Digitala," which is another Italian phrase. It means "digital imprint," but it also is the phrase meaning "fingerprint." When you go to the Italian police station, they take your Impronta Digitala.

DUNN: Oh, you've been in police stations a lot, huh!?

ZAIMONT: [laughs] The title for this movement didn't come until the piece was almost half over. The F-sharp minor sonata of Robert Schumann has a movement that is... he had to write a second version of it so that the piece would get played. His original conception for this movement was extremely difficult. It involved both hands playing extremely actively in ways that are often in contrary motion. The way you have to put your hands on the keys for that movement tells you a lot about how Schumann might instinctively have put his hands down on the keys -- something about the size or the splay of his fingers. And I've always been fascinated by that. The piece was so difficult, had so many knots in it, that it needed to be jettisoned or a substitute written so that the entirety of the work was performed. And if "fingerprint" or "hallmark" in art is really the artist's signature, this last movement of my piano sonata is my signature. It is a little bit more than seven minutes long, and it is a constant stream of notes. There are actually three resting-places in it. They come unequally provided in the movement, and need to be there as anchors, not just for physical reasons, but so you have a place to restart, to slow down your racing brain -- a change of orientation on the page. You take a deep mental, artistic, musical breath, and then get ready to gallop again. These plateaus are musically necessary. The best part of the movement, however, is a stream of sound in which the hands rarely play together. The music is all over the keyboard, in compound meters. Many of the meters change on a bar-by-bar basis, but there is a continuous stream of sound. Sometimes the hands will play just individual notes. There are some interlocking three- and four-note groupings which are the kind of thing you find in older toccatas. There are some interlocking passages, where you have to figure out which hand is best on top -- sort of weaving your hands over the keyboard. So the whole movement is a fingerprint. I've written quite a bit of other music for piano, but actually most of my solo keyboard music is my lightest, most traditional-sounding music.

DUNN: There's an old saw about pianists not being good orchestrators. Did you ever feel any restriction being a pianist when you were writing other kinds of music?

ZAIMONT: That's a really good question. Luckily the human is a perfectible being! And evolutionary as well: we can train ourselves in new ways despite the pathways of memory or habit. A lot of my orchestra music is conceived and, to some extent, developed, far away from any sound source. I will walk it out. It just comes to me, sometimes when I'm doing something very, very different, and I try to develop the forms and architecture far away from any sound source. It's far too easy for me to sit down at the piano, put my hands down and hear a certain kind of music. So what instrumental writing taught me was that it must be conceived in the head and in the inner ear.

DUNN: And often I've found that if something comes into my head and I try to play it on the piano I find myself profaning it in some way.

ZAIMONT: It gets plain, then. You can have a statement in the orchestra that is heard three or four times in succession -- each time differently orchestrated, handed from one player to the next, or supported differently or surrounded differently, so the colors make it live. It's not just a repetition. It is really like a putting the music in your hand: something you can concretely hold, turn all around to see in three dimensions. That's the thing that the orchestra can do to any sound -- realize it in complete dimension.

DUNN: What kind of responses have you had from audiences?

ZAIMONT: I've had people who say from time to time, "I don't understand your music but I like it," which is very helpful because that's ... a good thing to get ...

DUNN: I would say, yes; if you get "I completely understood it the first time I heard it" then you think, "Uh-oh, they don't want to hear it again."

ZAIMONT: Right. Well, I think we said that before, if a piece reveals itself on one hearing it's not going to endure. It doesn't mean it can't entrance or fascinate on first hearing. And then, of course, I've had people who speak to me about the technical aspects of the music. They heard something that they liked, and they said "Did you do it this way?" That's always good. It's a delightful response.

DUNN: So what are you working on now? You've finished the *Sonata*.

ZAIMONT: Yes, and the string orchestra piece, *Remember Me*. The three movements of that are "Ghosts," "Elegy," and "Dancing Over my Grave." So I will be editing the "Dancing" movement. This last was a piece where I tried to write in a traditional passacaglia form. But, of course, it's not that. It's a kind of demonic passacaglia... But, yes, my next piece is an orchestra piece. Following that are a chamber vocal work, a string trio, and a piece for a concert band.

DUNN: These are all commissions?

ZAIMONT: Yes.

DUNN: Are you working on anything outside of a commission, or are you just sticking to your commissions?

ZAIMONT: I can say no to a commission if it's not a piece that I want to write. My saxophone quartet was a commission. That piece is going to be premiered in the middle of April at the University of Wisconsin. That was a piece I probably wouldn't have written unless the commission came in. They gave me a choice of things, and I picked saxophone quartet because I figured this was my chance to write it!

DUNN: But to return briefly to the passacaglia last movement of *Remember Me*...

ZAIMONT: Yes, it's a species of passacaglia. How's that? It's a design you can clearly hear, at least in the first three minutes of the piece. You can hear the cells, which then disappear after a while.

DUNN: But the passacaglia cells come back at the end?

ZAIMONT: Yes, in fact they do -- in part.

DUNN: I love the passacaglia form. There are so many different and wonderful approaches. And, speaking of love, when you were growing up, did you have "love affairs" with the music of certain composers?

ZAIMONT: I've always liked Bach, and, being a pianist, I love Chopin. I think I always like Prokofiev; and, from the first moment I heard him (which was not until I was in college), I have loved the music of Benjamin Britten. Speaking about composers, let me put on my academic hat for a moment! The institutions of music in this country are borrowed constructs from Europe. The conservatory, the symphony, even the choral society, opera -- these are all things that we imported. Along with importing these institutions, we've imported a reverence and respect for music that proceeds in the German manner. We value music that shows in itself a working out of materials, music that can handle the musical equivalent of conflict and resolution, and things that follow generalized profiles of argument. There has been another stream of composers in history that I find fascinating: people who are never in the very first knee-jerk "name them" of composers. This is a "Column 1A" of composers whose music is fascinating to me because it's quirky. These are generally people who have not the same kind of control over the actual surface rhythm and the harmonic rhythm of their music -- not in some kind of graceful balance, the way it is in the music of Bach and Mozart (in the former's case, with the horizontal leading, and, in the latter's, with the vertical leading). But these other composers that I'm talking about are perhaps purposefully not naturally interested in achieving the balance of a Bach or Mozart. Or maybe these other composer couldn't corral balance in the first place. I don't know. These are composers who have something uneven in the way that their music goes. Sometimes it's convulsive and it stirs you up; sometimes it is too wretchedly slow, but it makes you listen for reasons that have to do with controlling sound over time or manipulating sound over time. I'm thinking back to the composers with whom I have had my chief "love affairs": Berlioz and Scriabin -- and another person who falls into this category would be Messiaen. For different reasons, there is a shift in these composers with regard to the usual hierarchy of how rhythm and harmony interact, and how melody is realized. These composers don't always do the Germanic balancing act.

DUNN: Yes, Scriabin, certainly. Some of his music is just still so strange to me.

ZAIMONT: Oh, but I love it!

DUNN: Indeed, it's fascinating.

ZAIMONT: It's particular, it's actually music written by a distinct personality and that's what I love about it!

DUNN: What's your prognostication about the future of music?

ZAIMONT: It'll still be here! It'll be with us. Right now I have no idea what the concert music of the year 2070 is going to sound like, none at all. I'm not even sure what it's going to sound like in 2010. Lots of grim prognoses and talk of the death of the orchestra, the death of anything that's not reaching a pretty general audience. I think that the trend of the 20th century, at least in American concert music, has had a lot to do with blending influences into the stream of the whole. Just the fact now that we need to talk about this music with an adjective, separate it from pop music or other kinds of music, this is a phenomenon of recent years. There used to be just music, and it was all kinds, there was music you danced to, music you sang, music you used for worship or for ritual purposes, music you listened to, music you made yourself at home. No doubt electronic instruments and the continuation of libraries of recorded sound of given music from every era will help to keep the history of music alive. What its evolution is going to be, I don't know. I have high hopes, though.

DUNN: Do you think post-modernism's gone and run its course?

ZAIMONT: I hope so.

DUNN: [Laughs] Well, it will if they start listening to your music and start looking at their inner selves rather than just making a comment about somebody else's music. Some post-modern efforts seem to be pretty shallow.

ZAIMONT: But then, people use music with different purposes. I'll never forget a decision made in the eighties by one of New York City's classical music stations -- it *was* a classical music station, WNCN -- to stop offering any music with text (no more songs, no more choral pieces except for opera broadcasts on the weekend), because they were hearing from a large part of their listening population that this was interfering with the way their music was being used. It was being used for backgrounds in offices, at law firms and other things like that. What they needed was continuing instrumental music sounds which wouldn't interfere with the word-oriented process of thought.

DUNN: It's a very critical age.

ZAIMONT: Do you mean that we're too self-knowing?

DUNN: I'm talking about bringing down idols, like everyone going after Clinton. It's easy to shoot holes in things.

ZAIMONT: We're not in an age where there are heroes; we aren't, and that's showing itself in art.

DUNN: But I think it's going to pass, it can't go on forever. .

ZAIMONT: A while ago we were discussing the difference in music that's written by people who are performers -- active performers. I think there's a wonderful sense of empowerment, of sitting down to make the music move and breathe all by yourself, from your two hands or from your voice. It's not the same thing as sitting down to listen to a piece, or doing something else while you listen to it. There is a total involvement in rendering the art fresh, it comes from performing it yourself, and you have that sense of awe at what kind of ability it takes to do this. I do believe that there's a difference -- I can't put my finger on it -- but that there is a difference in the livingness (not vitality, but in something dimensional) that exists in music written by people who are active performers, or have that experience.

DUNN: I'm thinking about a certain composer who, though he was not a performer when he went to school, became a performer ....

ZAIMONT: There you go, there you go.

DUNN: He became a percussionist.

ZAIMONT: And you can see that in his music.

DUNN: That's right. And one night, we were rehearsing in Oregon, and he got down there and was showing the percussionist how to ...

ZAIMONT: Yes, how to execute what the thing was ...

DUNN: Right, it was vital to him, the whole neuro-psychological gestalt. That's why we can extrapolate -- so everybody should take music lessons!

ZAIMONT: Yes, not only do you appreciate the physiological challenges of actually taming sounds into something listenable, something produced by your own efforts, but it also makes you understand the music from the inside as a living experience. Music, after all, is that stuff that's there for a fraction of a second. And unless we keep making it, it's not there.

DUNN: But I think you can also take it from the other side: if you've not played an instrument, are you going to be able to listen to it properly?

ZAIMONT: I wonder, does a non-player listen subtly in a different way from somebody who is a player? If I hear somebody singing a tenor -- having been assigned to sing in the tenor section of a chorus in college -- in the upper part of their range, I know exactly what that note is inside. I'm making the sounds along with the singer inside my own consciousness...

DUNN: I certainly listen to pianists very differently than I listen to other instruments because I know the piano very well. I would say that, even listening to other music, not piano music, I think I listen to music differently than someone who's never played an instrument. I mean, you know the situation when there's some background music coming out of the speaker and it annoys the heck out of you because you almost have to listen to it. It's very difficult not to listen to it, even if it's bad stuff; and the person sitting next to you is "Oh, is there music being played?" You know, I've talked to a lot of people who saw *Platoon* –

ZAIMONT: Yes?

DUNN: They said there was no music, there was *no music*, and there's Barber's *Adagio for Strings*, which is just saturating the atmosphere of the film.

ZAIMONT: Right, in every possible version!

DUNN: Right! "No music" in it!

ZAIMONT: Well, maybe it was such a good fit for superimproving the mood or telegraphing something about the film. There are places where there are parts of the *Adagio* used in that movie that I thought were inappropriate. It's just used -- but let's not go into that.

DUNN: But back to your view of text in music.

ZAIMONT: Well, yes, especially since I began by really writing texted music. The only reason for a composer to mess around with a pre-existing poem or piece of writing is so that the final musical result is going to be different from the original, generated from the original in ways that can clearly be followed, but as a specific and individual work of art. That means sometimes you have to know when you encounter a text that it really is not conducive to what you want to express. And it means you can't be reluctant in getting in there and messing around with the words, if necessary, and with permission, to come up with a text that you can work with musically. I have mentioned to you that I've written a number of my own texts or devised my own text by pushing together things that never previously were related: two, three, or four separate bits of writing. The dramatic cantata *Parable* in the middle 80's is a good example, because the text that the commissioners and I originally agreed on was that Wilfred Owen poem *Parable of the Old Man and the Young*, but I just couldn't deal with that. That's the alternate telling of the story of Abraham and Isaac.

DUNN: You said you loved Britten so much ...

ZAIMONT: Right ...

DUNN: That must be a profanation, to set the... I'm saying because Britten did such a good job of it ...

ZAIMONT: Yes, well... Yes, but that's O.K., too; the text is independent of any of its musical clothing. So you can go at it again.

DUNN: That's what I did once with a certain text. I heard it set in a concert in a twelve-tone version that had nothing to do with the inherent drama of the text, and I was so angry I said "I can do a better job" ...

ZAIMONT: So you decided to take up the challenge ...

DUNN: Right.

ZAIMONT: But with the text of the Owen poem, there was no room. It starts in so magnificent a fashion. It starts already on the journey up the mountain. They're getting ready for the sacrifice, and so it's very vivid and very abrupt. That bothered me as a parent. I cannot understand the parent sacrificing the child. So I had to work that out. I had to find words to put into the mouths of all the characters in that drama -- the angel, Abraham, and Isaac -- and then various kinds of roles to give to the chorus so that they were not extraneous as a group. They were not. The original commission, by the way, was for a piece with similar forces to, and of approximately the same length as, Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*. My cantata *Parable* exists in two versions: one for organ with chorus and soprano, tenor, and baritone soloists; and another with exactly the same vocal forces but with an accompaniment of string quintet and harpsichord. And so the commissioners and I then went back and discovered one of the medieval mystery plays -- the Brome mystery play, which is on the subject of Abraham and Isaac, and of the sacrifice... What was key here is that there were words. There were words for Abraham to tell Isaac that he loved him and that he was torn between one kind of love and another kind of love and duty; there were words for the angel to speak to Abraham; and there were words for Isaac to speak to his father. And once I was able to place these words, the Owen poem gets completely broken up. There's not a word of Owen's in there until the second part of the cantata. And the music for the Owen poem is different texturally and tonally from some of the music drawn from the older material. The language, of course, is also slightly different. It's *my* vision of this poem. And since it is a kind of alternate telling of the traditional Biblical tale, the piece begins on a single low F, and it ends on a completely bare C octave. So it sort of invites the sense that this is going to round-robin again at some future time. The tale will be told yet again, and who knows what the outcome will be the next time.

DUNN: But you used Owen's words to conclude the tale?

ZAIMONT: No, the last words are "Mercy, father, mercy." Isaac comes back; we don't know if it's his ghost. There has been a coda with the chorus in unison, over that the Kaddish is said over Isaac's dead body, but Isaac's voice comes back calling for "mercy, father, mercy." And then Kaddish is finished as the music concludes.

DUNN: Has that been performed recently?

ZAIMONT: Yes, recently in Wisconsin and Louisiana.



DUNN: Obviously it is hard to get pieces into the repertoire, but ... do you find performers returning to some of your pieces that haven't been performed in several years?

ZAIMONT: Yes, that does happen. But there are also some pieces that never go out of performance, and they're not always the ones that I expect. My large song cycle *From the Great Land* has been done in a number of places every single year since its premiere.

DUNN: Does your work sometimes get spread by word of mouth?

ZAIMONT: Yes, and there actually have been pieces written in imitation of this particular one.

DUNN: No! Do you have copyright lawyers going after them?

ZAIMONT: No, I don't! "On the model of" is what I should have said. It's to a poem by Frank Buske. The piece was commissioned by the Northstar Consort, the new music ensemble in residence at Fairbanks. It's scored for mezzo, clarinet, piano, and Eskimo drum (you can use a large tom, if you want). And the Buske is a cycle of poems on the thoughts and the dreams of the hallucinations and the actual observances of an old Inuit woman who's been placed out on the ice to die. That was a custom known to this century. And I added texts even to that cycle! And that was perfectly O.K. with the poet! So, yes, sometimes it's not the pieces you imagine that get the most performances. This piece is not an easy piece for any of the performers involved. It's complex, and it's on the long side.

DUNN: Is that part of the reason for its popularity, that it pleases performers?

ZAIMONT: Actually, I had some correspondence recently. *From the Great Land* was done last year at the Louisiana State University Contemporary Music Festival, and then it was also done recently in Oregon, Washington, and Texas. It's being done in the Netherlands next year. I find it truly surprising that a piece this complex is also recorded. Perhaps it's the subject matter. Certainly it's the treatment. It's got a virtuoso part for clarinet. I worked with a clarinetist who was my faculty colleague at Peabody at that time.

DUNN: Well, that probably is a factor, then. It's a challenge to their art ...

ZAIMONT: And I had him dismantle the instrument, take it apart; there are some places there where you finger one series of notes and the actual pitches sounded are a different series. You take the barrel apart and you put the instrument back together with parts of it missing. There's one movement where you play only with the mouthpiece...

DUNN: Do performers have the time to dismantle their instruments or do they need two clarinets in performance?

ZAIMONT: It's very simple, if you play the clarinet, to figure out what's asked for. It's something that's kind of a new technique. There's a little bit of inside-the-piano writing but not very much; mostly it's on the keyboard. It's a very dramatic piece, as you can imagine.

DUNN: Do you think, to take the opposite tack, if the composer wrote a very simple piece, it might not get played as much because it wouldn't challenge ...

ZAIMONT: Oh, that's very interesting ...

DUNN: Even if a piece were very melodic and the audiences loved it, performers might not play the work because ...

ZAIMONT: There are many different kinds of people. There are composers whose wisdom, skill, and gift is writing for the developing player. There are other people whose wisdom, skill, and gift is writing for the finished artist. The one important thing for both of these to know is "which kind of composer are *you*?"

DUNN: But are there composers who write for audiences? And if they write simple pieces, would these works have a less likely chance of reaching an audience?

ZAIMONT: I'm not so sure. What do you mean by "simple?" Do you mean that the atmosphere or mood or sense of the piece is all one -- it's one big block of feeling or sensation or one emotion? Are you saying a certain piece doesn't have an emotional landscape to it? Or are you suggesting a work that is just visiting with one tune?

DUNN: No, what I meant by "simple" was just with regard to technical challenges. If you could write a modern equivalent to, say, the Chopin E-Minor Prelude, that amateurs can play would professionals pick it up to please an audience?

ZAIMONT: Yes and yes.

DUNN: Well, I guess some of the Shostakovich preludes are pretty easy, and they're played a lot, so.... There're all kinds of challenges out there. I think there was a lot of discussion on the Internet last year about a Charles Rosen article that argued that there's a certain group of musicians who have specialized tastes through their experience in professionalism, and they're the ones who determine repertory; the composer writes for this great performer ...

ZAIMONT: Are you saying that the world of concert music is a closed shop?

DUNN: I have to agree that there are composers who write the way Rosen described in this article: for very specialized and sophisticated performers who enjoy a certain kind of music ...

ZAIMONT: Yes?

DUNN: ... but that's not the entire world of music...

ZAIMONT: That's right. As Bacon said, "There is no excellent beauty that hath not some strangeness in the proportion" -- meaning some particularity of what is beautiful is particular and not just a process of hitting all the general buttons. There's a team of visual artists who made art according to the general population's taste about what they would like to see in a painting, that they would like to see a painting that has deer and mountains, George Washington, and so on. So, that's *not* any kind of particular. That's throwing in everybody's general, and is it going to be great or beautiful? Most likely not. So what we may value in art (in addition to it having something in it to mirror back to the listener something that's already in the listener) is a particular voice with a particular point of view -- that strangeness in the idiosyncratic proportion, the imprint of the individual in the piece. If art is all things to all people, then it's maybe not really much of anything to anyone.

DUNN: But then there are people like Beethoven that seem to appeal to a lot of people ...

ZAIMONT: But for different reasons. For different reasons. And if there was ever a person who was an individual in his art, it's Beethoven. We hear him working out the material in real time before your ears. What a great lesson for composers.

DUNN: I just want to tell you it was really exciting for me to be at the Winnipeg Festival and see an entire audience give a standing ovation to your new work. There were sincere whistles and screams of joy.

ZAIMONT: Music needs to be always made fresh, and made *afresh*. Art is one thing that can live on after the artist. The idea is to make as much of it as you can while you're around! And give it a good send-off, and then trust to it to make its place.

DUNN: But culture in general is a problem in the U.S.

ZAIMONT: Yes, and the mass media have cultivated a kind of automatic identification of classical music appreciators as people that set themselves apart from the mainstream. Often the mass media resorts to simply making fun of ballet or opera, for example. Classical music comes into the popular culture now in rather odd ways -- it's no longer taken for granted. You couldn't make those Warner Brothers cartoons they used to make with Wagner references, or *Willy the Whale* and his opera-singing -- this would not be the stuff of reaching a mainstream audience, using classical music as the means, and I regret this. I regret that it's not part and parcel of the culture.

# John Cage: The Text Pieces 1

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ

We are finally recognizing that John Cage (1912-1982) was both a poet and a composer, contributing first-rank work to the histories of both literature and music. As his radical work took some time to be accepted into the canons of music, it is still penetrating the conservative bastions of literature.

While he performed both his poetry and his music, the results were uneven. As a pianist, he was limited; and once David Tudor agreed to perform Cage's most ambitious scores, Cage didn't play them publicly again. However, as a speaker of his own remarkable texts, many of which were semantically obscure, he was incomparable. Even now, several years after his death, no one else can recite them as well; few even try. Indeed, in my experience, no one else could hold an audience for so long with words that, as he put it, "do not make ordinary sense."

The only available recording of the short-short stories comprising his *Indeterminacy* (1957) features Cage himself; only he can be heard on the eight CDs (yes, eight) that comprise his reading of *Diary: How To Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)* (1967-69). Only the sometime cellist Frances Marie Uitti, among readers I've heard, comes close in declamatory quality. Though Cage the speaker may have lacked the theatrical flair of Dylan Thomas, Cage's declamations give his texts an aural signature, a unique quality that has likewise survived his death. So strong is his voice, even on records, that you hear it in your head when you read his text alone.

Rather than write entirely out of his own head, Cage customarily started with something else -- a subject or a favorite literary work. *Series re Morris Graves* began as a text to accompany an exhibition of drawings by the painter who had been his friend since the 1930's. A kind of American surrealist, two years older than Cage, Graves painted what was in his head. "The images seen within the space of the inner eye are as clear as seeing stars before your eyes if you get up suddenly," Graves wrote for a 1941 exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art. "It is certain that they are subjective, yet there is the absolute feeling that they are outside around your head."

Composed in the style of the *Diaries* of only a few years before, *Series* consists of disconnected remarks by Cage himself, by Graves in both print and conversation, and by mutual friends, leavened with "brief, unidentified quotations" from texts about spiritual experience. Since Cage wanted to realize with words alone, I think, the non-centered ethereal quality typical of Graves's painting, one issue is whether Cage comes closer to realizing this difficult ideal in sound than in print.

Cage befriended the painter Jasper Johns, a generation younger than both Cage and Graves, in the early 1950's, just after the younger man arrived in New York. Whereas Graves was concerned with spiritual-perceptual experience, a theme of Johns's art was esthetic-perceptual conundrums in the tradition of Marcel Duchamp. What Cage wanted to realize in his own text on Johns was the quality of depth that would always be incompletely understood. Formally, both *What You Say* and *Art Is Either a Complaint or Do Something Else* adopt his favorite literary form of the 1980's, a mesostic, where remarks would be made in short horizontal lines which contained key letters that are arrayed vertically. Whereas his principal other mesostics repeated key words vertically (e.g., James Joyce), here Cage begins with a statement by Johns that accounts for his predisposition for esthetic puzzle. All the letters from *What You Say* become Cage's vertical axis -- when it ends, he ends.

For the other text about Jasper Johns, the mesostic axis is initially an obscure sequence of incomplete sentences: "A Dead Man. Take a skull. Cover it with paint. Rub it against canvas. Skull against canvas." What is required on the page (but cannot be heard) is the experience of reading both horizontally and vertically, ideally keeping the progress of both in one's head. This text seems more attenuated both horizontally and vertically, than the others.

If you consider Cage to be a composer who also wrote, there is a case to be made for these performances as a kind of song, a contemporary *lied*, that extends a great tradition of singing while advancing it. Since no one else has done anything like these since, Cageian *lieder* is either a dead end or a barrier yet to be scaled.

# Concert Reviews

## Central Park on a Lark

JAMES L. PAULK

World premiere of *Central Park*, three one-act operas, conducted by Stewart Robertson and directed by Mark Lamos. Deborah Drattell's *The Festival of Regrets* (libretto by Wendy Wasserstein), with Lauren Flanigan, John Hancock, and Joyce Castle. Michael Torke's *Strawberry Fields* (libretto by A. R. Gurney), with Joyce Castle, John Hancock, and Jeffrey Lentz. Robert Beaser's *The Food of Love* (libretto by Terrence McNally), with Lauren Flanigan, Troy Cook, and Jennifer Anne Cooper. July 24, Glimmerglass Opera, NY. Reviewed August 14.

The concept was wretchedly bad. Take three famous playwrights, none of whom has ever written a libretto. Pair them with three well-known concert composers, none of whom has ever written an opera. Make them organize their work around a central idea (Central Park). And give the playwrights top billing and artistic control, with the power to fire the composers (one actually did). Such was the genesis of the trilogy *Central Park*, which had its premiere at the Glimmerglass Opera Festival before traveling on to New York City Opera. It would appear that this is an example of major artistic decisions being driven by the most crass marketing factors. So it is something of a surprise that the whole thing isn't a disaster, but a modest success. Fortunately, as sometimes happens, an ill-conceived project has turned out reasonably well -- saved, perhaps, by the talent of the collaborators, exceptional casts, and luck.

The first work of the three is *The Festival of Regrets*, by Deborah Drattell, with a libretto by Wendy Wasserstein. In the opera, a diverse group of New Yorkers come to terms with their pasts, lost loves, and the evanescence of life as they observe the Jewish ceremony of Tashlich, or the Festival of Regrets, a year-end ritual where the observant cast bread crumbs into the water to symbolize the expiation of their sins and regrets. The libretto is witty in the Wasserstein tradition, but with a dark, bittersweet quality. A divorced couple, sung by Lauren Flanigan and baritone John Hancock, have an awkward reunion, joined by his young girlfriend and her intrusive mother. As in her score for *Lilith*, heard at Glimmerglass last year, Drattell writes in a style heavily influenced by her Jewish musical heritage, but in this case artfully adapted to reinforce the libretto's underlying pathos. We will presumably be hearing more from her, as she is the composer-in-residence for New York City Opera, and this work serves to whet the appetite for something larger.

For *Strawberry Fields*, composer Michael Torke was paired with librettist A. R. Gurney. In this piece, an elderly woman, apparently with Alzheimer's disease, is about to be taken to a nursing home by her children. She meets a student in the park, where she has come from her Dakota residence, and imagines him to be her late husband, setting in motion an amusing but heart-rending exercise. Torke provides an eclectic and interesting score, tonal but with an interesting rhythmic modernity. But perhaps it is Joyce Castle's portrayal of the old lady that makes this opera work. The audience was seduced by her, as is her student friend.

Robert Beaser's *The Food of Love*, with a libretto by Terrence McNally, is the heaviest, darkest, and strongest of the evening's works. A homeless mother and child do battle with the policeman trying to shoo them out of the park, and she tries to give her baby to a succession of people who seem callous and caught up in their own affairs. The portraits of these people are so honestly drawn that they seem quite familiar. McNally's libretto is funny but frightening, dealing with our tendency to sympathize with the homeless more in the abstract than on the concrete pavement. There is a clear reference to the Madonna and child, looking for room at the inn, yet the woman seems psychotic, so the audience is never quite sure where everyone stands -- an ambiguity that persists as the opera ends. Beaser's score sometimes recalls Benjamin Britten, and the mother is an outcast like Peter Grimes, a similarly ambiguous character. But this score is Beaser's own, with definite American sources as well, and was most impressive. Such a harrowing work succeeds partly because Lauren Flanigan manages to turn in yet another one of her dazzling performances, this time in the role of the mother.

Beaser was the replacement for Aaron Jay Kernis, who was dismissed by McNally in an operatic sideshow reminiscent of *The Dreyfus Affair* a few seasons ago at City Opera. Why does this matter? Because it is the primacy of the music, and hence the composer, that makes opera different from some other types of musical theater. Of course, there is a disturbing tendency lately to produce works with scores that function more like movie music -- mood music for the theater -- and *The Central Park Affair* both reflects and reinforces that trend. City Opera, with its microphones, runs the risk of "dumbing opera down" so that it isn't really opera any more. This exercise is scary because it seems to be another experiment in the wrong direction.

The director for all three works was Mark Lamos, who really knows how to move singers around. The sets and costumes, by Michael Yeargan and Candice Donnelly, respectively, were unobtrusive and effective. Stewart Robinson conducted superbly. After visiting City Opera, the trilogy will be shown on public television sometime this next spring.

## Fear and Trembling in Aspen

JAMES L. PAULK

Aspen Concert Orchestra performs Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (libretto by the composer after the unfinished play by Georg Buchner), conducted by James Conlon, with Alan Held, Jennifer Ringo, Kenneth Reigel, John Cheek, and George Gray. July 28, Aspen Music Tent, Aspen, CO.

Aspen Opera Theater Center presents the world premiere of Bernard Rands's *Belladonna* (libretto by Leslie Dunton-Downer), conducted by David Zinman, directed by Edward Berkeley, with Makiko Narumi, Desiree Halec, Michael Maniaci, Katrina Thurman, and Jennifer Aylmer. July 29, Wheeler Opera House, Aspen, CO.

When composer Bernard Rands approached Leslie Dunton-Downer about writing the libretto for his new opera, he also handed her a somewhat unusual concept: take Plato's *Symposium* and cross it with a Passion setting. To complicate matters, he then asked that she find a way to set portions of it in ecclesiastical Latin, as he wanted to refer to Gregorian chant in his choral writing for the work. Dunton-Downer complied, switching the Platonic dialogue from a group of men having a dinner conversation about eros to a diverse group of modern women dining and discussing the meaning of love. As the women's conversations are acted out in a sort of dream sequence, they are structured to represent seven incidents in the life of Christ. *Belladonna* opens with the Last Supper (the dinner gathering), and progresses to include Trial (in which one of the women, a Chinese political dissident, is found guilty) and Execution, (where an abortion clinic physician is given a lethal injection while laid upon a cross-shaped gurney). The Betrayal involves a famous soprano, secretly a transvestite, who is married to a tenor, secretly (surprise) a woman -- each of whom has been having an affair with their manager, all of which is revealed onstage as an "opera within the opera." And the Latin? One of the women is a Classics professor in love with her student (Temptation), and another is a nun who, during prayer, hears "heavenly voices" (Solitude, but you knew that).

Well, it's not the simplest libretto. Yet Rands has somehow risen to the occasion, producing a score of equal complexity. Although this is ostensibly a chamber opera, written for 16-piece orchestra, it manages to have two choruses -- one in the pit and the other offstage, the latter requiring an assistant conductor and synthesizers. Each of the five main characters has her own motifs, pentatonic variations (which are characteristic of the work as a whole), and instrumental coloring. Sometimes the music of one character intrudes upon another, making subtle psychological comments à la Wagner. The score is eclectic: Gregorian sources, Asian material, an opera seria parody (the embarrassingly raucous "interior" opera, where the drag queen, as Media, is chased around by spear carriers gone wild), and plenteous chromaticism. Somehow, it all works. It was an exciting, challenging night, and the music was the real force that held this Gordian monster together as effective theater.

The production, by Aspen Opera Theater Center Director Edward Berkeley, was rather simple -- involving transparent plastic curtains, tables, chairs, and sophisticated lighting. The exquisite little Wheeler Opera House, a survivor of the Gold Rush, was the setting, and though all of this modernism sometimes seemed at odds with the gold-and-velvet setting, the intimacy of the space and its lovely acoustics helped things along greatly. The young cast was most impressive; it is hard to imagine a better performance than this one: every singer ideally cast, dramatically and vocally. The male soprano, Michael Maniaci, turned in a powerful and convincing performance in an extremely difficult role. Makiko Narumi, in the lead role of the Chinese dissident, was deeply moving. The Aspen Contemporary Ensemble, one of the music school's five orchestras, finessed a very difficult score under conductor David Zinman.

This was one of those works that only a fraction of the audience began to understand. The rest seemed polite, but a bit mystified. Everyone was so busy trying to sort out the labyrinthine text, that it was impossible to pay full attention to the music, at least on the first hearing. Yet this was one of those rare occasions when the sheer genius of the enterprise overwhelmed and astonished the listener, sweeping aside many problems and imperfections. This is an opera that must be heard again, and a composer who must be encouraged to keep at it. *Belladonna* was commissioned in honor of the 50th anniversary of the Aspen Festival and School, and it is hard to imagine a more appropriate way of celebrating.

In driving to the Aspen Music Festival campus, I encountered a group of teenager instrumentalists hitchhiking. As they were carrying instruments, I gave them a ride to the school, mentioning in passing that I was attending the performance of *Wozzeck* that evening. I was surprised to learn that all were playing in the orchestra, as *Wozzeck* challenges many of the most seasoned musicians. But the evening went rather well. Conductor James Conlon, perhaps realizing that he had a group of unusually big-voiced professional singers who could be heard over high volume (and a group of students who might not be able to sound so great while holding things down), led an unconventionally loud and spirited but quite intelligent performance. Alan Held was an extraordinary *Wozzeck*. Jennifer Ringo, as Marie, was less impressive but honorable. And Kenneth Reigel completely stole the show as the Captain, a role which he turned into a staged performance even though this was supposed to be a concert version in the Aspen Music Tent, which, incidentally, is to be replaced for next season with a greatly improved permanent structure.

## Dialogues of the Santa Feans

JAMES L. PAULK

Francis Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmélites* (libretto by the composer based on the play by Georges Bernanos), conducted by Stephane Denave, directed by Francesca Zambello, with Patrice Racette, Christine Goerke, Lynette Tapia, Sheila Nadler, Judith Christin, and Kathleen Clawson. July 31, Santa Fe Opera, Santa Fe, NM.

One of the many admirable things about Santa Fe Opera is its formula: of a five-opera season, one is always something new, often a premiere, and another must be a Richard Strauss opera. The remaining three are chosen from the usual war-horses. This year, the "new work" was Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmélites*, which is a stretch for this category. But much is forgiven -- for next year, Santa Fe will present the American premiere of Henze's *Venus and Adonis*. Meanwhile, a stellar performance of the Poulenc. The cast featured soprano Patrice Racette in an intense and powerfully dramatic portrayal of Blanche, the well-born young novice around whom the opera is constructed. Other standouts in this talented cast included Christine Goerke as a solid Madame Lidoine, the older nun, and Sheila Nadler, who stole the show with her deeply moving portrayal of Madame de Croissy, the old prioress.

Controversial director Francesca Zambello was in charge of this production. She seems to do her best work outside of New York, and this production was a model of simplicity and effectiveness. A very basic set, built around a massive moveable wall, was the backdrop for some of the most natural acting and stage movement I have seen in an opera of this vintage. And that is important, because dramatic stagecraft is essential to this harrowing work (New Yorkers will probably always compare everything to Teresa Stratas's performance in the Met's stunning production). Stephane Deneve, a French conductor making his American debut, provided a surprisingly spirited reading of the score.

This was the second year of the new opera house at Santa Fe, and the first year for the new seat-back titling system, the same as the Metropolitan Opera's. The titles work wonderfully well, and the house manages to preserve the open-air charm of the old one while mitigating its most serious problems (wind, rain, and acoustics). Next year, Henze!

## Summertime

JAMES L. PAULK

Berkshire Opera Company premieres Stephen Paulus's *Summer*. September 4, Pittsfield, MA.

Making its home in a 500-seat community college auditorium and surviving on an annual budget of less than one million dollars, the Berkshire Opera Company is one of the smaller professional opera companies in America. Yet this summer, to commemorate its 15th season, it commissioned a new opera, *Summer*, from Stephen Paulus. The libretto, by Joan Vail Thorne, is based on the Edith Wharton novel of the same name. This probably wasn't as much of a gamble as it seems. The company has considerable good standing with its audience; it has successfully produced a number of modern operas in the past (including a 1998 production of Menotti's *The Consul* and at least half a dozen others); Paulus, an old friend of Artistic Director Joel Revson and one of America's few full-time opera composers, is relatively old-fashioned, "safe," and reliable; and the opera is almost a local pageant, set in the region and drawn from the work of the town's most famous native.

Wharton's story takes place in a tiny isolated mountain village. The heroine, Charity Royall (sung by mezzo Margaret Lattimore) was born "on the mountain" -- in a nearby community of outlaws -- but raised by the town lawyer (sung by bass-baritone John Cheek), who now wants to marry her. A stranger appears in town, a young architect (sung by baritone Michael Chioldi) who proceeds to seduce Charity, but then abandons her for his well-born city girlfriend. Pregnant, Charity is rescued by her guardian in a bittersweet ending. Wharton makes all of this into a multi-layered masterpiece, psychologically rich and with wondrously complex characters. But this is hardly good news for a librettist who must somehow shrink the text to fit the needs of her composer. Thorne succeeds more often than not, and has managed to make at least the major characters three-dimensional and to keep Wharton's poetic language intact. The story is just as compelling in the opera house as in the novel -- the same sour, dry examination of class and character.

Paulus is a master craftsman, setting text to be understood and giving the singers a fair number of melodic set pieces, especially duets for the young lovers. Yet there is a sameness about all the music, which stays within a fairly narrow pattern, with little dramatic edge or variation of tempo. As with many neoromantic operas today, the text is skillfully set, but the music fails to take on the starring role that makes opera really "rock." Still, this was an opera that worked, and the reaction of the sold-out audience was enthusiastic.

It helped that the production was something of a coup. The sets, by David P. Gordon, used telescoping panels finished to look like clapboard, with photographs of local scenes projected in the rear. But the photographs made the village altogether too pretty and affluent, as Wharton's description is one of decay. However, no great damage is done, and it probably suits the local population to glamorize their history a bit. The young singers looked great and acted brilliantly under Mary Duncan's direction.

Lattimore, with a rich voice and serious dramatic skills, led a compelling cast. Cheek, as the lawyer/guardian, gave the most impressive performance of the evening, investing his character with all the pathos of a Hans Sachs. Chioldi managed a convincing portrayal of the architect, and two dramatic sopranos, Joanna Johnson and Michaela Gurevich, turned in excellent performances as Miss Hatchard, the town's grande dame, and Annabel, the architect's girlfriend. Revson led the 32-piece orchestra (the Camerata New York Orchestra) in an eloquent, thoroughly professional reading of the score. According to Paulus, there are no future plans for this opera as yet. But much of the production will be saved and could be utilized again. It deserves to travel, and, somehow, I suspect it will.

## Davison Memorial

### LOU CAMP

*Flowers for John Davison (1930-1999).* Crissey Concert. October 1, Fleisher Art Memorial, Philadelphia, PA.

The death, earlier this year, of John Davison deprived Philadelphia, always rich in native musical resources, of one of the area's most gifted and beloved composers. As first a student and then for many years a teacher at Haverford, Davison was an important creative presence in our musical midst, producing a body of music distinguished by an authentic personal voice, elegantly crafted from his rich store of musical awareness that included folk music, Bach, and jazz. Harrison Crissey, like Davison, a graduate of the Eastman School of Music, and Harry Hewitt presented a memorial concert to him on October 1 at the Fleisher Art Memorial. It may be hoped that other tributes will follow this fine start, which was devoted entirely to his music. The performers were all students of Davison, and they each gave a fine account of themselves, which of course redounded to the further honor of their mentor.

Heidi Jacob, a colleague of Davison's, opened proceedings with a few remarks; then, the pianist Annetta Lockhart played Davison's *Prelude No. 1* (1958) which showed its debt to Bach, while enlivening the solemn march of chords with some bracing exposed dissonances. Flutist Candice Shih and pianist Charles Abramovic brought off the *Introduction and Jazz-Reel* adroitly, the reel showing more syncopations than we might expect from the clean lines.

The real jewel of the first half was the *Introduction and Allegro for String Quartet*. The slightly haunted introduction and darkly tinted allegro amid the bright points are among the composer's most original efforts. It was played most securely and affectively by violinists Sarah Boss and Kate Gentry, Laura Montgomery, viola, and Bridget Penny, cello.

At the close of the intermission, Kit Crissey offered some affectionate anecdotes about the composer. The second half opened with the *Introduction, Psalm Tune and Allegro*, Op. 74 of 1981 with the unlikely combination of trombone and piano. Daniel Block managed the brass, assisted by Abramovic. This redoubtable pianist returned to close the evening with Davison's *Piano Sonata No. 3*, op. 113 (1995). This is a big, late piece in four movements. The first movement I thought carried touches of Barber in its ruminative and reflective mood, but without any melancholy or nostalgia. The second movement is just a great forward moving scherzo with some jazzy inserts. The following big adagio emerges out of the darkness of the bass depths; but then, as always, with this basically cheerful spirit, things lighten up in the middle, then settle back down toward the shadows. The last movement starts as a Davison Bach chorale, then breaks into a set of variations on "Caithness" from the Scottish Psalter of 1625, while Bach stays right there, present.

Thanks are due to Messrs. Crissey and Hewitt, but maybe most of all to John Davison, whose music will last because it is good, and so remains his gift to us.

## Mission Accomplished

### MARK PETERSEN

Seattle Symphony in Priaulx Rainier's *Sinfonia da Camera* (1947), G. Ligeti's *Ramifications* (1969), *Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* (1971) by Gavin Bryars, Copland's *Prelude* from *Symphony No. 1* (1934 chamber orchestra version), André Boucourechliev's *Ombres (Homage to Beethoven)* (1970), and Gail Kubik's *Folk Song Suite* (1945). October 22, Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA.

The current incarnation of the Seattle Symphony's new music series is called *Music of Our Time*. According to Music Director, Gerard Schwarz; the 1999-2000 series "is an unusually rich season . . . . I have asked Adam Stern, my gifted Associate Conductor, to put together unfamiliar works which have great importance to the development of musical composition in the 20th century. Naturally, I also want to celebrate Aaron Copland's 100th anniversary." Stern admirably completed both tasks.

Priault Rainier's *Sinfonia da Camera* is a powerful four-movement essay for strings. All the movements feature thematic and rhythmic development with stringent harmonies resulting from the chromatic (but not serial) melodic palette. The work opens with a dramatic theme reminiscent of a Jerry Goldsmith film score. As it progresses, *Sinfonia* becomes a mini-compendium of 20th century influences. The first movement recalls early Copland (*Piano Variations*) and Antheil's *Ballet mécanique*. Stravinsky comes to mind when hearing the third -- a rhythmic scherzo -- and Varèse is honored in the percussive finale. The orchestra's dynamic variation was phenomenal. Had the movement titles or tempo markings been printed in the program, the audience may not have applauded after the third.

György Ligeti's *Ramifications* definitely fits the "important" requirement for pieces on the program, and it is certainly less familiar than its older sibling *Atmosphères*. This is vintage Ligeti. Scored for 12-part strings, half of them tuned 1/4-tone higher, the work filled the hall with ephemeral clouds of overtones and partials. *Ramifications* also includes the trademark "insect sounds" found in the works of many of the sound mass composers. The fade-away ending left Stern meditatively conducting "silence;" an electric moment which made one afraid to breathe.

*Jesus' Blood Never Failed Me Yet* by Gavin Bryars was the "youngest" work on the program. It was composed in 1971 and is scored for tape loop, winds, brass, percussion and strings. The tape recording (originally an anonymous tramp in London) begins imperceptibly; fades in, and establishes a hypnotic litany to be accompanied by nascent rainbows of orchestral color.

Copland's *Prelude* from *Symphony No. 1* is an artifact from his chromatic "early" style. It is also a work which foreshadows many characteristics (especially orchestration techniques) found in his later compositions. A nice choice for the first concert of the series.

Like *Ramifications*, *Ombres (Homage to Beethoven)* by André Boucourechliev, is also scored for 12 strings -- this time one-to-a-part. It concocts metrical and aleatoric elements, sound mass and quotations, into a Penderecki-meets-Beethoven musical stew.

Gail Kubik's *Folk Song Suite* had its genesis in 1941, when the Columbia Broadcasting System asked the composer to take an American folk tune ("Whoopie-Ti-Yi-Yo") and "show what happens to it when treated freely by a serious composer." "Camptown Races" forms the source material for the third movement. The suite was completed with the composition of a similar treatment of two William Billings hymn tunes: "When Jesus Wept" and "Chester." This piece was clearly chosen for its crowd-pleasing ability; but it was amply evident that it was an orchestra favorite as well. Kubik generates interest through rapidly changing meters (and the corresponding alteration of the tunes), Grofé-style orchestration, Ivesian treatment of hymn tunes, and LOTS of sound.

In fact, there was almost too much sound for the Nordstrom recital hall, the smaller of the two venues within the symphony's year-old home, Benaroya Hall.

Conductor Stern demonstrated comfort and prowess with each of the diverse contemporary styles chosen for the program -- and accomplished both of maestro Schwarz's objectives for the series. The program was a delightfully satisfying cross-section of our 20th-century stylistic milieu -- and -- included a bit of Copland. Mission accomplished!

## Crumb Tan Potion

### LAURIE HUDICEK

Margaret Leng Tan performs George Crumb's *Makrokosmos, Volumes I and II*. October 22, Ulrich Recital Hall, University of Maryland, MD. Repeated. November 1, Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

On November 1 in Merkin Concert Hall in New York, the world's premier toy pianist, Margaret Leng Tan, made her big comeback to the "adult" piano. "Adult" is the word she used. For more than two years, Tan has spent the majority of her time dwarfing the instruments she played, while audiences delighted at her virtuosity. Her recent departure from her toys, placed Tan behind, and often inside, the concert grand piano.

In celebration of George Crumb's 70th birthday, the toy-pianist reverted to her alter ego, the string pianist. To pay tribute to Crumb, Margaret Leng Tan prepared the two volumes of the solo-amplified-piano *Makrokosmos*, a total of 24 fantasy pieces after the zodiac. Combined, the length of these colossal pieces verges on 70 minutes. Due to the stamina and focus required, they are rarely performed back to back. The Merkin Hall concert marked the first time both volumes have ever been performed on the same concert in New York. However, this was not the first time for Tan. Her first performance took place at the University of Maryland's intimate Ulrich Recital Hall on October 22. Tan used this performance as preparation for the Merkin Hall concert.

These were concerts that should never be reviewed for only the finished product. Although Tan's time on stage was considerable, she spent hours preparing before the concerts. However, Tan's preparations were not typical of a world-renowned pianist. She did not spend the beginning of her time on the Steinway tediously searching for the piano's idiosyncrasies. Nor did she run endless scales in an attempt to warm up her fingers. Instead, this pianist, whom one would normally expect to pull a miniature piano out of a hat, pulled a variety of objects from her bag and placed them inside the enormous instrument. The piano was suddenly dwarfing Tan.



With these objects, Tan prepared the piano for performance. This was not a preparation in the Cage sense of the word, but in the Crumb sense. The two are quite different. With Crumb, one finds fewer nuts and bolts. This is not to say that the preparation is any easier. Tan tediously labeled the inside of the piano and set up her trinkets, which included thimbles, glassware, jewelry, and paperclips.

Although these actions are expected of a pianist performing Crumb, viewing the procedure can be like that of observing an operation. Some actions (plucking and strumming the strings) are magical, while others (rolling glasses on the strings while playing: a dangerous feat) can cause an involuntary gasp. Some may believe Tan violates the piano, but one soon notices the extreme care she takes.

She approached the instrument with the care of a mother putting her sleeping child to bed. Before touching the strings, Tan washed her hands thoroughly and carefully marked the strings without disturbing the piano's intricate balance.

Observing Tan's attention to detail and the fatiguing manner by which she dressed the strings, one might be puzzled when looking inside her piano. Because every string-pianist labels his or her strings differently, it is virtually impossible for one to play on another's instrument. No common method exists. Tan's piano is not the epitome of order or economy as one might think. One wonders if she may need her own decoder ring to decipher her marks. About 100 labels were placed on the piano's inside: on the dampers, the bridge, the pins, and even some on the ends of strings. She also had various marks on the strings to help her locate the harmonics required. If one wanted to view Tan's piano after a concert, such a person would need to be quick, for this performer strips the instrument clean so no one will ever know she was there.

There are several actions required in Crumb's pieces that cannot be executed on every piano. Tan's performance was on a Steinway D. Due to bar placement, overstringing, and sheer size of the Steinway, problems arise. Required harmonics are often found under bars, beneath other strings, or too far inside the piano to reach while holding the pedal and standing. This sometimes requires the performer to contort her body in many unnatural ways. For example, the holes in the frame are quite far away from the keyboard, making it impossible for a pianist under 6 feet to reach the soundboard. Tan's solutions included the use of a wedge (à la Cowell) for the pedal, a seat pad to raise her higher in order to see into the piano, and an assistant to strike the soundboard.

In addition to playing inside the grand, Crumb requires the pianist to sing, groan, shout, whisper, and whistle. In this area, Tan fascinated some audience members by singing in the man's range. She also demonstrated in practice that she could sing well above most women's ranges as well. However, she used her assistant for the whistling.

Margaret Leng Tan's performances were awe-inspiring. Even her preliminary concert on a bare stage in Maryland was fascinating. The Merkin Hall concert was enhanced by projections of the zodiac symbols on the wall behind the piano, and added lighting design created a metaphysical atmosphere. However, these extras were not needed. Tan's performance alone was a vivid display of Crumb's interpretation of astrology.

Her commitment to the theatrics of the pieces was marvelous. She possesses the stamina of an ironman [ironman?] and the stage presence of a seasoned Shakespearean actor. Tan's whispers were eerie, shouts startling, and groans haunting. The combination of sounds Tan pulled from the piano reminded one at times of childhood phantoms and carnival rides. She created sound images through movement and resonance. Tan is truly the master storyteller of the concert stage. Her performance was certainly larger than life. Welcome back, Margaret!

## Wascally Wadicals

### LAURIE HUDICEK

*Looney Tunes*. Paul Hindemith's *Die Serenaden*, opus 35. Paul Schoenfield's *Carolina Morning*, and Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire*, opus 21, performed by the 20th Century Consort, directed by Christopher Kendall. November 13, Ring Auditorium, Hirshhorn Museum, Washington DC.

Three seriously different pieces were found on a *Looney Tunes* concert on November 13 at Washington's Ring Auditorium. Luckily, these composers had a more intellectual sense of moonstruck, than their cartooning contemporaries.

Paul Hindemith's secular cantata, *Die Serenaden*, is scored for soprano, oboe, viola, and cello: an unusually small ensemble for a cantata that claims characteristics of Bach. However, the union of the new with the old finds one in a mixture of different centuries.

The texts were taken from unknown romantic poets, while the style of the music owes a great deal to the masters of the baroque. This is not to say that Hindemith accompanies the soprano with three-part counterpoint for the entire piece. Often there are solos, duets, and trios. The cantata is barely set as a cantata before the cello launches into what seems to be a dramatic solo. Who is the diva in this piece? The instrumentalists as well as the soprano learn patience and graciousness in Hindemith's little essay -- a patience more suited to orchestral works.

One usually would focus on the singer when such a piece is reviewed. However, this ensemble, which included Daniel Foster, viola, David Hardy, cello, Lucy Shelton, soprano, and Rudolph Vrbsky, oboe, had a genuine camaraderie. Each was allowed to shine in their "solo," while the others stepped out of the light. Often one finds a diva, be it a singer or a concerto soloist, commanding the audience's attention even when he or she is not playing. But this was not true of the Consort.

Most notable of the soloists was Hardy. He took center stage with his solo introduction, and almost overshadowed Shelton in their duet. This performance of Hindemith's cantata was a true battle of the divas, but not without the perfect ensemble. With all of the upstaging occurring, the Consort melded into one during the ensemble sections, creating a remarkable variety of styles.

The youngest piece on the program, Paul Schoenfield's *Carolina Morning*, reached deep into the classic era to bring forth a set of "traditionally composed" variations. Each variation increases in tempo with a slower penultimate variation and a tarantella finale. *Carolina Morning* is based on musical motives of the 1922 song "Carolina in the Morning" by Gus Kahn and Walter Donaldson. The actual recognized melody of this piece is not played completely until the close of the entire set of variations, and its arrival is a satisfying experience.

As a whole, this piece is more classical than "new," making the second half of the concert, *Pierrot lunaire*, stand out as the "avant-garde" piece. *Carolina Morning* is an ideal audience pleaser, without any real challenges for the listener. The piece is humorous at times, lapsing into what resembles ragtime in the piano. In addition, one hears an abundance of imitation and pastoral characteristics. The opening makes one think of a dream of tremolos in the strings, until the grounded piano acts as an alarm to bring back reality.

The 20th Century Consort represented this delightful work with humor and extreme energy. The ensemble, although a classical piano quartet, was actually a merging of sounds from different centuries. One might have questioned if the concert had any "new" music in it at all.

*Pierrot lunaire's* 21 pieces representing the character of a moonstruck Pierrot monopolized the second half of the concert. The role of Pierrot -- for it really is a role rather than a soloist's dream -- was sung by soprano Lucy Shelton.

At first, one might have thought the performance would be simply an adequate representation, for there were minimal theatrics. Shelton simply stood on a pedestal in her concert dress from the cantata. However, when the music began, one realized that extra-musical devices, such as lighting, makeup, or costumes would possibly have weakened the performance. Shelton commanded the audience's attention with her exaggerated facial expressions and the extravagantly emphatic sounds that seemed to arise from the depths of Pierrot's soul. The "Madonna" movement had Shelton appearing as a hanged doll, while "The Crosses" seemed to crucify her. Her obsession with the moon was spell-binding: a pathetic sight of unyielding delusion. She changed personalities as one would change clothes. Shelton was the perfect Sybil!

The combination of these three pieces, which one may categorize as a compilation of the millennium, could satisfy even those who live their musical lives in a world that is void of the 20th century. Perhaps it is Kendall's participation in both this ensemble and the Folger Consort, for which he is founder and lutenist, that flavored the performance. Few artists could include hundreds of years in a concert that featured only one century and make it a success.

# Record Reviews

## Ucross Ulook Ulisten

LAURIE HUDICEK

Ernesto Diaz-Infante. *Ucross Journal*. [*Ucross Journal Weeks I - IV, Ucross Improvisations I - V*] Ernesto Diaz-Infante, piano. Itz'at Musica / BMI and Pax Recordings.

Often when one thinks of the great state of Wyoming, a vastness is imagined that can only be experienced by the visual sense. Ernesto Diaz-Infante has taken the enormity of the state's landscape and translated it into sound. What could once only be comprehended by the eye, is now accessible to the ear in *Ucross Journal*.

The composer wrote this set of piano pieces while in residency at The Ucross Foundation in Ucross, Wyoming. Composed as one would draft a written journal, Infante-Diaz depicts the many characters of Ucross, and includes a title for each. Some titles are "the big sky," "the high plains landscapes," and "the passing of the clouds." Although some are strictly musical, such as "play through/retrograde/repeat/skip harmonies," each represents clearly the happenings one may encounter in Wyoming's wide open spaces.

The chords of the piano are distant and sparse throughout most of the 64 minutes of the recording. Even without the written references to Morton Feldman by the composer, one would immediately notice the resemblance to the former's *Piano*. However, the long slow-moving chords are the only similarities between the two pieces.

*Ucross Journal* is not music simply for listening, like a symphony. Rather, it is sound that needs to be experienced. It represents the essence that is Wyoming's scenery.

There is a journey through which one can come to terms with the sparse landscape of the state as well as the sparse landscape of *Ucross Journal*. Upon the first listening, the hollowness is overwhelming, as it might be when looking across the plains. There is no rush to a destination, only uninterrupted time. One may travel through several feelings, such as desolation, solitude, loneliness or fear, before arriving at an absolute tranquillity not found in the hustle of everyday life.

After four weeks of meditative vignettes, Diaz-Infante adds five *Ucross Improvisations*, but the traditional improvisatory character with which one is familiar is missing. To improvise on a subject that is so static and bare is almost futile, yet this composer has done so in these five pieces in a character similar to the journal entries.

As a musical work, the strength of these pieces is not in the notes, but in the space between the sound. Possibly, the composer found himself in Ucross. Certainly his music leaves room for this listener to find herself. As a whole, *Ucross Journal* is not a piece to hear on the concert stage, for it needs to be experienced several times before the true illustration of Wyoming landscape is visible. With only one hearing, the listener might be deprived of a transcendental experience.

## Three Partitas from a Long Panhuysen

MARILYN HUDSON

Paul Panhuysen. *Three Partitas for Long Strings* (1997). Paul Panhuysen. XI Records.

You are listening to some of the strangest humming you've ever heard. Gradually, you become aware of a great deal of activity taking place within and around the humming -- overtone clusters of more or less complexity are building up and your ears hear and your mind starts to create patterns and you want to be in the room with them to see how this is all happening.

What you are actually hearing are the rosined arms, hands and fingers of Paul Panhuysen stroking thin steel wires attached to the walls and running parallel across the space of a large room. For these *Partitas*, four long strings, not amplified, span the large space at Het Apollohuis, the wooden wall acting as a resonator. Panhuysen plays the strings by walking back and forth between them at a measured pace, brushing them with his arms and hands, keeping the pressure light. This yields a virtually continuous sound as overtones are coaxed from the wires. The organ-like sounds are so otherworldly, often immeasurably beautiful, and so complex it is hard to realize that they are being created by the motions of one man.

Panhuysen's experiments are based on some definite criteria. Not interested in short, temporal melodies, or any factor that fragments the music, he achieves a feeling of existing outside of time with the long strings. Since the strings do not respond quickly to changes in playing technique, the result is a continuous sound with many layers of different harmonics in which the listeners may well lose their perception of time.

Here in the *Partitas* the main emphasis rests in the tunings and the density of sound, primary factors differentiating the three pieces. The strings in *Partita I* are all of the same length, thus the same pitch and the sound is very stable and continuous with hints of the fifth and the octave in the harmonics. *Partita II*, with its strings tuned numerically, is very dissonant. Occasional consonances tease your ear and disappear into shimmery ghosts from another planet, while the underpinning of sustained tones steadily pulsates in an atmosphere of varying timbres. *Partita III*, tuned proportionally, has a secure tonal center around which clusters build slowly from the center and chords progress in a stately manner. According to the liner notes, each *Partita* was recorded four times, superimposing these recordings over each other with Panhuysen listening to the earlier recordings over headphones while playing. Thus the total sound of each *Partita* was produced by 16 strings.

The Pythagorean dictum that "music is number made audible" is amply demonstrated here. The tunings for *Partita II* are equally diminishing in length, thus:  $S1=x$   $S2=x-y$   $S3=x-2y$   $S4=x-3y$  and on until  $S16=x-15y$ ; in which  $S_n$  is the actual string,  $x$  is the string at full length and  $y$  is 25 cm. *Partita III* has proportional tuning using the following series:  $S1=1/2 x$   $S2=2/3x$   $S3=3/4x$   $S5=4/5x$   $S15=15/16x$   $S16=x$ ; in which  $S_n$  is each string and  $x$  is the string at full length. These formulas are quoted from the essay by Rene van Peer which appears in the liner notes with the CD and in the March 1999 issue of *Experimental Musical Instruments*, published by Bart Hopkin of Nicasio, CA, until June of 1999 when publication was ceased. To anyone interested enough to find a copy of the March issue, the extra reward will be in seeing the pictures of several Panhuysen installations.

In spite of all this exactitude in string lengths, tension (applied with Belgian turnbuckles or weights of up to 7 kg.), and tunings -- Panhuysen welcomes the ever-present element of chance and discovery. His playing technique itself affords subtle distinctions and environmental factors may well affect any performance. His over 200 installations always respond to the particular environment, which range from a dock on the Baltic Sea to museums and warehouses.

The idea of performing room-sized steel string installations has been around at least since the 1970's and there are several other performers who have advanced their own techniques (Jim Burton in his *String Quartets*, Ellen Fullman, Terry Fox and Alvin Lucier are a few of them) but no one has done as much to bring this art before the public as Paul Panhuysen.

## Authors

MARK ALBURGER began playing the oboe and composing in association with Dorothy and James Freeman, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick. He studied with Karl Kohn at Pomona College; Joan Panetti and Gerald Levinson at Swarthmore College (B.A.); Jules Langert at Dominican College (M.A.); Roland Jackson at Claremont Graduate University (Ph.D.); and Terry Riley. Alburger writes for *Commuter Times* and is published by New Music. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

LOU CAMP teaches World Literature and Composition at Bucks County Community College. An ardent concertgoer and record collector, he has loved music all of his life. While growing up in Cincinnati he heard Goossens and sang in the chorus under Max Rudolf. He hosted classical and jazz music radio programs at WXPB for many years. He is a member of the Musical Fund Society.

JEFF DUNN is a systems analyst and freelance critic with a B.A. in music and a Ph.D. in Education. He is an avid collector of recorded performances of 20th-century music, a dedicated operagoer, 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 serves on the board of directors for New Music Forum and is a correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

LAURIE HUDICEK began her musical education at the age of five. In 1988 she began studying at the Peabody Preparatory School where she was a student of Frances Cheng-Koors. She completed the school's certificate program in 1991. In 1995, Hudicek graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in music from St. Mary's College of Maryland where she studied with Brian Ganz and focused on twentieth-century repertoire with Eliza Garth. In 1998, she received her Master's of Music degree in Piano Performance from the University of Maryland while studying with Bradford Gowen.

Composer and writer MARILYN HUDSON received her MA in Composition from California State University at Hayward in 1996. She recently has been involved with sound sculptures built from old boats.

RICHARD KOSTELANETZ has authored and edited several books about John Cage, including *Thirty Years of Critical Engagements* (Archae, 1999). Kostelanetz's writing appears this month appears courtesy of Mode Records from *The Text Pieces 1* (Mode B4/B5).

JAMES L. PAULK is a New York correspondent for *The New Music Connoisseur* and 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).

# Calendar

January 6

Terry Riley and the All Stars. Union High School, Nevada City, CA. Through January 13, Merkin Hall, New York (NY).

San Francisco Symphony in Kernis's *Musica celestis* and Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through January 8.

Puccini's *Madama Butterfly*. Metropolitan Opera, New York, NY.

Philadelphia Orchestra in Sibelius's *The Swan of Tuonela*, Stenhammar's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, and Nielsen's *Symphony No. 4 ("The Inextinguishable")*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through January 8.

Seattle Symphony in J. Fischer's *Symphony for Eight Timpani and Orchestra*. Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA.

January 7

Kitty Brazelton and her rockestra DADADAH in her *Love, Lust, and Beyond*. HERE, New York, NY.

January 8

*Voices of the Century*. Thompson's *Alleluia*, Ives's *Psalm 67*, Barber's *The Twelfth Night*, Copland's *In the Beginning*, Wuorinen's *A Solis Ortus*, Harbison's *Concerning Them Which Are Sleep*, Perle's *The Chorus of Marvels*, Babbitt's *Three Cultivated Choruses*, Lang's *By Fire*, Schuman's *Carols of Death*, and Dawson's *Ezekial Saw de Wheel*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

January 9

World premiere of Joël Lindheimer's *Concerto for Cello and Orchestra* with Jean-Michel Fonteneau and the UCD Symphony Orchestra. Freeborn Hall, University of California, Davis, CA.

January 10

California E.A.R. Unit in *Century's End / It's a Wrap*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

*Unmeasurable Distance*, with Philip Gelb, Carla Kihlstedt, and Hugh Livingston. Noh Space / Theater Yugen, San Francisco, CA.

*New Music Petting Zoo: American Composers' Summit*, with Derek Bermel, John Zorn, George Crumb, Sebastian Currier, John Musto, and Kenji Bunch. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

January 11

New York Philharmonic in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Berg's *Violin Concerto*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

January 13

Ensemble Intercontemporain in Monnet's *Bosse, crâne rasé, nez crochu* and Durand's *La terre et le feu*. Centre Georges-Pompidou, Paris, France.

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*. Davies Symphony Hall, New York, NY. Through January 16.

January 14

Soloists of L'Ensemble Intercontemporain in Jarrell's *...some leaves II...*, Huber's *Sabeth*, Zender's *Tre Pezzi*, Schöllhorn's *Under one's breath*, G. Steinke's *...kaum einen Hauch...*, and Holliger's *Trio*. Goethe-Institut, Paris, France.

New York Philharmonic in Rihm's *Time Chant*, Berg's *Violin Concerto*, Ravel's *La valse*, and Penderecki's *Violin Concerto No. 2 ("Metamorphosen")*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

Orchestra of St. Luke's in Zemlinsky's *Psalm 23* and the New York premiere of his *Psalm 13*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

January 15

Rubio String Quartet in Shostakovich's *String Quartet No. 2*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Seattle Creative Orchestra in Hába's *Nonet*, Schoenberg's *Three Piano Pieces* and *Suite*, and Zemlinsky's *Trio*. Brechmerin Auditorium, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

January 16

*Breaking Sound Barriers*. Ford's *If and Don't Lose Your Faith in Me*, Coltrane's *Equinox*, Collins's *Through*, McDaniel's *Who Do You Love?*, Weill's *My Ship, One Life to Live*, and *Lost in the Stars*, Strange's *Elemental Vamp*, Avila's *What, Me Worry?*, Cage's *Variations II*, and Scoville's *Ice 5*. Recital Hall, University of California, Santa Cruz, CA.

January 18

L'itinéraire in Zinsstag's *Artifices I*, Leroux's *d'Aller*, and Grisey's *Périodes*. IRCAM, Paris, France.

San Francisco Contemporary Players in Copland's *Piano Quartet*, M. Wagner's *Sextet*, Caltabiano's *Quilt Panels*, and Davidovsky's *Quartetto*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

*Enchanted Circle Series*. Nancarrow's *Tango*, Russell's *Concerto for Two Guitars*, Cogan's *Eight Poems of William Bronk*, Latartara's *Ripe*, and Liang's *Dialectal Percussions, March Cathedral, Garden Eight for Any Solo Instrument*, and *Lake*. Brown Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Parnassus in Carter's *Trilogy*, the U.S. premiere of Constant's *Trois Portraits*, the New York premiere of Korf's *Presences from Aforetime*, and R. Martin's *Charred Beloved*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

January 19

Cellist Anssi Karttunen in Saariaho's *Prés* for cello and electronics. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

Colorado String Quartet in Shostakovich's *Quartet No. 5*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

John Adams conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Glass's *Façades*, Piazzolla's *La Mufa*, and Adams's *Violin Concerto*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through January 22.

Violinist Charles Libove and pianist Nina Lugovoy in Bacewicz's *Violin Sonata No. 4*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

January 20

Soloists of L'Ensemble Intercontemporain in Eötvös's *Kosmos, Psy, Two poems to Polly*, and *Intervalles/Intérieurs*, and Schoenberg's *Suite*. Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France.

ACF Salon with Harry Bernstein, Sarah Michael, and Darcy Reynolds. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

New Century Chamber Orchestra in Kokkonen's *Music for String Orchestra* and Sibelius's *Raka Stava*. First Congregational Church, Berkeley, CA. Through January 23, Hoytt Theater, Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael, CA.

The Philadelphia Orchestra in Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through January 24, Carnegie Hall, New York (NY).

January 21

Guy Livingston in *60 Seconds for Piano*. Minute-long works by T.J. Anderson, Andriessen, Aviram, Baas, Bailie, Beaudoin, Bermel, Betz, Bolcom, Boulez, Bourdelion, Büttich, Caravaggio, Carrick, Cody, Ketzler the Cat & Morris Cotel, Culpo, Eggert, Eidschun, Ekimozsky, Engel, Fox, Frahm, Goldschneider, Gosfield, Newton "Newt" Hinton, Paul von Hippel, Jallen, J. Katz, Kleier, Landau, Lann, Leach, Mancuso, Maral, Martinez, McGinn, McLosky, Nez, Arnoud, Norton, Pallante, Pritsker, Rovin, Shadle, Sharp, Schockley, D.E. Stewart, Togawa, Vees, Warburton, Yoshinaka, and Zebrowski. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

January 22

85th birthday of Henri Dutilleux.

Regina Symphony Orchestra in Adaskin's *Fanfare*, Liebermann's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, and Holst's *The Planets*. Regina, Canada.

Bakersfield Symphony in the premiere of Bedford's *The Sultan's Turret* and Debussy's *Nocturnes*. Bakersfield, CA.

Santa Barbara Symphony in Villa-Lobos's *Symphony No. 10*. Santa Barbara, CA. Through January 24.

Pianist Hai-Kyung Suh in Schoenberg's *Five Piano Pieces* and Stravinsky's *Petroushka*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Orchestra 2001 in Pärt's *Collage on B-A-C-H*, Finko's *Violin Concerto*, and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 14*. Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. Repeated January 23, Trinity Center for Urban Life, Philadelphia.

January 23

SFS Chamber Music presents Prokofiev's *Quintet in G Minor*, Martinu's *Duo for Violin and Cello*, and Schulhoff's *Concertino*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Marin Symphony in Hovhanness's *Symphony No. 2 ("Mysterious Mountain")* and Holst's *The Planets*. Veterans Auditorium, San Rafael, CA.

January 24

82nd anniversary of the birth of Gottfried von Einem.

Left Coast Chamber Orchestra in the West Coast premiere of Davidovsky's *Festino for Guitar, Viola, Cello, and Double Bass*, the premieres of Merritt's *The Day Florestan Murdered Magister Raro*, Laurie San Martin's *Trio for Viola, Cello, and Piano*, and Riley's *El Hombre*. Green Room, War Memorial Performing Arts Center, San Francisco, CA.

Earplay in Chuaqui's *De Metal y Madera*, J. Berger's *The Lead Plates of the ROM Press*, Furman's *Matices Coincidentes*, and Davidovsky's *Synchromisms No. 10*. Campbell Recital Hall, Braun Music Center, Stanford University, CA.

January 25

Clarinetist Armand Angster in Aperghis's *Simulacre IV*. Ircam, Paris, France.

January 26

Dawn Upshaw and Gilbert Kalish in Messiaen's *Harawi*, Saariaho's *Lonh*, and Harbison's *Mirabai Songs*. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

Prometheus Chamber Orchestra in Lutoslawski's *Funeral Music* and Sibelius's *Symphony No. 3*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

20/21 Club Record Party, with the Emerson String Quartet performing Shostakovich string quartets. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

January 27

Ensemble Intercontemporain in Lachenmann's *...Zwei Gefühle...* and Eötvös's *As I crossed a bridge of dreams*. Cité de la musique, Paris, France.

NEC Opera Theater in Britten's *The Rape of Lucretia*. Emerson Majestic Theater, Boston, MA. Through January 30.

Shostakovich's *Cello Sonata* and Feldman's *Enigma No. 1*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Philadelphia Orchestra in Bernstein's *Overture to Candide* and *Serenade*, Liebermann's *Concerto for Flute and Orchestra*, and Copland's *Appalachian Spring Suite*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through February 1.

Seattle Symphony in Copland's *Billy the Kid Suite*. Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA.

January 28

Oakland East Bay Symphony in Barber's *Knoxville: Summer of 1915*. Paramount Theatre, Oakland, CA.

Violinist Janet Packer and pianist Orin Grossman in Haversal's *Legend*. Old First Church, San Francisco, CA.

Shelley Hirsch's *For My Father Piece*. The Kitchen, New York, NY. Through February 5.

January 29

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in Tippett's *Divertimento on Sellinger's Round* and the world premiere of Botti's *Within Darkness*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

Percussionist Stephen Schick and cellist Maya Beiser in Didkovsky's *Caught by the Sky with Wire* and Ung's *Grand Alap*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Yaquina Orchestra in Adams's *Shaker Loops*. Newport, OR.

January 30

Contemporary Festival, with Gunther Schuller. Schuller's *Conversations for Jazz Quartet and String Quartet*, *Fantasy for Cello*, and *Homages for Eight Cellos*. Brown Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

January 31

Vinny Golia Ensemble. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Columbia Sinfonietta in Ron Smith's *Remembrances of a Garden*, Hurel's *Poul l'image*, and Grisey's *Les Espaces Acoustiques: Prologue, Périodes, and Partiels*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

# Chronicle

November 1

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

Sara Roberts. Mills College, Oakland, CA.

George Crumb 70th Birthday Celebration. Margaret Leng Tan performs the first back-to-back presentation of *Makrokosmos, Books I and II: 24 Fantasy Pieces after the Zodiac for Amplified Piano*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Copland's *Piano Quartet*. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Foldover broadcasts Peter Blauvelt's *Oblaka*, Robert J. Frank's *Zymurgy*, Inez's *Suction*, Patrick Kosk's *Radial Nerve Pressure*, Petri Kuljuntausta's *Idea of Proof*, Tung-Lung Lin's *Mirror of Time*, Juhani Nuorvala's *Im Vorbeigehen*, Teemu Ontero's *Objawr*, Mark Phillips's *T. Rex*, Funki Porcini's *Long Road*, Michel Redolfi's *appel d'air*, and Kalev Tiits's *Short and Gritty*. WOBC, Oberlin, OH.

Bill Frisell and the New Quartet. Theatre of Living Arts, Philadelphia, PA. "On one song his lines recalled Thelonious Monk, and on the next conjured up Aaron Copland's Appalachian Spring with Jimi Hendrix as guest soloist" [Karl Stark, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/3/99].

November 2

M. Rouse's *Dennis Cleveland*. Founders Hall, Orange County Performing Arts Center, CA. Repeated November 6.

San Francisco Opera presents Berg's *Wozzeck*. War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA. Through November 17.

Meredith Monk's *Magic Frequencies: A Science Fiction Chamber Opera*. Joyce Theater, New York, NY. Through November 7. Through November 20, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore (PA). "*Magic Frequencies* . . . has all Ms. Monk's signature techniques, most notably stylized dance moves and wordless vocalizations that combine a Minimalist simplicity and repetition with an appealingly complex, interlocking rhythmic counterpoint. Equally central to Ms. Monk's style, and abundantly present here, is an undercurrent of wry humor that keeps the piece afloat" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 11/4/99]. "Two of her early colleagues were . . . Steve Reich and Philip Glass. Like them, she's a fast and articulate talker. . . . Monk's father died while she was developing *Magic Frequencies*" [Elizabeth Zimmer, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/16/99].

November 3

Student Electronic Showcase Concert. Mills College, Oakland, CA.

Smuin Ballets presents Stravinsky's *Les Noces*. Cowell Theatre, San Francisco, CA. Through November 21.

NEC Orchestra in Britten's *Sinfonia da Requiem* and Larsen's *Overture for the End of a Century*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Mannes Orchestra in Stravinsky's *Le Chant du Rossignol*, Bright Sheng's *Flute Moon*, and Bartók's *The Miraculous Mandarin Suite*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

*Sonic Boom 8*. New York New Music Ensemble in Steiger's *Thirteen Loops*, Wolfe's *Girlfriend*, Lowenstern's *Spasm*, and Mackey's *Micro-Concerto for Percussion*. Cooper Union, New York, NY. Festival through December 6.

November 4

Different Trains presents Sappington's *Beneath the Underdog*, Brennan's *Formation 1* and *Formation 2*, Hoey's *Sudden Travel*, Flaherty's *Trio for Cello and Digital Processor*, Jarvinen's *Pizzicato*, Patricio da Silva's *Estudo Para Clarinete*, and Hiel's *Flow: Quiet in the City* for 5 wineglass players and piano. Zipper Auditorium, Colburn School of the Performing Arts, Los Angeles, CA.

Stephen Petronio Dance Company in Nyman's *Strange Attractors*. Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA. Through November 7.

NEC Contemporary Ensemble in Brant's *Angels and Devils*, Escot's *Sarabande for Lillian*, Wyner's *Memorial Music I* and *Memorial Music II*, Berio's *Sequenza No. 7b*, Heiss's *Mosaics with Fanfare*, and Nancarrow's *Trio*. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Hoffmann-Goldstein Duo in Shapey's *Gottlieb Duo*, S.S. Smith's *Links No. 6 (Song Interiors)*, the New York premieres of Wolff's *Rosas*, Dashow's *First Tangent to the Given Curve*, and Delio's *not*, the world premiere of Clearfield's *Double Play*, and Pasaribu's *Genderang Senja*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Organist David Hurd in his *Evening Song*. Church of the Holy Apostles, New York, NY.

New York Philharmonic in Tippet's *A Child of Our Time*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Through November 6.

Philadelphia Orchestra in Varèse's *Arcana* and *Un Grand Sommeil noir* (orch. Beaumont), and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through November 9.

Seattle Symphony in Honegger's *Symphony No. 2* and Glazunov's *Violin Concerto*. Seattle, WA. Through November 7.

November 5

Ensemble Intercontemporain conducted by Pierre Boulez, in Alban Berg's *Chamber Concerto for Piano, Violin, and 13 Wind Instruments*. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

*The Art of One*, with Aaron Bennett, Morgan Guberman, Matt Ingalls, Adam Lane, and John Shiurba. Art Rattan, Oakland, CA.

*Festival of New American Music*, with Chen Yi and her *The Golden Flute*, *Feng, Qui, Fiddle Suite*, *Romance*, and *Fisherman*. California State University, Sacramento CA. "In her enormously likable way, she was as much fun as the music, which is saying a lot" [William Glackin, The Sacramento Bee, 11/8/99].

*Enie Macy & the 10 Step Program*, by Lemberg, Serber, Foodvaylor, Leonard, and Wilson. San Francisco, CA. Through November 13.

San Francisco Symphony in Shchedrin's *Suite: Not Love Alone* and Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 3*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.



Claremont Ensemble in Crumb's *Night of the Four Moons*, Schwanter's *Distant Runes and Incantations*, and Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*. Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY.

American debut of the Monks, in their first show since 1967. New York, NY. "The Monks were radical oddballs even in the 1960's . . . [f]ormed by five American G.I.'s stationed in West Germany . . . . The band stripped down its music, discarding most melody in favor of seething chords above . . . simple, relentless drumbeat. . . . Songs pounded and oompahed, then sprouted an incongruous harmony chorus or veered into a new key. . . . [T]he monks once again wore black shirts and nooses; their tonsures looked less startling on balding pates. . . . [The] organ shifted between staccato chords and gusty dissonances" [Jon Pareles, *The New York Times*, 11/8/99].

Bachmann-Klibonoff-Fridman Trio in Schoenfield's *Café Music* and Moravec's *Mood Swings*. Morgan Library, New York, NY.

World premiere of Michael Wartofsky's *Falling Leaves* (libretto by Lauren Marshall). Seattle, WA. Through November 14.

November 6

ACF *Salon* with Laurie Amat, Matthew Burtner, Jim McManus, Katie Wreede, and Richard Burg. Berkeley, CA.

*Inside/Out* with Chris Brown and Brandon LaBelle. Brown's *Clouds* and *Invention #5*, Coffey's *Muka Wha?* and LaBelle's *noise is a noise*. Concert Hall, Mills College, Oakland, CA.

ACF *Monthly Meeting* with Bruce Rockwell. San Francisco, CA.

Community Music Center Orchestra in Kimbell's *Night Songs*, Glanville-Hicks's *Etruscan Concerto*, and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*. First Unitarian Universalist Church, San Francisco, CA.

Carlisle Floyd's *Susannah*, Washington Opera, Washington, DC.

*Music from China*. Chen Yi's *Duo Ye*, Zhou Long's *Valley Streams*, and Zhou Qinru's *Moving Clouds*. Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

Philadelphia Orchestra in Holst's "Jig" from *St. Paul's Suite*, Gould's "Pavane," from *American Symphonette No. 2*, and Argento's "Tango" from *The Dream of Valentino*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA.

*New Music North West*, with Tim Brock, Matthew Burtner, Bret Battey, Diane Thorne, Martin Gotfritt, Susan Parenti, Ann Warde, Beatriz Ferreyr, Elsa Justel, Volkmar Lien, Stuart Dempster, Peter Randlett, Terry Setter, Linda Antas, Arun Chandra, Amy Denio, David Evan Jones, and Chris DeLaurenti. Olympia, WA.

*Computer Music from Argentina*. U. of Washington, Seattle, WA.

November 7

Zap Mama. Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA.

Citywinds. Gualala Arts Center, Gualala, CA. Through November 13, St. Joseph's Hall, Grass Valley.

California Symphony in Nelson's *Savannah River Holiday* and Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 3*. Walnut Creek, CA.

Met Orchestra in Cage's *Atlas Eclipticalis*, Schuller's *Of Reminiscences and Reflections*, and Milhaud's *Le Boeuf sur le Toit*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

Loyola University New Orleans presents the New York premiere of W.F. Reed's *Three Piano Pieces*, the world premieres of McKitty's *The Seventh Moon*, Vachon & Ricci's *L'amour apprend au monde à aimer* and *Lost in Maspeth*, Otomo & Ricci's *Indifferent Aim*, Vachon & Landreth's *Nothing Can Change My Dream*, and Pillow's *Two Jazz Pieces*, Copland's *Poems of Emily Dickinson*, Debussy's "Ondine" from *Préludes, Book II*, and Poulenc's *Sonate à Quatre Mains*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

New York Philharmonic Ensembles in Hindemith's *Die Serenaden* and Copland's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*. Merkin Hall, NY, NY.

Lahti Symphony Orchestra of Finland in Sibelius's *Symphony No. 5*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

November 8

Death of trumpeter/bandleader/composer Lester Bowie (b. Frederick, MD), of liver cancer, at age 58. "[A]n icon of the experimental movement in jazz from the mid-1960's on . . . . Best known as a member of the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Mr. Bowie performed and recorded for more than 30 years. . . . In most performances he wore a long white lab coat and his narrow face was bracketed by a flat-top haircut and a sharp goatee. In publicity photos he was rarely seen without a cigar. . . . The most famous part of Mr. Bowie's trumpet language was timbral effects -- glissandos, smears, growls, flutters, half-valved wincies and other vocalizations that worked their way into the style of almost every self-consciously experimental jazz trumpeter . . . . [H]e attended a composers' workshop led by the pianist Muhal Richard Abrams. Many of those in the workshop, including Roscoe Mitchell, Henry Threadgill, Joseph Jarman, Anthony Braxton and Jack DeJohnette, would in the next decade become major figures in the new jazz. Mr. Abrams's workshop bands formed the nucleus of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians, the nonprofit cooperative first organized in 1965. Mr. Mitchell created a band with three other A.A.C.M. members: Mr. Bowie, the bassists Malachi Favors and the drummer Phillip Wilson. When Mr. Wilson left, the band had trouble finding a replacement. Out of desperation its members incorporated small percussion instruments -- gongs, bells, shakers -- into their group improvisations. This sound would be one of the staple gestures of the music played by the Art Ensemble of Chicago, which the Mitchell group became in 1969. By Mr. Bowie's reckoning, the Art Ensemble of Chicago rehearsed about 300 times a year in Chicago and gave only a handful of performances because there was almost nowhere to present their music. So they traveled to France, where there was curiosity about American experimental jazz. They made six albums in two months and performed hundreds of times in their two years there. The band played blues and Bach fugues and percussion interludes and hooting free-improvisation pieces and word tribalist face-paint. The Art Ensemble's notoriety followed it back to the United States, and the group was soon recording for Atlantic Records. By the mid-70's the Art Ensemble had an easier time reaching large audiences. . . . In the early 80's, he formed the New York Hot Trumpet Quintet, which briefly included Wynton Marsalis. Later Mr. Bowie and Mr. Marsalis would often be cited in contrast in debates on the issue of futurism versus traditionalism in jazz. He assembled a 59-piece band called the Sho Nuff Orchestra for a concert at Symphony Space in Manhattan. . . . In recent years Mr. Bowie set up the Hip-Hop Feel-Harmonic, an unrecorded project with rappers and musicians in his Brooklyn neighborhood of Fort Greene. . . . [H]is track 'Jazz Death' . . . begins with Mr. Bowie's dramatically clearing his throat and asking, 'Is jazz, as we know it, dead yet?' The reply is a long trumpet solo punctuated with silences, muted wah-wah passages, Mr. Bowie's own off-horn shrieks and murmured comments, and finally, six minutes later, a sentence: 'Well, I guess that all depends on, ha, what you know'" [Ben Ratliff, *The New York Times*, 11/11/99].

San Francisco Contemporary Music Players in Isang Yun's *Octet*, Shin-Ichiro Ikebe's *Quatrevalence I*, Elizabeth Brown's *Migration*, Chinariy Ung's *Luminous Spirals*, and Zhou Long's *Ding*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, San Francisco, CA.

NEC Jazz Orchestra in Ellington's *Ko-Ko* and Atkins's *Four Square*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

The reunited Eurythmics, ten years after Annie Lennox and Dave Stewart released their last album. New York, NY.

Riccardo Chailly conducts the Philadelphia Orchestra in Varèse's *Arcana* and *Un Grand Sommeil Noir* (chamber orchestration by Anthony Beaumont), and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. Through November 10, Academy of Music, Philadelphia (PA). "*Arcana* is not Varèse's best piece, partly because it owes so much to *The Rite of Spring*, which it virtually quotes at one point. Still, it sure packs a punch, and at Mr. Chailly's fast tempo its pounding dynamism was strong and sure. Low strings and timpani thumped emphatically together in the main theme, and the wind playing in the marchlike episodes was as exact and shrill as it should be. The solo trombonist made much of the moment when he had to have the instrument amplify his laughter. After the strange ending, which sounds like the start of a new work that is then abruptly discontinued, there was more Varèse, or perhaps one should say there was less, for his setting of Verlaine's *Grand Sommeil Noir* is a juvenile piece the composer tried to make the world forget, successfully (Although published, the work was completely overlooked until several years after his death.)" [Paul Griffiths, The New York Times, 11/10/99].

Ore's *Praesens Subitus*, *Festina Lente*, and *Non Nunquam*, Ness's *Charm* and *(Oh no, not) Tripe Again!*, and Thommessen's *Cantabile* and *Music for Bats*. Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

Jupiter Symphony in Pollen's *Aubade*. Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, New York, NY. Repeated November 9.

Foldover broadcasts Kris De Baerdemacker's *XplosiV*, Moniek Darge's *Sand*, Beatriz Ferreyra's *Rio de los Pajaros*, Sheila Forrester's *Das Große Lalula*, Kristof Lauwers's *Processing #5*, Cibo Matto's *Theme*, Daniel McCarthy's *Concerto for Marimba, Percussion & Synthesizers*, Steve Reich's *Come Out*, Denis Smalley's *Valley Flow*, and Francesca Verbaudhede's *Canned*. WOBC, Oberlin, OH.

November 9

Sam Ashley performs his *Everyone Laughed When I Sat Down at the Piano*. Caffè Sapore, San Francisco, CA.

NEC Wind Ensemble in Colgrass's *Winds of Nagual* and Husa's *Fanfare for Brass and Percussion*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Cellist Kristina Cooper and pianist Joel Sachs in Ali-Zadeh's *In Habil's Style* and Golijov's *Omaramor*. Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

Washington Square Contemporary Music Society presents Knussen's *Whitman Settings*, the New York premieres of Boykan's *Sonata for Solo Violin* and Rosenzweig's *On the Wings of Wind*, the world premieres of Karchin's *Saraband/Variation* (performed by David Starobin), León's *Bailarin*, and McMullin's *Li Bai Songs*, Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "[T]he very first measure of [Knussen's] piece has a Briton flavor to it. . . . As a dual song cycle touching various moods within a symphonic continuity, the work is a miniature *Lied von der Erde*, with some graphic images (itchy music for violin playing close to the bridge to depict fleas) . . . .

*Saraband/Variation* revisit[s] the wobbles of the old dance form in a style at once austere and sumptuous" [Paul Griffiths, The New York Times, 11/12/99].

Oslo Philharmonic in Verdi's *Overture to "Il Vespri Siciliani"* and Glass's *Violin Concerto*, with Gidon Kremer. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "The qualities that made the Verdi such a success were the same ones that just about did the concerto in. Here Mr. Glass's shiny, repetitive procedures found themselves nestled in woozy Romantic style: vibrato-laden violins, pliant phrasing in the Max Bruch manner and a gentle, fuzzy orchestra sound that killed with kindness. This is a composer whose music adds up to a tacit rebellion against the 19th century. The personal touch, the twinges of the heart, the surrender of exact movement to the pulls of harmony and surges of emotion are precisely what the Glass style excludes" [Bernard Holland, The New York Times, 11/11/99].

Musica Viva in Poulenc-Plus! Poulenc's *Le Bal Masqué*, *Un Soir de Neige*, and *Litanies de la Vierge Noire*. New York, NY.

Washington Composers Forum presents Keith Eisenbrey performing his *Slow Blues*. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

November 10

NewOp, with Pamela Z's *Gaijin*, Scelsi's *Chants du Capricorne*, Evangelista's *La Port*, Eric Salzman's *Abel Gance à New York*, and Rinde Eckert's *Idiot Variations*. Musée d'Art Contemporain, Montreal, Canada.

Pierre Boulez conducts the Ensemble Intercontemporain in his *sur Incises*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Conservatory Classical Orchestra in Copland's *Outdoor Overture* and Stravinsky's *Suites No. 1 and No. 2*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Guild of Composers presents Berger's *Partita for Piano*, Shifrin's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, Babbitt's *None But the Lonely Flute*, Davidovsky's *Synchronism No. 6*, the premiere of Plante's *Variations for Piano: Etudes No. 1 and No. 7*, Bartók's *String Quartet No. 3* (with the Arden Quartet), Delage's *Quatre Poèmes Hindous*, and Ravel's *Trois Poèmes de Stéphane Mallarmé*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "The [Bartók] often sounds tough; here it was spontaneous and easy. . . . [T]he extraordinary imitations of Indian instruments in [Delage's] viola and cello parts were strikingly realized by Jennifer Sterling and Rupert Thompson. There were also nice things from Patricia Spencer on first flute; she had earlier played . . . Babbitt's perky *None but the Lonely Flute*" [Paul Griffiths, The New York Times, 11/12/99].

Death of violinist Felix Galimir (b. 5/12/10, Vienna, Austria), at age 89. New York, NY. "He was, with the pianist Rudolf Serkin, a guiding spirit at the Marlboro Festival in Vermont . . . . In addition to his work at Marlboro a typical concert season for Mr. Galimir included teaching commitments at Juilliard School and the Mannes College of Music . . . and the Curtis Institute -- he was on the faculty of all three -- as well as at the New York String Orchestra seminar . . . . He was also a coach at the chamber workshops that Isaac Stern conducts periodically at Carnegie Hall. . . . [H]e formed the Galimir String Quartet when he was still a teenage, in 1929, and kept it going with younger musicians until 1993. . . . The circle in which Mr. Galimir traveled early in his career included the composers Arnold Schoenberg, Alban Berg, and Anton Webern . . . as well as Ernst Krenek, [and] Alexander von Zemlinsky. . . .

Berg coached the Galimir Quartet in his Lyric Suite in 1931 and inscribed the score of the 20-year old violinist, 'To Felix Galimir, outstanding quartet leader, excellent violinist, splendid musician, in remembrance.' In 1936, when the Galimir Quartet recorded the Lyric Suite and Ravel's String Quartet, both composers were on hand to oversee the ensemble's rehearsals and recording sessions. . . . For his entire life, Mr. Galimir was an eloquent and passionate champion of the composers he knew in his youth, and in discussing Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, he always emphasized the soulfulness he found in their works, rather than the austerity that many listeners hear in the music. 'Berg asked for enormous correctness in the performance of his music,' Mr. Galimir told The New York Times in 1981. 'But the moment this was achieved, he asked for a very Romanticized treatment. Webern, you know, was also terribly Romantic -- as a person and when he conducted. Everything was almost oversentimentalized. It was entirely different from what we have been led to believe today. His music should be played very freely, very emotionally. . . . When I was a student, it was understood that young people played new music,' he said in the 1981 interview. 'Now, unfortunately, this is no longer so. I have difficulty asking my students to play even the Bartók violin and piano sonatas.' . . . Although his mother was an Austrian, his father was from Romania and was considered an enemy alien during World War I. The fact that the Galimirs were Sephardic Jews and spoke Ladino, a hybrid of medieval Spanish and Hebrew, raised similar suspicions because it sounded vaguely like Italian . . . . 'I had to learn German very quickly,' Mr. Galimir said later. . . . In 1936, Mr. Galimir was hired by the Vienna Philharmonic. . . . 'I had never heard a Brahms symphony until I played one,' he said. It was also an increasingly uncomfortable time for him as a young Jewish musician in a society where anti-Semitism was increasingly open . . . . Mr. Galimir spoke about one performance at which, when the lights went down, the principal clarinetist called out, in a voice audible throughout the theater, 'Galimir -- have you eaten your matzos today?' . . . [H]e and two of his sisters accepted the invitation of Bronislaw Huberman to come to Palestine, where Huberman was starting the orchestra that became the Israel Philharmonic. In 1938, Mr. Galimir emigrated to New York. . . . He . . . played for several years with Arturo Toscanini's NBC Symphony. . . . His affiliation with the Juilliard School began in 1962, and he was appointed head of the chamber music department at the Curtis Institute in 1972. In 1976 he began teaching at the Mannes College of Music" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 11/12/99].

*Sonic Boom 8*. ModernWorks! performs Hyla's *Howl* (with a tape of Alan Ginsberg reciting his poem), the U.S. premiere of Saariaho's *Neiges*, Gubaidulina's *Silenzio*, and Sculthorpe's *From Ubirr*. Great hall, Cooper Union, New York, NY. "The [Sculthorpe] is scored . . . for string quartet and . . . didjeridoo . . . which has the quality of a drain pipe, and the player, Peter Zummo, had a second, seemingly home-made didjeridoo that really was some kind of plastic drain pipe. . . . Not much happens, but the music lends itself to contemplation . . . *Silenzio* . . . is scored . . . for violin, cello and accordion, from which instruments the composer elicits a vivid array of colors. . . . [A]s the piece begins, the soft, high harmonic tones of the violin and cello mingle with the reedy high notes of the accordion, resulting in a celestial chorus of delicate squeaks and sighs. . . . *Nieges*, scored for eight cellos . . . proved that music of mostly sound and color can also have thematic complexity. The piece is a set of variations . . . . [A]s the cellists press harder on their strings the pitches splatter, producing a shimmering, intense yet contained rumble of sound. . . . [The Hyla] did provide the evening's promised sonic boom" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 11/13/99].

*Voyages: New Icelandic and American Music*. Baltic Philharmonic in Harper's *Marlindendur*, Phillips's *Fire and Ice*, Shapiro's *Intrigue*, Sveinsson's *Dolorosa*, Thorkeldsdottir's *Kvinnan Froma*, and Sigurbjörnsson's *Good Night*. Miller Theater, Columbia University, New York, NY. "Marlindendur was cast in a conservative if not quite neo-Romantic language, flecked with modal, folklike themes and driven by insistent rhythms." [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 11/13/99].

November 11

Judith Blankman and Marilyn Hudson's *Reclaiming the Ground Note: Echoes from Broken Vessels* and Mark Alburger's *Blue Boat*. Crucible Steel Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

neoPhonia presents the world premiere of *Tonoi I* for solo viola by Nickitas J. Demos, *Evening Dance* (1990) for 2 guitars by Andrew York, *The Widening Gyre* (1999) by Robert Scott Thompson, "Abyss Of The Birds" (1941, from the *Quartet For The End of Time*) by Olivier Messiaen, and the world premiere of *Music For A Starless Night* (1999) by Nickitas J. Demos. Georgia State, Atlanta, GA.

Larry Bell presents Ravel's *Histoires Naturelles*, the premiere of his own *The Immortal Beloved*, and spirituals by Ives, Zaninelli, and himself. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

*Messages for the Millennium*. New York Philharmonic commissions. World premieres of Adès's *America: A Prophecy*, Corigliano's *Vocalise*, Saariaho's *Oltra mar: Seven Preludes for the New Millennium*, Satoh's *Kisetsu*, and Henze's *Fraternity*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Through November 16. "[In *America*, T]he brass pealed forth fanfares in high polyphonic style -- a kind of negative magnificence, like the glory of the Renaissance run amok. Brutal dissonances took over, silences intervened . . . . Some critics have taken *America* as an arrogant, confrontational gesture towards its American audience. I talked to the composer after the first performance, and I got the sense that the piece was a more private matter. Writing in a less brilliant style than usual, he composed and recomposed sections of the work over a period of eighteen months, and at the last minute he changed the ending. What would have been a raucous coda, replete with anvil percussion, became a ghostly one, a cortège of blacked-in, major-plus-minor chords. Adès risked chaos in this music: it's grander and rougher than anything he has done to date, and it lacks his customary playfulness. It seems to have been written out of burning necessity. For that reason, it is the one work from the Philharmonic's end-of-century marathon likely to survive the coming years of zeros" [Alex Ross, The New Yorker]. "The seven short movements speak of departure, love, tides, time, memory, death, and arrival," Ms. Saariaho said of *Oltra Mar*, a 16-minute work [Cori Ellison, The New York Times, 11/7/99]. "Through a spokeswoman, Mr. Adès declined to be interviewed for this article. . . . *America: A Prophecy* . . . begins with a soft, tonal, almost banal fanfare. Soon it segues into kinetic music more typical of Mr. Adès. Jittery instrumental riffs collide with sustained vocal lines, broken by refrains for chorus in block harmonies. . . . Henze's 10-minute *Fraternité* . . . is steely music with inexorable slow marches in dotted rhythms, and restless outbursts. Mr. Satoh's 15-minute work, *Kisetsu*, is a time-stands-still meditation, marked, 'As delicate and quiet as possible.' . . . [Corigliano] said, 'My first response, quite honestly, was fairly inane. I thought of having Mel Brooks on stage in his old vaudeville persona as the 2,000 year-old man, declaiming with Kurt Masur. But my publisher had a stern talk with me and said, 'Hey, this is a real project.' . . . Called *Vocalise*, the piece, for soprano, electronics and orchestra, boldly tries to depict the ways in which the elements of music have both stayed the same and changed during the millennium. 'It starts with the first instrument, the voice,' Mr. Corigliano explained. 'First humming, then intoning.

Then the percussion, the oldest instruments, enter. As the orchestra grows, a kind of progression of materials unfolds. But they are the same materials, treated differently.' Eventually, electronic instruments and amplified traditional instruments are introduced, to represent what Mr. Corigliano calls the 'only contribution to sound of the 20th century. . . . 'I didn't want a piece where electronics, like an upstart, are used to shake things up,' he said. 'I wanted them to add to the beauty of the orchestra'" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/7/99]. "America . . . [was] roiling and disturbing" [James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*, 11/13/99].

Sequitur presents Harbison's *Due Libri di Motetti di Montale*, Kagel's *Pan*, Zivian's *Music*, *When Soft Voices Die*, and Schoenberg's *Ode to Napoleon*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

#### November 12

Death of Gaby Casadesus, at age 98. Paris, France. "[With Robert Casadesus, she] began giving performances of duo piano works . . . and they married in 1921. Robert Casadesus wrote several works for the duo, including *Six Pieces* (1938), and a *Concerto for Two Pianos*, which they first performed in Warsaw in 1934, and with the New York Philharmonic in 1950. In the 1960's their son Jean Michel Casadesus sometimes joined them in performances of Robert Casadesus's *Concerto for Three Pianos*" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/20/99].

David Tanenbaum talks about the making of making of Terry Riley's *The Book of Abbeyozud* (New Albion). KPFA, Berkeley, CA. "Riley writes 'All of the pieces have Spanish titles and take a different letter of the alphabet to begin their names. They are also indebted to great Spanish music traditions and to those traditions upon which Spanish music owes its heritage.' David Tanenbaum had been asking Terry Riley for a guitar piece for some time, and found success finally after Terry's young son, Gyan, began studying classical guitar and brought its world into the Riley home. David Tanenbaum commissioned the first piece, *Ascención*, through Albert Augustine Ltd., and through the editing and performance process of that piece the idea for the book was born" [internet release].

Oakland Ballet presents Copland's *The Tender Land* and Ravel's *Bolero*. Paramount Theatre, Oakland, CA. Through November 14.

Lily Cai Chinese Dance with Dimensions Dance Theater in *Common Ground II*, with music by Gang Situ and Gary Schwantes. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA. Repeated November 13.

Stanford Chamber Chorale in *Ave Maria* settings by Bibl and Lauridsen. Stanford Memorial Church, Stanford University, CA.

Dallapiccola's "*Quaderno Musicale di Annalibera*" and Copland's *Fantasy*: *The Meaning of the Horizontal and the Vertical*, with Randall Hodgkinson. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Deutsche Kammer-Philharmonie in Berg's *Lyric Suite*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

Bolcom and Morris. Metropolitan Museum, New York, NY.

New York City Opera presents *Central Park*, an operatic triptych by Deborah Drattell, Michael Torke, and Robert Beaser (on libretti by Wendy Wasserstein, A.R. Gurney, and Terrence McNally). New York State Theatre, New York, NY. "It is an exceedingly modest entertainment" [Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*, 11/15/99].

Fast Forward's *Feeding Frenzy*, for musicians and cooks. The Kitchen, New York, NY. "[F]our musicians join four chefs and four waiters to collaborate on preparing and delivering dishes for the audience, with everyone's sounds amplified and combined to create a sonic landscape" [The New Yorker].

Manhattan School of Music Symphony in Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*. Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY.

Philadelphia Orchestra in Janacek's *Lachian Dances*, Kernis's *Lament and Prayer*, and Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through November 16.

The Esoterics in *Antiphonia*. Christ Episcopal Church · Tacoma, WA. Through November 21, Portland (OR).

#### November 13

53rd anniversary of the death of Manuel da Falla.

Pacific Mozart Ensemble in Stravinsky's 3 Prayers and Barber's *Agnus Dei*. St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Berkeley, CA. Repeated November 14, Trinity Episcopal Church, San Francisco. Masterworks Chorale in Britten's *Ceremony of Carols*, Dello Joio's *Jubilant Song*, Biebl's *Ave Maria*, and Cotton's *Alleluia*. Our Lady of Angels Church, Burlingame, CA.

Empyrean Ensemble presents *From Both Ends of the Century*. Ravel's *Piano Trio*, Anderson's *Cloud Collar*, Biggs's *When You Are Reminded by the Instruments*, and Chasalow's *Winding Up*. Wyatt Pavilion, University of California, Davis, CA. Repeated November 14, Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco.

Jim O'Rourke performs *Planes, Trains, and Hotel Rooms*, Kenneth Atchley presents *fountain\_1999.20*, and Brian Beinbolt showcases *Dutch Interiors*. Mills College, Oakland, CA.

3rd *Derriere Guard Festival*, with music of Jake Heggie, Gordon Getty, Alva Henderson, and Stefania de Kenessey. SomArts Gallery, San Francisco, CA. Festival through November 21.

Philharmonia Virtuosi in Adams's *Shaker Loops* and Shostakovich's *Piano Concerto No. 1*. Metropolitan Museum, New York, NY.

Prometheus Chamber Orchestra in Weill's *Symphony No. 2* and Bartók's *Music for Strings, Percussion, and Celeste*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

#### November 14

College of Marin Orchestra in Barber's *First Essay for Orchestra* and Copland's *Our Town*. College of Marin, Kentfield, CA.

Opera San Jose presents the world premiere of Craig Bohmler's *The Tale of the Nutcracker*. Montgomery Theater, San Jose, CA. The word 'Christmas' is avoided with almost perverse thoroughness -- though the action takes place during a gift-laden winter party, so who's fooling whom? . . . Bohmler's score is sufficiently self-assured that he can puckishly quote a snippet of Tchaikovsky without inducing winces. . . . He writes sweeping Broadway-style ballads one moment and tonal but more intricately wrought ensembles a la Barber or Britten the next. At a moment of high eeriness he even throws in a measure or two of music from *The Twilight Zone*" [Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 11/15/99].

Jennifer Lane and Thomas Schultz in Schoenberg's *The Book of the Hanging Gardens*. Campbell Recital Hall, Stanford University, CA.

Stanford Wind Ensemble in Schuman's *George Washington Bridge*. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Susanne Mentzer sings Berg's *Sieben Fruhe Lieder* and Poulenc's *Quatre Poèmes de Guillaume Apollinaire*. New York, NY.

The Terwilliger-Cooperstock Duo presents *The Complete Works for Violin and Piano by Aaron Copland*. Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

*PoulencPlus! Sextet for Piano and Wind Quintet, Trio for Oboe, Bassoon, and Piano, Flute Sonata, Villanelle for Piccolo, Oboe Sonata, Clarinet Sonata, Elégie for Horn, and Sonata for Clarinet and Bassoon*. Ethical Culture Society, New York, NY.

Sting. Tower Theater, Upper Darby, PA. Through November 19, Beacon Theater, New York (NY). "[H]is grainy wail soared heavenward in the luscious Algerian rai number *Desert Rose*" [Dan DeLuca, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/16/99].

Baritone William Dean, accompanied by pianist Emily Greenleaf, present the premieres of Tom Baker's *Desperate Messages* and Tony Grasso's *Meditation On Death*, plus Alberto Ginastera's *Cinco Canciones Populares Argentinas* and Gustav Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. Seattle Mennonite Church, Seattle, WA.

#### November 15

Luciano Berio's *Outis*, performed by the Swingle Singers and the Orchestre de Paris. Paris, France. Through November 21.

Minnesota Contemporary Ensemble. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

Pianist-composer Georg Graewe performs his *Fountain Rhythms I-VII* and *17 Fantasiestücke*. Mills College, Oakland, CA.

Earplay presents Carter's *Gra*, Druckman's *Come Round*, Harrison's *Ariadne's Song*, and Crawford-Seeger's *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, with Lou Harrison. Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA.

Current Sounds in the premiere of Hogan's *Call*, Schocker's *Musique Française*, Holland's *Geometry and Grace*, Stevens's *Intermezzo, Cadenza, and Finale*, Bolcom's *Graceful Ghost Rag*, Ross Lee Finney's *Cello Sonata No. 2*, and Bernstein's *Two Meditations from "Mass."* First United Methodist Church, Santa Barbara, CA Repeated November 16, First Baptist Church, Ojai, CA.

IRCAM and Ensemble 21 perform, in celebration of Jonathan Harvey's 60th birthday, his *Nataraja*, *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco*, *The Riot*, *Tombeau de Messiaen*, and *Song Offerings*, with a talk by the composer. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY. "[*Nataraja* and *The Riot*] explore the icy, chattering ceilings of wind instruments played against calmer, deeper textures. Harvey likes the effect of instruments playing in parallel lock step, one of several techniques reminiscent of Messiaen. He also shares the trans-Atlantic fascination of contemporary European and American composers for woozy Far Eastern religion and thought . . . . The irresistible crowd pleaser of the evening (a well-attended one, by the way) was the *Mortuos Plango, Vivos Voco* from 1980. It is also a centerpiece for Harvey's popular reputation. Recorded church bells of various depth and brilliance ring out, their natural resonances taken up by electronic devices and stretched from original shapes into new ones.

One hears in these synthetic sounds the natural materials from which they came and something previously unknown. Synthesis arrives sometimes as sheets of legato, sometimes in tiny, shattered fragments. [In] *Tombeau de Messiaen* . . . [d]escending chords and wild flurries are transformed by computers. Sonorities are bent, also the tuning of individual tones. The [piano] takes on an anthropomorphic life, with body parts stretched as if by some distorting photographic process. I don't know (nor do I need to know) the thought processes behind these procedures, but what we end up with is a sensualist" music, in which the intellect has done its work and then been forgotten. In a curious way, Harvey's computer invests in traditional instruments the power to dream: an odd conceit, perhaps, but what are dreams but a liberation from the limitations of the physical world? The message may be that electricity has come to music not to replace old instruments but to free them" [Bernard Holland, The New York Times, 11/17/99].

Foldover broadcasts John M. Allemeier's *Vade Mecum*, Charles Amirkhanian's *Politics As Usual*, Barry Anderson's *Domingus*, Roger Doyle's *Fin-Estra*, David Heuser's *Birds*, Cornelius's *The Micro Disneycal World Tour*, and Elsa Justel's *M'ts*. WOBC, Oberlin, OH.

#### November 16

Composers, Inc., presents Jalbert's *Trio*, Currier's *Whispers*, Miller's *Recollection*, Barker's *Three Pieces for French Horn*, Barsom's *Joyous Light of the World*, and Kellogg's *Momentum*. Green Room, Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

Cellist Rafal Kwiatkowski and pianist Albert Tiu in Barber's *Sonata in C Minor*. New York, NY. "You hear swashes of Scriabin and other late-Romantic influences in this work of Barber's youth, but also genuine originality. The music's sudden harmonic shifts continually startle" [The New York Times, 11/20/99].

*Carnegie Talks: Pierre Boulez*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "When you are young, you must reject. In the 1950's, if I was very sarcastic toward some periods of Stravinsky's work, I was also very much under the spell of Stravinsky" [Pierre Boulez, 11/14/99].

Dragstra's *Trio for Two Violins and Viola*, Felsenfeld's *Smoking My Diploma for Oboe, Cello, and Electronic Amplification*, Vavok's *Bestiaries: The Book of Creatures and Monsters for Alto and Ensemble*, Miljkovic's *Journey Through the Forest for Two Prepared Pianos, Two Singing Bowls, Two Rain Sticks, and Sea Drum*, and Valliere's *What Any Lover Learns for Soprano and Ensemble*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

#### November 17

Berkeley Symphony in Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra*. Berkeley, CA. "[A] bravura treatment of folk melodies that owes something to Bartók but rather more to the late composer's own inimitable mastery of form and texture" [SF Chronicle, 11/19/99].

Angeles String Quartet in Webern's *Six Bagatelles*. Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

Yerba Buena Ensemble in Honegger's *Sonatine for Violin and Piano* and Ravel's *Piano Trio*. St. Patrick's Church, San Francisco, CA.

*The Pierre Boulez Workshops*. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

Composers Concordance presents A.R. Thomas's *Incantation*, Pehrson's *Doodle Do*, Chiu's *There Goes My Hat Again*, *Flying*, Siegmeister's *Prelude, Blues, and Finale*, E. Brown's *Music for Violin, Cello, and Piano*, Brooks's *Invention*, and Hodkinson's *Epitaph and Scherzo*. New York, NY.

David Hykes leads a performance of his *Eyes Wide Open*. Winter Garden, World Financial Center, New York, NY.

Taneko in Jo Kondo's *Standing*, Gareth Farr's *Kembang Suling*, Lou Harrison's Varied Trio, Janice Giteck's Leningrad Spring, and Cowell's: The Tides of Manaunaun, The Aeolian Harp, The Banshee, and Advertisement. Cornish College of the Arts, Seattle, WA.

November 18

100th anniversary of the birth of Eugene Ormandy. Hungary.

Death of Paul Bowles (b. New York, NY), at age 88. Tangier, Morocco. "[H]e was most famous for his stories and his novels . . . . He was also known for his songs, concertos, incidental music and operas; for his marriage to Jane Bowles; and, simply, for being Paul Bowles. . . . One of the last of his cultural generation, what might be called the post-Lost Generation, he knew and occasionally collaborated with many of the major artistic figures of his time, among them Orson Welles, Tennessee Williams and Gertrude Stein. . . . Although Mr. Bowles's 1972 autobiography was titled *Without Stopping*, his career was filled with stops and restarts. . . . [H]e rejected an offer from the producer Lawrence Langner to write the score for the Broadway show that later became *Oklahoma!* He did this before Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein 2nd came into the project. 'They're lucky I turned it down,' he later said, adding that his version 'would have been a terrible flop.' He also rejected an offer from Jerome Robbins to write the music for the ballet *Fancy Free* before the assignment went to Leonard Bernstein. He insisted that he did not plan things; he had no itinerary for his life. 'I've never been a thinking person,' he said. 'A lot seems to happen without my conscious knowledge . . . . It is not surprising that he was idolized by writers of the Beat Generation, many of whom visited him in Tangier. Allen Ginsberg called him 'a caviar writer.' There were two sides to Mr. Bowles's art, as Ned Rorem explained in his memoir *Knowing When to Stop*. Mr. Rorem said that his stories were 'icy, cruel, objective' and his music was 'warm, wistful, witty.' When that criticism was repeated to Mr. Bowles, he laughed and said, 'He has a lot of chutzpah to use the word cruel.' He said he would have substituted the word realistic. It was his feeling that of his 50 stories only two were marked by violence . . . . Virgil Thomson said about Mr. Bowles's work as a composer, 'Paul Bowles's songs are enchanting for their sweetness of mood, their lightness of texture for in general their way of being wholly alive and right . . . . The texts fit their tunes like a peach in its skin.' . . . Until he was 18, he followed a rigidly formalized life. Then, in his first semester at the University of Virginia, he suddenly quite school. He left the United States without telling his parents, expecting never to see them again. For the first of several times, he changed his life. In characteristic Bowles fashion, he fled to Paris. He once said that he was not running away but was 'running toward something, although I didn't know what at the time.' In Paris, he met Gertrude Stein, Jean Cocteau and André Gide, but he retained a cool air of indifference about his meetings with such famous people. 'I took it for granted,' he said. 'You go to Paris and you meet all the people you admire.' A year later, he returned to the United States, where he met Aaron Copland and began to study composition with him. For four months he lived in Berlin, where one of his friends was Christopher Isherwood, who was gathering material for what would later become his book *Goodbye to Berlin*. Isherwood named his leading character Sally Bowles after Paul Bowles.

In 1932, at the suggestion of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, Mr. Bowles went to Morocco, where he and Copland shared a house in Tangier. By the mid-1930's, he was back in New York. He wrote musical scores for Orson Welles, beginning with *Horse Eats Hat* at the Federal Theater Project, and later for works by William Saroyan, Tennessee Williams and others. In 1937 he met Jane Auer. She was a lesbian, and he was bisexual; there was an immediate rapport and an intimacy. Within a year they were married. Through countless affairs on both sides, they remained married and permanently attached to each other. Looking back on their marriage, Mr. Bowles said: 'We played everything by ear.' . . . At first, he focused on his music while she began writing a novel. When she gave a draft of it to him in Mexico in 1945, he read it carefully and, acting as editor, suggested changes. The book, *Two Serious Ladies*, received mixed reviews, but it was the beginning of Jane Bowles's literary reputation, and it acted as an inspiration to her husband. . . . In contrast to his wife, who apparently found no pleasure in wiring, Mr. Bowles savored the experience and the experimentation. . . . In New York, the Bowleses were immersed in a literary world. In the early 1940's they lived with other artists in a house on Middagh Street in Brooklyn Heights. The residents included W.H. Auden, Benjamin Britten and Oliver Smith, the scenic designer. . . . In this period, Mr. Bowles wrote scores for seven plays (including *The Glass Menagerie*) and collaborated with Tennessee Williams on the song fragments *Blue Mountain Ballads*. He also returned to writing short stories and translated Jean Paul Sartre's play *Huis-Clos*, retitling it *No Exit*. Mr. Bowles also reviewed music for The New York Herald Tribune. . . . One night in 1947 Mr. Bowles had a dream about 'the magic city' of Tangier, . . . and he decided to return there. Before departing, he had an idea for a novel that would take place in the Sahara, and he thought of a title, *The Sheltering Sky*, borrowing it from the popular song, *Down Among the Sheltering Palms*. . . . 'I could have gone to some other part of the world,' he said. 'But Morocco was a magnet. Published in 1949, *The Sheltering Sky* quickly became the foundation of his estimable career as an author, and it is still at the core of his literary legacy. . . . 'The tale is entirely imaginary. Kit is not Jane, although I used some of Jane's characteristics . . . . Obviously I thought of Port as a fictional extension of myself. But Port is certainly not Paul Bowles, any more than Kit is Jane. Reviewing the book in The New York Times Book Review, Tennessee Williams proclaimed the author 'a talent of true maturity and sophistication.' . . . His musical works included *Concerto for Two Pianos, Winds and Percussion, A Picnic Cantata*, an operatic version of García Lorca's *Yerma* and *The Wind Remains*, a zarzuela for piano and orchestra based on a text by García Lorca. . . . 'I haven't the energy to move out,' he said in 1995 when he returned to New York for a festival of his music at Lincoln Center. He added, 'I wouldn't know where to go.' . . . [A]t 84 he was still a striking figure and retained his handsome, ethereal looks. 'The marbles are still there, believe it or not, but the body's a mess,' he said. Mr. Bowles had not heard most of the music for 50 years, but, as ever, he expressed his reluctance to be nostalgic. 'I live in the present,' Mr. Bowles said . . . . For Mr. Bowles, the point of life is to have fun, 'if there is any point at all.' Enjoyment, he said firmly, 'is what life should provide. . . . I think it's a very harmful, disruptive thing to ask, 'Why am I, I?,' he said. To Paul Bowles, the supreme individualist, 'there isn't any why.' Asked if he had made any mistakes, he said: 'I must have made a lot, but I wasn't aware of them. Maybe my whole life has been a mistake. This is no time to find out, and even if I did, what would I do? Regret something? I don't regret anything.' Years before, in [an] interview in The Paris Review, he had said, 'If I knew I were going to die tomorrow, I'd think, so soon?' He added, 'Still, if a man has spent his life doing what he wanted to do, he ought to be able to say goodbye without regrets.' In his strange, exotic life, Mr. Bowles apparently did exactly what he wanted to do, writing fiction and music and continually searching for that magic place where he would find his twinned goals of wisdom and ecstasy" [Mel Gussow, The New York Times, 11/19/99].

Lawrence Pech Dance Company presents Morricone's *Sonuvagush*, Pärt's *Fratres*, Cox's *Critters*, and Volans's *Allegoria*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA.

Harman/Diaz-Infante Duo. Luggage Store, San Francisco, CA.

Laetitia Sonami, Zipperspy, and Pamela Z. Diego Rivera Theatre, City College, San Francisco, CA.

Stanford Symphonic Chorus and Peninsula Symphony in Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms* and the premiere of Holmes's *Now Is the Time*. Memorial Church, Stanford University, CA. Repeated November 21.

NEC Jordan Winds in Koussevitsky's *Prelude and Fugue* and Grondahl's *Concerto for Trombone and Wind Ensemble*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center presents Britten's *Cello Sonata* and Respighi's *Violin Sonata*. New York, NY.

*Piano Century*. Jelly Roll Morton's *Big Foot Ham*, Babbitt's *Lagniappe*, Copland's *Piano Fantasy*, Amanda Harberg's *Fun with Compulsive Behavior*, Scriabin's *Vers la flamme*, Messiaen's *Cantéyodjayâ*, Ligeti's *Etude No. 6 ("Autumn in Warsaw")*, and Kurtág's *Games*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

New York Philharmonic in *Messages for the Millennium*. The premiere of Kancheli's *And Farewell Goes Out Sighing...* plus Bruckner's *Symphony No. 7*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Through November 16. "The Bruckner, though hardly free of tension and struggle, ends in a majestically brassy blaze of E major. It seemed to be Mr. Masur's way of saying, 'This is what I had in mind.' . . . Most of [*And Farewell*] proceeds as a quiet meditation, with hazily voiced and almost static string chords supporting a graceful solo violin line, played colorfully by Gidon Kremer, and occasional fragments of Shakespeare and nonsense syllables, sung by Derek Lee Ragin, the countertenor. Every now and then, a fortissimo, a stretch of more agitated fiddling and a full orchestra burst interrupt this slow-moving, quiet flow, and as the work unfolds, these explosions grow longer and more cacophonous, as if they are a kind of mayhem, increasingly desperate to break out. In every case serenity prevails, and the work ends as it begins, with a barely audible sigh" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/20/99].

Earl Howard's *Strong Force*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

IRCAM and Ensemble Sospeso in the American premieres of Tristan Murail's *L'esprit des dunes* and *Bois flottés*, plus Magnus Lindberg's *Related Rocks* and *Ur*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY. "In Mr. Murail's music, the tempo is generally slow, and the whole composition is a gradual exploring of a particular sound world, even of a particular sound. The sequence of separated sounds at the beginning. *Bois Flotté* gave the impression that a stick was being drawn again and again through muddy water, reconfiguring the same silky texture. Sounds of diverse kinds -- live instrumental, electronically transformed, adapted from recordings -- were held in the same place, loosely but together. Strings whispered much on the surface, while a trombone reinforced the bass notes and thereby gave a strong actuality and presence to the harmonic spectrums with which Mr. Murail is characteristically concerned. As the work progressed, so it seemed to come into itself, growing to a point where the violin could set out on melodies suggestive of French chamber music of a century ago. There was no stylistic disruption. Mr. Murail's spectrums are cousins to the elaborate, almost immobile harmonies of Fauré or Chausson, and his electronic appurtenances give him access to the same pleasure in sound. . . .

The effect [in *Espirit des Dunes*] is more orchestral, the impressive climatic moments coming not with a quiet violin solo but with clangorous sounds that envelop -- not quite completely -- the instruments, as if flute, cello and the rest were sticking out from the sides of a great bell. . . . [T]he electronic treatment [in *Ur*] gives the instruments bigger voices; violin and double bass have the heft of brass as their darting lines answer each other and collide. There is the heat, if nothing else, of jazz in what they do, and in the clarinet's breaks. . . . *Related Rocks*, which Mr. Lindberg wrote in 1997, 11 years after *Ur*, was by contrast smiling and playful, with lighter energy. Pairs of pianists and percussionists race and stop through glittering music that evokes Bali from time to time, arrives at a cartoon-style chase, and dances nonchalantly into B-flat major" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 11/22/99].

Jackson Mac Low and Anne Tardos. Roulette, New York, NY.

Seattle Symphony in the world premiere of T. Shapiro's *Piano Concerto*. Seattle, WA. Through November 21.

November 19

Riley's *The Dream*, plus music of Palestine and Glass. Rome, Italy. The Riley is repeated December 5, Yokohama (Japan).

*Sonic Explorations* with Tom Heasley, Tom Nunn, Garth Powell, and Ken Rosser. New Langton Arts, San Francisco, CA.

Stanford Symphony Orchestra in the West Coast premiere of Glass's *Songs of Milarepa*. Stanford University, CA.

Omaha Symphony in Holst's *The Planets*. Omaha, NB.

Panel discussion with Pierre Boulez. Altschul Auditorium, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center presents Françaix's *Divertissement for Bassoon and String Quartet*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. Repeated November 21.

Rozanne Levine and the Crystal Clarinets. Roulette, New York, NY.

*PoulencPlus!* *Gloria*, *Litanies à la Vierge Noire*, *Mass in G*, and *Concerto for Organ, Timpani, and Strings*. Church of St. Ignatius Loyola, New York, NY.

Pierre Boulez leads the Ensemble Intercontemporain in an all-Schoenberg program of *Chamber Symphony No. 1* and *Suite for Woodwinds, Strings, and Piano*. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY. "[W]hen . . . [Boulez] was asked about his combative past . . . his responses were blithe or humorous. 'Is Schoenberg still dead?' one brave man inquired. . . . 'No,' the reply flashed back, 'but he needs strong medicine.' . . . Both works . . . have been in Mr. Boulez's repertory almost throughout the four decades of his conducting career. He does not love them equally: the Chamber Symphony, which he took as a model for his first big composition, evidently stays high in his admiration, while, as he disclosed, he has not changed his view of the Suite as academic. (That was the main charge he held against Schoenberg's later output in 1952.). But nobody could have discerned either warmth or doubt in Mr. Boulez's treatment of the scores . . . He was rather, scrupulously attentive to the text and to the musicians. almost never did he speak of the music's character or expressive qualities. Instead his concerns were with balance, rhythmic precision, tempo relationships" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 11/22/99].

Philadelphia Orchestra in Vaughan Williams's *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* and Walton's *Viola Concerto*. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA. Through November 25.

November 20

The New York Times announces that, before his death, Paul Bowles transferred the bulk of his literary papers -- 50 cartons of annotated manuscripts, notebooks, and correspondence -- to the University of Delaware Library. "Librarians beginning to catalog the collection said it included an unpublished journal, fragments of unfinished work, poems, stories, translations, photographs and hundreds of letters from 20th-century notables . . . . 'They were scattered all over the place,' said [librarian Timothy] Murray of the papers they found throughout Mr. Bowles's modest one-bedroom apartment, where he lived under the care of his longtime Moroccan butler, Abdelouahed Bouliach. Some of the first letters examined were from Allen Ginsberg, William Burroughs, Gregory Corso and other leaders of the Beats, who grew close to Mr. Bowles while gravitating to Tangiers's mysticism and drug subculture in the 1950's. The University of Delaware Library had an association with Mr. Bowles going back to acquisitions in the late 1960's for its literary collections of Hemmingway, Tennessee Williams and others. the University of Texas at Austin also has a large Bowles collection, but the latest acquisition, Delaware librarians said, undoubtedly makes theirs the largest. . . . During [a visit last] September . . . [librarian Francis] Poole videotaped an interview with Mr. Bowles, surely one of the most interviewed figures of the age but in recent years increasingly frail and nearly blind from glaucoma. 'How does it feel to be almost 90?' Mr. Poole asked. 'Well, I'm not there yet,' Mr. Bowles replied. 'I may never get there. I'm only 80-what, 88. I don't know. One has the same body but it doesn't work right.' 'Do you still have ideas for stories?' Mr. Poole asked. 'Yes,' Mr. Bowles replied, 'but I don't pay attention to them because I know I can't get them out'" [Ralph Blumenthal, The New York Times, 11/20/99].

57th birthday of Meredith Monk.

*Intimate Immensity*. Paul Drescher Ensemble and the Abel-Steinberg Duo in J.L. Adams's *The Light That Fills the World*, Woolf's *Angel Dust*, Drescher's *Elapsed Time*, A. Davis's *A Walk Through the Shadow*, M. Grey and Cox's *Into the Wild*, Cloldt's *Life Is Good...and People Are Basically Decent*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Forum, San Francisco, CA.

Randy Nordschow performs his *Transitoire* for 5 electric guitars, live video projection, ice, water, and an amplified space heater. The Lab, San Francisco, CA.

Milhaud's *Symphony No. 4* for strings and *Symphony No. 5* for winds, and Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Carmel by-the Sea* performed by The Mission Chamber Orchestra. San Jose, CA.

Ensemble Intercontemporain in Berio's *Linea*, Schoenberg's *Suite*, and Boulez's *sur Incises*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

*Sonic Boom 8*. Continuum in F. Schwartz's *Cannibal-Caliban*, Bolivar's *Dream*, My *Aleph*, and *Songs of Loneliness*, Cage's *Concert*, Deak's *Lady Chatterley's Dream*, and LaBarbara's *Time(d) Trials and Unscheduled Events*. Cooper Union, New York, NY.

*Arnold Schoenberg and His World: The Bard Festival in New York. Schoenberg's Vienna: 31 March 1913*, with the American Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Leon Botstein. Schoenberg's *Phantasy*, *String Trio*, and *Chamber Symphony No. 1*, Kim's *Now and Then*, Weiss's *Preludes*, Blitzstein's *Piano Percussion Music*, Kirchner's *String Quartet No. 1*, Cage's *Two Pieces for Piano*, Harrison's *Praises for the Beauty of Humming Birds*, Rosenman's *Faded Chandeliers*, Webern's *Six Pieces for Orchestra*, Zemlinsky's *Four Orchestral Songs after Poems by Maeterlinck*, Berg's *Altenberg Lieder*, and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*. New York, NY.

*Beyond Crossover*. Krakauer's *Rothko on Broadway* and Messiaen's "Abyss of the Birds" from *Quartet for the End of Time*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

*Symposium: Schoenberg in Vienna and America*, with Reinhold Brinkmann, Sabine Feisst, Leon Kirchner, Leonard Rosenman, and Leonard Stein. Kaplan Penthouse, New York, NY.

Orchestra 2001, conducted by James Freeman, in the premiere of Nicholas Brooke's *Double*, and Gerald Levinson's *Time and the Bell*. Lang Concert Hall, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, PA. Repeated November 21, Philadelphia. "Freeman . . . said that . . . Time . . . was the most difficult work the group had played. . . . The piece is densely score, rhythmically intricate and often harshly dissonant. But, as the titles of its six movements suggest, it is long on atmosphere" [Peter Dobrin, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/23/99].

November 21

Redwood Symphony in Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 2*, Charles Ives's *Unanswered Question*, John Cage's *4' 33"*, and Britten's *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*. Redwood City, CA.

*The Third Derriere Guard Festival*. World premiere of Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *The World is a Butterfly's Wing* (a song cycle with words by Allen Cohen) for tenor, viola and piano, plus music by Giancarlo Aquilanti, Thomas Goss, Bruce Hamill, Sarah Michael, and Darcy Reynolds. SomArts Gallery, San Francisco, CA.

Pierre Boulez conducts Ensemble Intercontemporain in an all-Boulez program. *Douze Notations*, *Sonatine*, *Structures -- Livre II*, *Incises*, *Messagesquise*, and the U.S. premiere of *Anthèmes II* for violin and electronics. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "Early, middle and late periods may in the end imperfectly explain Mr. Boulez's long life (now in its mid-70's), but it did make sense out of this chronologically wide and temperamentally various set of pieces. . . . The *Sonatine* for flute and piano and the *Douze Notations* are, remarkable as it seems, more than 50 years old. . . . The music belies the image of thinker. The pieces are intensely theatrical; and in both, sheer virtuosity is a major engine of expression. . . . The *Douze Notations*, which became fodder for a still unfinished series of orchestral elaborations, arrive in short bursts. . . . The *Structures, Livre II* come some 15 years later. The sense of audience has gone away and left behind something almost lonely. The two-piano writing is dour and hard-bitten, the moments of tenderness seldom and brief. Energy has replaced expression: driving, relentless and intricately brutal. If this music is not beautiful and often not easy to listen to, those are perhaps its intentions. March another 15 years ahead in the composer's life, and we come upon the [cello sextet] *Messagesquise* and a different world. This is a charmer, exploiting the sound of a single instrument multiplied seven times and doing it with great delicacy. . . . *Anthèmes II* is an orgy of refinement" [Bernard Holland, The New York Times, 11/23/99].

Soprano Christine Schäfer and pianist Eric Schneider perform Messiaen's *Poèmes pour Mi*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.



November 22

Rico Gulda in F. Gulda's *Play Piano Play*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Massachusetts Youth Wind Ensemble in Schwanter's *From a Dark Millennium*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Pianist Antonio Pompa-Baldi performs Poulenc's *Suite Napoli* and the U.S. premiere of M. Abbado's *Variations on a Minuet by Bach*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "Abbado's tough, angular variations" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/25/99].

Mitsuko Uchida performs Webern's *Variations*, op. 27. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "[T]his music was as much about color, dramatic gesture and intricacy of texture as . . . Chopin, and certainly no more shocking. Indeed, the middle variation was remarkable for its playfulness" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/24/99].

Foldover broadcasts Simon Emmerson's *Ophelia's Dream II*, Noah Creshevsky's *Private Lives*, Paul Goodman's *Mirror Images*, Matthew H. Fields's *Summer Mischief*, Anna Ikramova's *einstimmig*, Luc Martinez's *Escalier du Plancton*, John McElroy's *its a Blue Word after all*, Thomas Neuhaus's *5 Kleine Stücke Über die Kleinen Laute eines Kleinen Menschen*, John Palmer's *Phonai*, Michel Pascal's *Monde du Plancton*, and Robert Scott Thompson's *The Cathedral Sky*. WOBC 91.5 FM, Oberlin, OH.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Reflections on the Hudson* performed by The Clemson University Orchestra. Clemson, SC.

November 23

Pianist Susan Svrcek performs Arthur Schnabel's *Piece in Seven Movements*, a half-hour work written in 1936; Peter Micehalides's *Four Noturnes: Night Scenes in an Enchanted Forest*; Tom Flaherty's *Nightstars*, Toru Takemitsu's *Litany*, and Ramiro Cortés's *Sonata No. 3*. Neighborhood Church, Pasadena, CA. "Although the Austrian pianist, who emigrated to America in the late '30s, never played modern music (he claimed Schubert was the last great composer), he was close friends with Schoenberg and admired his music. . . . There is a reason why Schnabel played like a composer; he was one. He wrote in an intense, uncompromising Schoenbergian style; and he wrote a lot -- three massive symphonies, five substantial string quartets, a concerto, grand sonatas and much more. Yet he never played his music, and he didn't encourage anyone else to either. He ignored it in his autobiography and left most of it unpublished at the time of his death in 1951. . . . The form is unique. The first movement, around a minute long, introduces the raw material of intervals and gestures, and each subsequent movement takes off from it but also expands it in unpredictable ways. . . . Schnabel was not a sensual or colorful pianist, and he didn't write sensual or colorful music. *Piece in Seven Movements* is thick, dense, hard to follow; but there is a substantial richness to the weighty sonorities and a spooky harmonic force that pulls the listener along through the atonal thickets. Svrcek played it with a ferocious concentration and control that grabbed the ear. . . . [Nocturne has] trills, . . . notes that hang in the air and . . . crashing chords that go bump in the night. *Nightstars* . . . began with a big band and then explored the gleaming sonic shards. . . . *Litany* -- made of lush, thick, sad chords -- invited Debussy's ghost. Ramiro Cortés's moody *Sonata No. 3* verged on the despondent" [Mark Swed, *Los Angeles Times*, 11/26/99].

NEC Wind Ensemble in Schwanter's *In Evening's Stillness* and Hindemith's *Symphony for Band*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

*Piano Century*. Ruggles's *Evocation No. 1*, Amy Beach's *Five Improvisations*, Poulenc's *Six Improvisations*, Wolpe's *Passacaglia*, Webern's *Variations for Piano*, Prokofiev's *Pensées*, Willie "The Lion" Smith's *Fingerbuster*, Seeger's *Etude in Mixed Accents*, and Bloch's *Sonata*. Paul Hall, Juilliard School, New York, NY. "[F]ew . . . would attempt a project as bold and fascinating as *Piano Century*, the 11-concert survey of 20th-century piano music being offered by the Juilliard School . . . . Bruce Brubaker . . . has linked 101 student pianists with 101 works ranging over the entire century, from Ravel's *Jeux d'Eau* (1901) to Amanda Harberg's Juilliard commission, *The Fun of Compulsive Behavior* (1999). Each program focuses on one decade, though a recent concert in the series was a compendium. Making a statement about the relative importance of various composers is not the point. Major and minor composers are here, as are young ones, and no composer is represented by more than one work. Yet just by hearing such varied pieces written within a few years of each other, the listener comes away with a sense of a decade in music. . . . [The] Ruggles . . . is a fearsome growl of a piece by this flinty American composer. . . . The opening improvisation [in the Beach] is somewhat daring harmonically, with hints of . . . 12-tone writing. But the other movements are like harmonically spiked-up salon music, folk music, and a mock-sentimental waltz. . . . Poulenc's *Six Improvisations* . . . were vastly . . . inventive, especially the skittish third one, with its Prokofiev-like astringencies. . . . Wolpe's *Passacaglia* is as frenzied and explosive as Anton Webern's landmark 12-tone *Variations*, Op. 7, is cool, incisive and spare-textured. . . . with Prokofiev's *Pensées* (1933--34) Akiko Chiba showed us the more ruminative side of this famously percussive composer. It was refreshing to hear the joyous stride piece *Fingerbuster* (1939) by Willie (The Lion) Smith, the teacher of Duke Ellington . . . . Seeger's onrushing, astonishing *Étude in Mixed Accents* is so short that Maria Beatriz Ramos played it twice, each time impressively" [The New York Times, 11/25/99].

Metalica and Michael Kamen, with the Orchestra of St. Luke's. Madison Square Garden, New York, NY. Success came at an obvious cost to classical standards. But as rock 'n' roll, it exceeded expectations, sidestepping the problems raised by most previous unions of classical and pop music" [The New York Times, 11/25/99].

Ovidiu Marinescu and Kenneth Boulton in Poulenc's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

Kremerata Baltica in Vasks's *The Book* for cello, Morricone's *Il Sogno di un Uomo Ridicolo*, Kancheli's *Time and Again*, Piazzolla's *Pieces for String Trio*, and Schnittke's *String Trio*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "*Sogno di un Uomo Ridicolo* (1996), a meditation on Dostoyevsky, for violin and viola, began as a slow canon and explored the textural connections between the two string instruments abstractly . . . . [A] string of melodic sections, includ[ed] one in which the violin sings over a strummed viola accompaniment, and another in which the violin plays a simple chord progression to accompany a bluesy viola melody. The Kancheli work, like his recent piece for the Philharmonic, is an expansive dreamscape in which loud, severe sections are interspersed between gentler evocations of distance and serenity. . . . and there are some stunningly beautiful sections . . . . Its spacey quality contrasted sharply with the Schnittke Trio, an arch compendium of neo-Classicism, neo-medievalism and the chugging modulations of Glassian Minimalism" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 11/25/99].

November 24

*Completely Copland Festival.* Kurt Masur conducts the New York Philharmonic in *Symphonic Ode*, *Clarinet Concerto*, *Inscape*, and *Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Repeated November 27. "The *Ode* is an arresting but not totally successful score. . . . Later revisions . . . in 1952, the version performed . . . did not essentially alter it. . . . [T]he triumph of [the *Clarinet Concerto*] is that Copland imbued the music with a moody, jazzy melancholy . . . and a touch of swing . . . but did not self-consciously evoke jazz. . . . Copland utilizes 12-tone techniques [in *Inscape*] but in a way that allows his distinctive voice to reach us. . . . There was a certain straight-laced quality to Mr. Masur's conducting of . . . *Four Dance Episodes* . . . But Copland's infectious score . . . seems less hokey when treated like vigorous contemporary music, as it was here" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/27/99].

November 25

103rd anniversary of the birth of Virgil Thomson.

November 26

Philadelphia Orchestra in Sviridov's *A Little Triptych for Orchestra*, Prokofiev's *Violin Concerto No. 1*, and Rachmaninoff's *Symphonic Dances*. Philadelphia, PA. Through November 29.

November 27

*Completely Copland Festival.* New York Philharmonic in *Symphonic Ode*, *Clarinet Concerto*, *Inscape*, *Four Dance Episodes from Rodeo*, and *Appalachian Spring*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Festival through December 11.

November 28

New York Chamber Symphony in Pfitzner's *Kleine Sinfonie*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

November 29

*Festivals for the End of the Century: I. Three Nights of Percussion with Steven Schick.* *Drumming in the Dark.* Xenakis's *Rebounds* and *Psappha*, P.T. Lewis's *Bricolage*, Ferneyhough's *Bone Alphabet*, M. Gordon's *XY*, and Globokar's *Toucher*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Festival through December 6.

*Twentieth Century Retrospectives. Boulangerie -- Nadia Boulanger the Artist: Her Musical World.* Lili Boulanger's *Pie Jesu*, Nadia Boulanger's *Lux aeterna*, and Stravinsky's *Octet for Wind Instruments*. Paul Hall, Juilliard School, New York, NY.

*Songs by Philip Glass.* Metropolitan Museum, New York, NY.

*Winds at Weill.* Wallingford Riegger's *Concerto for Piano and Woodwind Quintet*. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

Symphonicum Europae Orchestra in Schuman's *American Festival Overture*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

Foldover broadcasts Bret Battey's *Distance, Dance, Discern*, Darren Copeland's *Reaching for Tomorrow*, Robert Gibson's *Ex Machina*, Chris Herb's *Pedicularis Groenlandica*, Brenda Hutchinson's *Long Tube Trio*, Tom Nelly's *Modal Dance*, Sarah Peebles's *Phoenix Calling*, William Price's *Let Freedom Ring*, Anna Rubin's *Crying the Laughing and Golden*, Kilian Schwoon's *Orpheus und Demokrit*, Andrew Simpson's *Chamber Concerto*, Paul Still's *Benediction*, Vernon Taranto Jr.'s *Five Haiku Impressions*, and Pete Williams's *Megan's Room*. WOBC 91.5 FM, Oberlin, OH.

UW Contemporary Group presents Webern's *Five Movements*, Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir*, Boulez's *Twelve Notations*, Stockhausen's *Adieu*, Musgrave's *Impromptu*, Copland's *Piano Variations*, Xenakis's *Rebond*, and Stravinsky's *Octet*. Meany Hall, University of Washington, Seattle, WA.

November 30

Violinist Carolin Widmann in Shchedrin's *Echo Sonata*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Guitarist Liona Boyd in Villa-Lobos's *Chôros Typico* and Boyd's *The Lament of the Guitar*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

*Piano Century.* Skalkottas's *Reverie in the Old Style*, Boulez's *Sonata No. 1*, Milhaud's *Une Journée (One Day)*, Diamond's *The Tomb of Melville*, Kirchner's *Sonata*, Cage's *The Perilous Night*, T. Monk's *Monk's Mood*, Rorem's *Barcarolles*, Chávez's *Etude -- Homage to Chopin*, Lutoslawski's *Two Etudes*, and Gold's *Boogie-Woogie Etude*. Paul Hall, Juilliard School, New York, NY. "How often do you hear Pierre Boulez, Thelonious Monk, Ned Rorem and Morton Gould . . . on the same program?" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 11/25/99].

*Completely Copland Festival.* New York Philharmonic in *Suite from Hear Ye, Hear Ye!*, *Dance Panels*, *Dance Symphony*, and *Suite from Appalachian Spring*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Repeated December 2.

Houston Composers' Alliance presents Thow's *Quartet* (1997), Milburn's *Two Love Songs* (1970), Eaton's *Concert Music* (1961) (with clarinetist Richard Nunemaker), and Lavenda's *Octet* (1995). Brown Auditorium, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, TX

*Sonic Boom 8.* Da Capo Chamber Players in *By George! Honoring George Perle at 85. Sonata a Quattro, Critical Moments, Songs on Texts of Emily Dickinson*, and *Sonata a Cinque*, plus the world premiere of Lansky's *Odd Moments*. Cooper Union, New York, NY.