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An Interview with Jean-Luc Darbellay

ANTON ROVNER

ROVNER: Where did you begin your activities as a composer, and where and with whom did you study?

DARBELLAY: I studied composition at the Bern Conservatory with Theo Hirsbrunner, who was a pupil of Pierre Boulez. This makes me a "grandson" of Boulez! I also studied with Cristobal Halffter and Dimitri Terzakis. Master classes with Heinz Holliger and Klaus Huber followed, and I took courses with Boulez (at the Sorbonne and IRCAM) and with Edison Denisov (in Luzern, where I was his assistant). In 1993, together with five other Denisov students, I founded the Lacroix group.

ROVNER: Which composers influenced you the most in your formative years?

DARBELLAY: The most influential were Debussy, Messiaen, Boulez, Stravinsky, and Denisov. Among older composers, I could mention Beethoven, Mozart, and Schubert.

ROVNER: Could you speak about the Lacroix group?

DARBELLAY: The group was formed somewhat by chance. The Denisov courses took place in Chalet Lacroix, organized by the Hindemith Foundation in Frankfurt. Hindemith lived in Blonay and founded a music center in that setting with his royalty money. The six are John Wolf Brennan, Christian Henking, Michael Radanovics, Marianne Schroeder, Michael Schneider, and I. The group was essentially organized by Thüring Bräm, the director of the Luzern Conservatory, who was responsible for organizing the Denisov classes. The Lacroix group continues to collaborate with Bräm, and recently he invited us to Luzern, where we organized the concerts of the newly formed Spectrum Ensemble. After completing the classes, the group came up with the idea of organizing concerts at the Chalet Lacroix. The first of these took place at the end of classes in September 1993. We stay together, despite the fact that our aesthetics are entirely different. The musics of pianist Brennan and violinist Radanovics are very much influenced by jazz. Among pianist Schroeder's repertory is music of Cage, Scelsi, Stockhausen, Ustvolskaya, and the minimalists. Her music is influenced more by such composers.

ROVNER: You are frequently involved in arranging concerts.. Could you describe some of your activities in this field in greater detail?

DARBELLAY: When we were first establishing ourselves as a group, we arranged a few concerts together, first at the workshop as mentioned, then in Moscow in May 1995, at the *Alternativa Festival*. After that, we had concerts in Moscow (November 1996), and Dublin and Blonay (1997) -- the last of these with the Moscow Ensemble of Contemporary Music, directed by composer Yuri Kasparov.

We also had a concert in memory of Edison Denisov on December 3, 1997, in Luzern, where we presented six of our compositions, as well as works by Bräm and Denisov. Marcel Wengler, the director of the Luxembourg Society for New Music, took part in a concert in 1999 in Weggis, near Luzern. This was a soprano and piano recital, where we set texts by Hans Arp.

ROVNER: With which contemporary-music ensembles do you regularly collaborate?

DARBELLAY: First of all with the Orion Ensemble. This group started out as the Orion Duo, my son Olivier (who plays both horn and cello) and saxophonist Marc Sieffert -- the ensemble performs music for cello and saxophone duo as well as for horn and saxophone duo, as Olivier plays both instruments at alternate times. Around this duo the Orion Ensemble is structured, the instrumentation of which is continuously fluctuating, with the addition violinists, cellists, pianists, and others. Then, there is a larger Antipodes Ensemble, also founded and directed by Olivier. Two years ago, Moscow pianist Victor Yampolsky and I founded the Spectrum Ensemble, half of which consists of Moscow musicians and the other half of Swiss. Sometimes the Swiss go to Moscow, which they did for the ensemble's first concert there in March, 1999, and sometimes the Russians come to Switzerland, as in February 2000. I also work with Accroche Note Ensemble, which recently performed in the *Presences Festival*. I have also performed with Ensemble Contrechamps, as well as with other ensembles and orchestras. My orchestral pieces have been recorded by the Stuttgart Radio Orchestra, the Mittel-Deutscher Rundfunk (Middle German Radio) Kammerphilharmonie, the Moscow Symphony Orchestra, and the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande -- the latter performed my pieces in September 2000. Since I studied not only composition, but also conducting and clarinet at the Bern Conservatory, I sometimes participate in concerts there either as a clarinetist or a conductor.

ROVNER: What can you tell us about your compositions, and the aesthetics of your language? Which works give a good representation of your ideas?

DARBELLAY: My aesthetic originates from serial technique, but is not limited to it. 12-tone music was my first contact with contemporary composition. Later on I developed my own system of "central notes." Sometimes this involves centering on one note -- as in *Ein Garten für Orpheus* (for horn, basset horn, and string quartet) and *La or A* (for clarinet, violin, cello, and tuning fork) -- or focussing on a group of notes, as in *Images Perdues* (for cello and piano). Other times, the focus can be on more complex aggregates, groups of five or six notes, which frequently recur like leitmotifs, or "central" or "basic chords," as in my new orchestral piece, *Oyama*.

I frequently use a technique of "microcanons." These are successions of same-note passages that form thematic or pitch units and recurring successively in various instruments. The result is an intricate micro-polyphony -- intense textural flourishes! -- in essence, moving clusters! I use such technique in *Ein Garten für Orpheus*, piling moving clusters around the central notes, as quick and texturally elaborate arabesques. The flourishes form a pillar of sound! I try to have a very clear and comprehensible type of formal development, with clearly discernible contrasts of texture and dynamic, as well as recognizable recurring pitch themes or textural units. I also endeavor to use accessible forms, such as a succession of fast-slow-fast sections in a one-movement piece. Often I use very soft dynamics juxtaposed with louder ones for formal contrast. My orchestral piece, *Oyama*, starts like a volcano eruption (extremely fast, loud, texturally dense and dramatic) and then gradually subsides to slow, soft and texturally sparse and intricate rumble in the middle, before ending loud and fast, like a second explosion. I use a sparing amount of extended technique, which yet serve an important dramatic role in my work. I try to use musical material in a very compact way, not spreading things around, and not having too wide or extended thematic palette. When you write an orchestral piece, such as *Oyama*, you have to choose material very carefully, and make sure not to have too many elements or ideas at a time, but to be able to use a small amount of material developed at length.

ROVNER: How did you decide to meet Denisov and to attend the Luzern classes?

DARBELLAY: I did not know Denisov personally, though I was familiar with his music and had great admiration for it. I simply saw the announcement about the classes, and thought that this would be an excellent opportunity. The course lasted for three weeks altogether -- one week in Luzern, a second in Blonay and then back to Luzern. Altogether, there were three years that Denisov gave courses in these venues -- 1989, 1991 and 1993 -- and I attended them all. Denisov gave us the opportunity to work with the Moscow Ensemble for Contemporary Music. The first concert was the aforementioned May 1995 *Alternativa Festival*. In 1996, we recorded a CD with the Rachmaninoff Piano Trio (founded by Victor Yampolsky, with violinist Mikhail Tsinman and cellist Natalia Savinova) called *Groupe Lacroix* (Creative Works, CW1030). This included our compositions for the trio, plus solos and duets (my piece was *Empreintes* for the full ensemble), as well as Denisov's *Variations on a Theme by Schubert* for cello and piano. The Moscow Ensemble of Contemporary Music came to Blonay in 1997, and we also had a concert with them in Dresden, organized by the Mittel-Deutscher Rundfunk.

ROVNER: In addition to Russian musicians, you have very good connections with musicians and groups in what used to be East Germany.

DARBELLAY: Lately I had a lot of success in establishing many connections and good working relations with numerous orchestras and ensembles in East Germany. I work a lot with the MDR Orchestra.

Cantus for horn and organ was given in 1993 in Altenburg, and *Pranam No. 4* for cello and orchestra was performed in Halle in November, 1995, with the MDR Orchestra and Siegfried Palm. I wrote *Ein Garten für Orpheus* for a performance in Dessau in 1996. *Ode Breve* for saxophone, violin and cello was heard in Halle in 1998, while *Ondes Fugitives* was performed in Plauen in 1999. In the 2000-2001 season, there will be the first East German performance of *Oyama* in the Gewandhaus by the MDR.

ROVNER: Who are some of the composers that you have had a chance to work or collaborate with?

DARBELLAY: In 1992, the director of the Quaderni Perugini di Musica Contemporanea gave me a commission to write a piece for cello and ensemble. Inspired by Scelsi's *Pranam No. 2*, I called the new work *Pranam No. 3*. Around the same time, there was a John Cage festival in Perugia, and I was one of the performers in *Music Walk*, where we had to recite texts and play radio transistors. I had a chance to meet Cage shortly before his death, and had him sign my copy of *Letters of Exchange between Boulez and Cage*. Later, that year, I took the book to Paris when I went to study with Boulez. In November I gave him the book to sign, and he wrote "apres John, et encore vivant" ("after John and still alive"). The main topic of the book was the interrelation between Boulez's total serialism and Cage's aleatory music. Earlier on, I worked with Hungarian composer, Georgy Kurtag, who I met in his Bern master class. I played him a recording of *Glanum* for three basset horns. He was very surprised at the timbre of the instruments, and expressed a wish to write a piece for them. Siegfried Palm, who was also there, dissuaded me from relying on Kurtag to write the piece, saying that the latter would promise to write such piece but would never do so, since composition usually takes him such a long time. Nevertheless, in 1991, he did keep his promise and sent me a piece for two basset horns and two pianos. I arranged for a performance of this work in Witten at *The Chamber Music Days of Witten*, organized by the West-Deutscher Rundfunk.

ROVNER: You are also an active participant in a national composers' organization, as president of the Swiss section of the ISCM [International Society of Contemporary Music]. Have you participated in many *World Music Days Festivals*?

DARBELLAY: Before I became the president of the ISCM, there was no unified Swiss section. There were only regional sections from different parts of Switzerland -- one from Bern, one from Basel, one from Zurich. We decided to establish a unified Swiss section in 1995. The first time I attended the *World Music Days Festival* was in Stockholm in 1994. Since then I have attended all but one of the subsequent ones -- Essen (1995), Copenhagen (1996), Manchester (1998), Bucharest (1999), and Luxembourg (2000). The only festival that I could not attend was in Seoul (1997). The first time that I had a piece performed at one of these festivals was in 1999, when *A la recherche* for flute, oboe, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, double-bass, percussion and piano was performed very successfully. This year *Ein Garten für Orpheus* was performed by the Antipodes Ensemble, and that went well, too.

Concert Reviews

The Long and the Short

DAVID CLEARY

Longitude. March 13, 2000, Edward Pickman Hall, Longy School of Music, Cambridge, MA.

Writers are wise to avoid using clichés, but this reviewer cannot resist mentioning the old saw, "tooting one's own horn," in this case. The March 13 Longitude concert gave director Eric Sawyer a chance to do just that, as he appeared as composer, pianist, and conductor.

Sawyer's piece, *Under the Sudden Blue* (1999) received its premiere. This was one of the evening's highlights, a work exhibiting clever transformation of small-scale materials and a resultantly unusual, yet highly effective, long-range structure. The mood here is low-key, yet evocative, quite seductive in its unique way. Longy faculty Elizabeth Anker sang wonderfully; her scrumptious, well-controlled contralto voice was remarkably even from top range to bottom, and her diction was excellent. The composer accompanied sensitively at the piano.

The other works performed varied in style and quality. Elliott Schwartz's *Spectrum* (1998) excellently integrates spoken dialogue and instrumental playing. Like Tom Johnson's *Failing*, another winner in this vein, the words here serve as a clever (if somewhat more disjointed) commentary on the surrounding music. And best of all, the text is used to clearly delineate the work's larger formal divisions. This unusually scored trio (cello, horn, and tuba) is a delightfully witty entity, much fun to hear. *Four Movements for Piano Trio* (1990) by Bright Sheng is concise and eloquent, finding a wealth of contrast in its pentatonic-based, yet dissonantly-handled harmonic language. The piece nicely mixes ethereal and energetic passages into a satisfying whole and sports some first-class instrumental writing. Mark-Anthony Turnage's soprano-and-ensemble cycle *Her Anxiety* (1992) betrays folksy touches underneath its otherwise cosmopolitan skin. But this is no indication of lightness; the music in fact nicely mirrors the sour look at love cast by the Yeats poems selected. While text setting here is sometimes not to this reviewer's taste—not always suggestive of how one would naturally intone the words and taking some liberties with text presentation—the vocal writing is very idiomatic. The work's overall dramatic schema, featuring one movement for unaccompanied voice and another for ensemble alone, seems odd but effective. Sadly, the years have not been especially kind to *Vox Balanae* (1971) by George Crumb. Its once novel special effects seem either quaint or stock-in-trade nowadays; combined with its languorous unfolding, pallid melodic figures, consistently spare textures, mannered ritualistic feel, and lack of overall structural shape, the work makes for difficult listening. This reviewer prefers hearing other Crumb works.

Performances by the ensemble's student members were generally very good. Special bravos go to Alexandra Tucker (flute), Rachel Brown (cello), and Heather Gilligan (piano) for their skilled playing in *Vox Balanae*, and the ensemble (expertly conducted by Sawyer) that effectively presented the Turnage piece.

This critic is happy to report that Sawyer managed to toot all his horns in a most accomplished fashion—and it made for very satisfying listening indeed.

Duke's Place

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Pianist Bill Susman and bassist Tim Enos in works by Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. January 14, Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA.

Everyone is unique. And an individual style of dress, or tone of voice, a favorite word, or maybe just a gesture or a phrase can speak volumes. Composers are expected to be individual, and we want them to tell us something funny or deep in an entirely personal way. The best have instantly identifiable sounds. Duke Ellington (1899-1974) and his "composing and arranging companion" Billy Strayhorn (1910-1967) have unique styles, but they complement each other, too.

Bay Area composer-pianist Bill Susman and his fluid bassist Tim Enos gave a thorough and thoroughly musical demonstration of uniqueness and compatibility in a concert on January 14 at Fort Mason Center in San Francisco. And they had a lot to choose from: the Ellington-Strayhorn songbook contains well over 1,000 items, and with a treasure trove that rich one can afford to be selective. Susman and Enos chose 16 out of a possible 21 gems, and the pianist, in particular, stressed their harmonic similarities both in his remarks -- with musical examples -- and in his playing.

A device common to both composers is the frequent use of descending chromatic lines, usually in minor. The altered chords of Ellington's signature tune, "Take the 'A' Train," which was actually written by Strayhorn in 1941 (he joined the band in '39), are a good example, and show how well he assimilated Duke's style. The "Black and Tan Fantasy" (1927) became, in this performance, a moody, majestic, "primitive" blues, which takes off from the funeral march slow movement in Chopin's Bb Minor Piano Sonata No. 2, op. 35. Ellington's style was steeped in the blues and the duo here emphasized this feeling and elsewhere in the program, with smooth, seductive playing, or by using jabbing single notes or chords.

"C-Jam Blues"(1941) got the party treatment, and the 1946 "Just Squeeze Me," which was one of Ella Fitzgerald's big numbers, received requisite attention. Famous ballads like "In a Sentimental Mood" (1935), the Strayhorn "Day Dream" (1940) -- so chromatic here it was almost a nightmare -- and "Sophisticated Lady" (1932) with its flatted fifths (tritones) were mined for their melancholy. And speaking of melancholy, the duo played Strayhorn's "Passion Flower" (1944) and "Chelsea Bridge" (1941), and there were those descending chromatics again.

But the favorites were the 1937 "Caravan" (written with trumpeter Juan Tizol), which displayed Susman's steady, heavy left hand vamp, and "Sunset and the Mockingbird" from "The Queen's Suite" (1959, written as a personal gift for Elizabeth II), which showed the personal touches of both Strayhorn and Ellington -- the former's static, impressionist colors, and the latter's ornamented, almost oriental turns, which re-surfaced in his ballet for Alvin Ailey, *The River* (1970). An entranced audience listened intently and applauded vociferously.

Guitar Peninsula

ILANA COTTON

Peninsula Symphony in Darius Milhaud's *Suite Provençale*, the premiere John Beeman's *Concerto for Electric Guitar and Orchestra* (with Paul Dresher), Charles Griffes's *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*, Claude Debussy's *Petite Suite* (orchestrated by Henri Büsser). January 19, San Mateo Performing Arts Center, San Mateo, CA.

With a very adept and musical performance by soloist Paul Dresher, Beeman's well-crafted and resourceful *Concerto for Electric Guitar and Orchestra* received its world premiere with the Peninsula Symphony, conducted by Mitchell Sardou Klein, in a concert surrounded by light and colorful older American and French works. For Dresher -- who is acclaimed for his own creative work, especially with his adventuresome Electro-Acoustic Band -- this was also a debut: as soloist with a more traditional symphonic ensemble. Commissioned by the Peninsula Symphony, the concerto is also quite traditional in some respects: three movements with clearly-drawn structures and a variety of solo/tutti interactions. It was well-written for this orchestra, and they performed it in an exemplary manner. Stylistic language derives from an interesting cross-section of all that's available to us these days: jazz, rock, contemporary techniques and rhythms, but also holds a firm grounding in the chromatic harmony of romanticism. While Beeman is comfortable with wailing solo lines and effects reminiscent of rock guitar legends, it was immediately clear that he intended also to explore the electric guitar's range as an instrument capable of blending with orchestral timbres.

The robust outer movements are a satisfying mix of rhythmic themes and virtuoso riffs, but the second movement presents a more thoughtful and lyrical side of the instrument. With a spare and delicate higher register motive set against an orchestral backdrop of gently echoing and impressionistic textures, this movement explores the electric guitar's idiosyncratic and very expressive range of articulation, from percussive staccato to eloquent sustain. Dresher was very much up to the variety of tasks, and one hopes that he and this concerto will enjoy further performance.

The concert programming brought us a sense of connection from earlier composers who shared many of the same tendencies: use of folk and contemporary rhythms (Milhaud's *Suite Provençale*) and affinity for impressionism and orchestral color (Griffes's *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*). To further connect with the visual, the program included a slide show, introduced by Shulamit Hoffmann, of Hudson River School and French impressionist art which accompanied *The Pleasure-Dome* and Debussy's *Petite Suite*.

Strings Plus

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

San Jose Chamber Orchestra in works by Susman, Mollicone, Helfgot, and Touchi. January 21, Le Petit Trianon, San Jose, CA.

New music is often ghettoized. But not so with the ten-year-old San Jose Chamber Orchestra, which played an entire subscription program of works by living composers on January 21. And the evening, dubbed *Celestial Strings*, got a full house at the Willis Polk-designed Le Petit Trianon (yes, it was modeled after the one at Versailles) in downtown San Jose. The elegant 340-seat room is rectangular, with a high ceiling and flat walls, and all of these factors seemed to help make the sound clear, warm, and evenly balanced. And when you're making a case for unfamiliar music, it certainly helps to have charm and good looks on your side.

Conductor Barbara Day Turner chose a diverse but complementary program which began with William Susman's *Angels of Light* (1991). The ten-minute work, scored for strings plus piano (Michael Touchi) and glockenspiel (Tammy Chen), was inspired by a passage from a Mark Helprin novel. Susman's transparent, shimmering textures perfectly describe the essence of the Helprin. The music is also largely based on a three-note cell, with frequent use of minor thirds and modes which give it an appropriately timeless effect (and affect), with exquisite tonal clashes.

Henry Mollicone's 20-minute *Inner Light* (1994), for strings and tubular chimes (Mark Veregge), was a far more dramatic affair reflecting his spiritual experiences and concerns. The chromatic writing in the first movement, "Quiet Light", recalled Mahler's epic adagios, while the second, "Blinding Light," functioned as a kind of scherzo, with vigorous syncopations and frequent metric shifts. The last, "Final Light," combined adagio and scherzo elements, and there were many striking textures throughout, especially in the cellos and basses.

Next came the U.S. premiere *Improvisacion y Danza* (1985) of Polish-born Argentinian composer Aaron Helfgot, with concertmaster Cynthia Baehr and Patricia Emerson Mitchell, oboe. The eight-minute piece was tight, imaginative, seductive, and colorful.

Even showier was the world premiere performance of Michael Touchi's 16-minute *Tango Barroco* (2000), with soprano saxophonist William Trimble and English hornist Mitchell. The piece imagined what kind of work Vivaldi would have written if he'd lived in 1930's Argentina. The answer fused modern harmonic writing with baroque textures. Trimble and Mitchell were remarkably fluid and expressive. Turner's conducting throughout was precise and alert, and she got tremendously responsive results from her ensemble, proving that a full subscription program of new music is a fine notion.

The New Century, ostensibly a "conductorless" string orchestra (its music director is Krista Bennion Feeney), was in peak form, from the arresting folkish melody and striking pulses which begin the divertimento, right through the spastic rhythms and humorous surprises of its conclusion. In between, there are the spine-chilling ruminations of a morbid and passionate slow movement that build up to fever pitch. The ensemble shone throughout, with a noticeably augmented richness from previous seasons, no doubt in part due to increased membership among the lower parts. While the group maintains a roster of ten violinists, a program insert presently notes four violas, four cellos, and two basses: up from the original season membership of three, three, two, and one.

Music of Lou Harrison offered clear-cut events, if less organizational logic. The *Suites for Cello and String Orchestra* are actually adaptations and orchestrations, by Robert Hughes, of two Harrison works for cello and accompanist (piano and harp respectively). Each of the eight movements of this heterogeneous melange brought forth appealing and intriguing motives, more meditative than dynamic. Emil Miland was the committed and well-favored soloist.

The concert also featured Ellis Schuman's brief and solemn *In Memoriam for Strings*.

Event and Logic at New Century

MARK ALBURGER

New Century Chamber Orchestra performs Bartók's *Divertimento*, Ellis Schuman's *In Memoriam for Strings*, and *Suites for Cello and String Orchestra* (music of Lou Harrison, adapted and orchestrated by Robert Hughes). January 25, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA. Through January 28, Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael. Reviewed January 28.

Event and logic are certainly not the only aspects that contribute to making a great work of art, but they definitely are welcome. The Béla Bartók *Divertimento*, performed by the New Century Chamber Orchestra on January 28 at the Marin Jewish Community Center, is one such composition, filled with engaging moments that are organized into a clear and satisfying whole.

Record Reviews

Clarinet in the Balance

DAVID CLEARY

Virtuoso Works for Clarinet and Orchestra. CRS CD 9459

The title of this CD is misleading. While a number of selections featuring clarinet and orchestra are indeed found here, one also encounters two compositions for orchestra without soloist and one for unaccompanied clarinet. Sad to say, the difficulties with this release do not end there.

Of the three pieces by living composers presented on this disc, the best is Irwin Swack's *Symphony No. 2 in One Movement*. Scored for string orchestra and originally written as a quartet, this intense, brooding selection fluidly phases in and out of triadic harmony, at times suggesting Mahler, Bartók, Shostakovich, and (in the coda) Copland. Its formal construction is unusual and imaginative for the genre -- essentially an ABCA blueprint -- but the weighty feel and broad time scale employed easily justify the "symphony" label. Regrettably, the line leading to *Weltschmerz* and sprawl also gets crossed here, but despite that, Swack's piece is not a bad listen. The phrase "Hollywood Varèse" succinctly describes the contradictions inherent in Henry Wolking's curious *Pangaea for Orchestra*. Opening with an English horn melody with roots in the oboe figure from *Octandre*, the piece is shot through with obsessively repeated snippets, prominent percussion, and gritty harmonies. But the instrumentation is luxuriant in the manner of a film score and more dissonant verticals eventually dissolve into added-note triadic constructs. While not a wholly successful entity, one can definitely give Wolking good marks for adventurous risk-taking. Surprisingly, *Concertante for Clarinet and Orchestra* by Norman Dello Joio proves disappointing. The sound world here is fetching enough (vintage 1940's Americana), the clarinet writing is effective, and the idea of composing a stand-alone variation set for soloist and orchestra is unusual in music of this period. But formal considerations are not handled well. The variations often stop dead rather than linking into each other smoothly, and no larger plan yokes the various sections together. And sorry to say, the work's predominantly bucolic and flossy feel palls over time.

Performances of these and the standard literature selections often leave much to be desired. John Russo's clarinet playing frequently boasts a big, ringing sound, but also periodically exhibits odd interpretive license, imprecise rhythmic execution, and inattention to detail. His playing of Stravinsky's *Three Pieces for Clarinet Solo* is a case in point: retards and accelerations not marked in the score are added in, breath marks and register shifts interrupt the rhythmic flow, and the last movement's "*sombrer le son subito*" marking (in this context implying a suddenly softer tone quality and dynamic level) is ignored. The Dello Joio receives a very doubtful presentation, suffering from recurring ensemble sloppiness (most especially in the final fast variation, which sometimes degenerates to an incoherent scramble) and generally sounding wan and pedestrian. The booklet notes are often curiously written and sometimes miss important issues, at one point taking pains to discuss Russo's added cadenza in the Donizetti *Concertino for Clarinet and Orchestra* while overlooking the CD's omission of the lengthy *Andante sostenuto* opening found in the Peters edition of this score. Sound quality varies from decent to dicey, and some splices are very noticeable. Additionally, the track numbering on the disc and cover do not agree; the latter lists the Dello Joio as an eight-section work while the former enumerates it as one entity, making identification of later pieces on the CD confusing.

Cinematic Copland

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Aaron Copland. *Cinematic Copland.* Eos Orchestra. Telarc.

The first classical music I ever heard live was by Aaron Copland. That experience -- in Hayward, CA, no less -- had a big impact on me. And why? Because the music was direct and communicated vividly. Copland's centenary was celebrated last year with lots of performances, and with the release of many CD's, including one by The San Francisco Symphony under Michael Tilson Thomas.

And now we have New York's Eos Orchestra in a Telarc album of four film scores, its release timed to coincide with *Copland's America* on PBS. Eos's first CD was all Paul Bowles, and their latest, led by music director Jonathan Sheffer, is equally fascinating, and fun.

Film music has gotten a bad rap, especially in America. In Europe there seems to be less prejudice against the cinema, and Copland's contemporaries, like Prokofiev and Honegger, went back and forth from movie to concert work, as did Benjamin Britten. Like the British composer, Copland was gay -- though not, one thinks, especially out -- and worked in as many genres as he could, with remarkable results in each. And being a child of his time, he sometimes scored films with social concerns, like his first, *The City*. Written by leftist Pare Lorentz, who did two earlier documentaries with composer Virgil Thomson, and shot by Paul Strand, it was first shown at the 1939 New York World's Fair. Copland's music is energetic and highly imaginative, especially cues like "Taxi Jam," with its skittering strings, and "New England Countryside," which has fluid, delicate orchestrations, and wry, bouncing rhythms. The Office of War documentary, *The Cummington Story* (1945), was about the resettlement of presumably Jewish refugees in a Massachusetts town. Copland's music for this is highly lyrical, string dominated, in his idealized Americana vein.

Copland additionally scored for Lewis Milestone's 1943 *The North Star*, which starred Anne Baxter ("Eve, Eve") and Erich von Stroheim in a Lillian Hellman script about the Nazi rape of a Russian village. Copland's music is appropriately grand, with lots of fanfares and drum tattoos, and touching. There's even the witty "Going to School," which sounds like a French children's song; and a wonderful oddity, "The Song of the Guerillas," which has perfectly serious words by Ira Gershwin! *From Sorcery to Science* couldn't be more different. Written for a puppet show at the New York World's Fair (1939), it's snappy and shows the composer's command of styles -- ranging from Mexican-Afro-Cuban in "African Voodoo" to French in "The Alchemist."

Copland wrote five other Hollywood scores including one for Wyler's *The Heiress* (1949), for which Olivia de Havilland and he received Oscars, and the Carroll Baker starrer *Something Wild* (1961). Copland's pupil Alex North stayed in Hollywood and prospered. Copland succeeded, too, in almost everything he did. Sheffer's orchestra responds superbly, and the sound is brilliant and clear, with lots of punch.

Stopping for Dickinson

ELLIOTT SCHWARTZ

Peter Dickinson. *Rags, Blues and Parodies* [*Stevie's Tunes* (1984), *Concerto Rag* (1980), *Three Satie Transformations* (1970), *Four Blues* (1973)]. Meriel Dickinson, mezzo-soprano; Peter Dickinson, piano. Albany, Troy 369.

Peter Dickinson. *Piano Concerto* (1979-84). *Outcry: A Cycle of Nature Poems* for contralto solo, chorus and orchestra (1969). *Organ Concerto* (1971). Howard Shelley, piano; Jennifer Bate, organ; Meriel Dickinson, mezzo-soprano; BBC Symphony Orchestra, David Atherton conducting; The London Concert Choir; City of London Sinfonia, Nicholas Cleobury conducting. Albany, Troy 360.

Peter Dickinson. *Song Cycles*. [*Four W. H. Auden Songs* (1956), *A Dylan Thomas Song Cycle* (1959), *An e.e. cummings Song Cycle* (1965)]. Meriel Dickinson, mezzo-soprano; Marilyn Hill Smith, soprano; Henry Herford, baritone; Martyn Hill, tenor; Robin Bowman, piano; Peter Dickinson, piano. Albany, Troy 365.

Peter Dickinson has been very active on the British music scene for many years, as composer, pianist and writer. He's also quite well known as an enthusiastic advocate for American Music -- an interest which arose from his experience of living in New York in the 1950s, attending the Juilliard School (where his fellow students were Philip Glass and Peter Schickele), hearing a broad range of American music, and meeting many of this country's leading composers. It's fair to say that Dickinson is widely regarded in Britain as the leading authority on the subject -- perhaps the musical equivalent of Alistair Cooke? -- as evidenced by the fact that when Copland, Cage and Virgil Thomson died, Dickinson was one of those most frequently asked to write obituaries and give BBC talks about those figures.

As one might expect, his work presents a fascinating amalgam of British and American influences. There are obvious elements of English musical tradition, and performance training focused on the choir and organ loft. Dickinson's music reveals a considerable level of experience with singers, singing and vocal setting (It is worth noting, in this regard, that his sister is the highly accomplished mezzo-soprano Meriel Dickinson; she is featured on all three of these CDs). From his keyboard compositions -- both the concertos and the song accompaniments -- one can detect the hand of an outstanding pianist and organist. And there is a uniquely British flair for grand dramatic gesture and arching line (reminiscent, to this critic's ears, of both Elgar and Britten), most clearly evident in the early song cycles for voice and piano, set to texts by W.H. Auden, Dylan Thomas and e.e. cummings, and the massive, impassioned oratorio *Outcry*, for voice, chorus, and orchestra.

But elements of Americana enter into Dickinson's work as well -- not only in the frequent references to jazz, blues and ragtime, but in his Ivesian fascination with "found" sounds (pre-existing fragments which serve as springboards for his own imagination). In *Stevie's Tunes*, Dickinson's cycle on texts by Stevie Smith, the words -- for which, in many cases, the poet had certain melodies in mind -- are set to snatches of folk song, nursery tune, Victorian hymn, even a juicy fragment of Tchaikovsky, presented in surprisingly modernist harmonies and textures. On the same *Rags, Blues, and Parodies* disk which contains the Smith cycle, we can also hear a series of Transformations of music by Satie, a piano rag based upon Edward MacDowell, another rag derived from a hymn, and a third rag drawn from an early string quartet of Dickinson's. Perhaps the most interesting rag of all, combining the parodistic and self-referential in a single work, has been derived from a harmonic progression originally found in Ravel's piano music, then set to words by Lord Byron, and later put to use in Dickinson's organ concerto.

Similarly Ivesian -- or Cageian -- is Dickinson's fondness for layered textures, in which seemingly unrelated musical languages are juxtaposed (He coined the term "style modulation" to describe his activity in this area). The sounding results may at times remind listeners of Ives, Schnittke, Zimmermann, Bolcom, or Rochberg; moreover, Dickinson's approach to both borrowed materials and multi-layered texture borders on the cinematic, in its use of slow fades, quick cuts, double images and flashbacks. His 1971 organ concerto and 1984 piano concerto are excellent examples of this eclectic approach. The piano concerto, in particular, offers wonderfully evocative passages of multiple exposure and shifting focus. Like the organ concerto, it can be heard either as a single unbroken movement, or as a series of continually evolving variations -- evoking memories (trans-Atlantic ones, appropriately) of Bernstein's *Age of Anxiety* on one hand and Tippett symphonies on the other.

Without a doubt, Peter Dickinson should be better known in the United States. These three disks will, one hopes, go a long way to help increase his visibility on this side of the Atlantic. These CDs offer a fascinating, and often quite moving, portrait of an unusual creative artist -- one versed in many musical languages and dialects, and whose own compositions have successfully integrated those different styles into a unique, eclectic mix.

Pièces Gaubert pour Flûte et Piano

DAVID CLEARY

Phillippe Gaubert. *Pièces Romantiques pour Flûte et Piano*. Deux-Elles.

Phillippe Gaubert (1879-1941) was perhaps better known during his lifetime as a flautist (appearing often as soloist and touring with vocalist Nellie Melba) and conductor (presenting the French premieres of countless major stage works during his tenure as Director of Music at the Paris Opera). He also wrote music in genres ranging from solo song to opera, from small chamber groups to orchestra -- in fact, Gaubert's reputation and ability as a young composer was sufficiently high that he placed second in the 1905 *Prix de Rome* award competition.

After hearing this CD, one might opine that the title *Pièces Impressionistes* could be even more apropos; except for the final selection, these works all show extremely strong influence of Claude Debussy. Characteristics such as non-functional employment of scalar material (with a penchant for whole tone, modal, and -- in *Deuxième Sonate pour flûte et piano* -- pentatonic idioms), loosely balanced but clearly demarcated formal constructs, melodic ideas that receive different harmonizations when repeated, and lush, atmospheric moods predominate. The slow-tempo tunes here even sound similar to Debussy's at times, often unfolding in the same unhurried manner. Despite this, Gaubert's three sonatas for flute and piano show a few modest personalized touches. The first (written in 1917 and perhaps the best of these selections) generally avoids square phrasings and scatters a good bit of driving energy within its otherwise supple confines. Even more limpid and bucolic than most works written by the erstwhile Impressionist master, the second sonata (1924) pleases the least. Shorter, more obviously motivic melodies and a nattier, more cosmopolitan feel suggestive of Ravel can be found at times in the last of the set (1933); its occasional use of mild bitonality suggests stylistic flirtation with the work of *Les Six*. Two other flute/piano duos, *Madrigale* and *Orientale*, are single movement selections that would make attractive encores. The two trios, both scored for flute, cello, and piano, contrast greatly in style; *Trois Aquarelles* (1926) shows obvious affinity to the other numbers here, while the early *Pièce Romantique* (1904) belongs to the French post-Wagnerian school of Chabrier, Chausson, and D'Indy. The verdict? In sum, Gaubert's music is ably put together and excellently written for its players, listenable enough if lacking the special *je ne sais quoi* of Debussy and Ravel.

No hedging needs to be made regarding the performances, though. Flautist Kathryn Thomas plays wonderfully, sporting spry finger technique, sinuous melodic shaping, and a ripe, sumptuous tone quality that projects well even in the lowest reaches of the instrument. Richard Shaw proves an ideal piano accompanist, putting forth the perfect amount of energetic sound and clean, controlled playing while staying supportive of Thomas; their ensemble interaction is splendid. Cellist Phoebe Scott also performs excellently, demonstrating notably fine intonation with the flute in the numerous octave passages of *Trois Aquarelles*. Production is fine. Except for a few brief crackles and distortion blips early in the disc, sound is good.

Calendar

March 1

John Tower. Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, MI.

John Tavener's *The Bridegroom* performed by Anonymous 4 and the Chillingirian String Quartet. Tucson, AZ. Through March 8, New York (NY).

Pierre Boulez. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 14* performed by the Cleveland Orchestra. Cleveland, OH.

Gunther Schuller's *Blue Dawn into White Heat*. Miami University, Oxford, OH.

March 2

101st anniversary of the birth of Kurt Weill.

Charles Amirkhanian and Carl Stone. KPFA Berkeley, CA.

Schoenberg's *Brette-Lieder*, Berg's *Sonata*, op. 1, Webern's *Drei Lieder*, and songs of Weill. University of California, Davis, CA.

Charles Rosen. Mills College, Oakland, CA.

Glass's *Concerto for Saxophone Quartet*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY. Repeated March 4, Settlement Music School, Philadelphia (PA).

March 3

Amira's *Bubbles rain*, Donatoni's *Ali*, Scelsi's *Duo*, Xenakis's *Mikka, Mikka "S,"* and Harvey's *Death of Light / Light of Death*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Bernstein's *Chichester Songs*. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

Sarah Michael presents a new composition for Blue Boat, a stringed instrument by Marilyn Hudson and Judith Blankman. Bedford Gallery, Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA.

Schuller's *Song and Dance*. Yale University, New Haven, CT.

John Adams's *The Chairman Dances* performed by the Peoria Symphony. Peoria, IL. Repeated March 9, with the Lexington Philharmonic, Lexington, KY.

Ives's *Washington's Birthday* and Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra* performed by the Westchester Philharmonic, Hartsdale, NY. The Lutoslawski is also performed through March 31, with the Dallas Symphony. Dallas (TX).

Penderecki's *String Quartet No. 1 and No. 2*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Schuller's *Eine Kleine Posaunemusik* performed by the South Dakota Symphony. SD.

The Esoterics in *Lux*. Christ Episcopal Church, Tacoma, WA. Through March 11, St Thomas Church, Medina.

March 4

86th anniversary of the birth of Carlos Surinach.

Schoeller's *Volubilis*, Eötvös's *Psalm 151*, Wuorinen's *Bassoon variations*, Hosokawa's *Renka I*, and Crumb's *Madrigals: Book III*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France

Sounds New plays David Cleary's *Pocket Divertimento* and the premiere of Herb Bielawa's *Earth*. Unitarian Universalist Church, Kensington, CA.

Stanford Wind Ensemble plays Brian Bice's *Homage*. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Glass's *Concerto for Saxophone Quartet* performed by New Sounds Music. New York, NY.

Elizabeth Keusch. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

NEC Opera Workshop. Brown Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA. Repeated March 5.

Kernis's *Musica Celestis* performed by the Fox Valley Symphony. Menasha, WI. Through March 9, with the Florida West Coast Symphony (FL).

March 5

Peter Schickele's *Piano Quintet No. 2*. Irvine Barclay Theatre, CA.

David Tannenbaum plays Henze's *Royal Winter Music, No. 1 and No. 2*. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

First Monday at Jordan Hall. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

March 6

Ensemble Intercontemporain in Ives's *The Unanswered Question*, Zender's *Music to hear*, Zimmermann's *Omnia tempus habent*, and Varèse's *Intégrales*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger Concerto*. Taipei, Taiwan.

Aaron Jay Kernis. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN.

March 7

Manoury's *K...* Opéra-Bastille, Paris, France. Through March 27.

Jack Dubowsky. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

March 8

The Complete Sonatas of Beethoven [32]. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France. Programs through March 11.

Ives's *Symphony No. 4* performed by the Helsinki Filharmonia. Helsinki, Finland. Through March 11.

90th anniversary of the birth of Alan Hovhaness.

Bang on a Can All-Stars in Byron's *Dark Room* and Eno's *Music for Airports* (arr. Michael Gordon). Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

San Francisco Symphony in Berio's *Requies*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Other Minds Festival VII. Velez's *Ancient World*, Hovhaness's *Khaldis Concerto*, Vrebalov's *String Quartet No. 2*, and Bryars's *Adnan Songbook*. Cowell Theater, San Francisco, CA.

Eric Rosenblith and Gabriel Chodos. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

March 9

Frank Martin's *Six monologues de Jedermann* and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5* performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Théâtre du Chatelet, Paris, France.

91st anniversary of the birth of Samuel Barber.

Mark Alburger's *Antigone*. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

Other Minds Festival VII. Forum with Alvin Curran, Hi Kyung Kim, Andrew Hill, James Tenney, and William Winant, moderated by Charles Amirkhanian. Hi Kyung Kim's *Rituel*, James Tenney's *Diaphonic Trio*, Ezra Pound's *Cavalcanti* (selections and the premiere of *Fiddle Music: Suite I*, and George Antheil's *Violin Sonata No. 1*. Cowell Theater, San Francisco, CA.

March 10

Acousmatique II. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France

National Association of Composers presents Lee's *Nocturne*, Deussen's *A Recollection*, Cotton's *Playthings 2*, Clark's *Florida Fantasy*, Hawley's *Spanish Variations*, Carey's *The Wetland at Dusk*, Hamill's *Pacific Skies*, and Alburger's *Antigone*. Art Center, Palo Alto, CA.

The Music of Ezra Pound, with Charles Amirkhanian and Robert Hughes. Koret Auditorium, San Francisco Library, San Francisco, CA.

Other Minds Festival VII. C. Brown's *Invention No. 7*, Hill's *Bellezza Appasita*, Curran's *Inner Cities 8*, and Bryars's *One Last Bar Then Joe Can Sing*. Cowell Theater, San Francisco, CA.

Women's Philharmonic in the premiere of Chen Yi's *Violin Concerto*. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA.

March 11

Double Reed Extravaganza. Julie Ann Giacobassi performs John Marvin's *Music From the Night*. Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco, CA.

Marc Teicholz. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

March 12

Hampton-Schwartz Duo. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

Shakespeare in Music. Frank Martin's *Songs of Ariel* and Vaughan Williams's *In Windsor Forest*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA. Programs through March 15

March 13

Shakespeare in Music. Igor Stravinsky's *Fanfare for Two Trumpets* and *Shakespeare Songs*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Kernis's *Still Movement with Hymn* performed by the Soli Ensemble, San Antonio, TX.

Cindy McTee. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

March 14

M.T. Thomas's *From the Diary of Anne Frank* performed by the Louisville Symphony. Louisville, KY. Repeated March 15.

Shakespeare in Music. The British View. William Matthias's *Final Dance.* Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Shakespeare in Music. Shakespeare and the Symphony Orchestra. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

University of Kansas Chamber Choir in Chen Yi's *A Set of Chinese Folk Songs.* San Antonio, TX.

March 15

St. Lawrence String Quartet. San Francisco Conservatory of Music, San Francisco, CA. Repeated March 17, Stanford University.

Shakespeare in Music. The Music in Shakespeare's Words. Shakespeare and Opera. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Shakespeare in Music. Shakespeare and Jazz. St. Botolph Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Shakespeare in Music. Sergei Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet Suite.* Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Seattle International Fringe Festival: Degenerate Art Ensemble. Odd Fellows Hall, Seattle, WA.

March 16

Bang, Scrape, and Screech. Victoria, Canada.

Opéra National des Pays de Loire in Menotti's *The Consul.* Nantes, France.

64th birthday of David Del Tredici.

Chen Yi's *Momentum* performed by the Oakland East Bay Symphony. Paramount Theatre, Oakland, CA.

Weir's *King Harold's Saga* and *King Harold Sails to Byzantium.* Tsai, Boston, MA.

Eos Orchestra in *The Little Theatre of Igor Stravinsky.* Ethical Culture Society, New York, NY.

March 17

Pierre Boulez conducts Ensemble Intercontemporain in his *Dérive 2*, Stravinsky's *Two Balmont Poems* and *Three*

Japanese Lyrics, Manoury's *Passacaglia for Tokyo*, and Carter's *A Mirror Upon Which to Dwell.* Concert Hall, Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Neuwirth's *Quasare/Pulsare*, Scelsi's *Ko-Lho*, Maderna's *Pièce pour Ivry* and *Dialodia*, Murail's *Le fou à pattes bleues*, and Crumb's *Eleven Echoes of Autumn.* Amphithéâtre du Musée, Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

Kernis's *Symphony No. 2* performed by the BBC Symphony. London, UK.

Kronos & Riley: Solo Sets, including *Sunrise of the Planetary Dream Collector.* Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA.

March 18

Scelsi's *Four Pieces* and Martin's *Quintette de cuivres.* Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

College Operahouse Company presents Menotti's *The Consul.* Tokyo, Japan.

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Winds*, *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, and *Movements for Piano and Orchestra.* Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

March 19

Schoenberg's *Die Jakobsleiter* performed by Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Salle Pleyel, Paris, France.

Parisii Quartet in Boulez's *Livre (The Book for String Quartet).* Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Repeated March 29, Miller Theatre, New York (NY). "The chamber music magnum-opus begun fifty years ago" [press release].

March 20

Piano Revolution. Ligeti's *Piano Etudes* and *Musica Ricercata* and Bresnick's *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise.* Columbia University, New York, NY.

March 21

Tan Dun's *Concerto for Water Percussion and Orchestra* performed by the London Philharmonic. London, UK.

March 22

Poulenc's *Litanies à la Vierge noire* performed by the Orchestre National de France. Théâtre du Champs Elysées, Paris, France.

John Cage's *The Seasons* performed by the New Century Chamber Orchestra. Berkeley, CA.

Talking Inside the Beat, with the Cathedral Band ("Blue" Gene Tyranny, DJ Tamara, Stuart Dempster, Abel Domingues, Charles Wood, William Duckworth, and Wu Man). Galapagos, New York, NY.

March 24

Robert Turner's *String Quartet No. 1, Vestiges*, and *Voluntaries*, and Michael Matthews's *String Quartet No. 1, Deux chansons d'amour, Partita: Images/Fragments*, and *Postlude*. Eva Clare Hall, University of Manitoba, Canada.

Bartók's *Piano Concerto No. 2*. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

NewEar in Chen Yi's *Sparkle*, Varèse's *Octandre*, and Zhou Long's *Spirit of Chimes*. Kansas City, MO.

March 25

Sang Singing Sung Trio, with Kattt Sammon, Ron Heglin, and Bob Marsh. 1111 8th Street, San Francisco, CA.

March 26

Reich's *Different Trains* and Stravinsky's *Ragtime*. IRCAM, Paris, France.

Corigliano's *The Mannheim Rocket* performed by the Mannheim National Theater Orchestra. Mannheim, Germany.

30th-Anniversary Concert. San Francisco Contemporary Players in Mackey's *Micro-Concerto*, plus music of Ortiz, Harrison, and Kui Dong. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

Betty Woo. San Francisco Conservatory, San Francisco, CA.

March 27

David Lang's *Frag*. State University of New York, Purchase, NY.

March 28

NEC Honors Woodwind Quintet. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

March 29

65th birthday of Richard Rodney Bennett.

Corigliano's *The Red Violin, Chaconne for Violin and Orchestra* performed by Orchestre Symphonique de Nancy. Nancy, France.

Corigliano's *Gazebo Dances for Band* performed by Tonsberg Wind Band. Oslo, Norway.

New York premiere of Kernis's *Simple Songs* given by the New York Philharmonic. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

March 31

Honegger's *Symphony No. 2* performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Chronicle

January 3

Night Waltz: The Music of Paul Bowles. Film Forum, New York, NY. "[Bowles recalls with] sharpness and vividness . . . his experiences with other iconic figures like Virgil Thomson, under whom he studied composition; Gertrude Stein; Orson Welles; and Tennessee Williams. . . . As he's being interviewed, Bowles constantly taps out rhythms on surfaces; you can almost imagine him using the typewriter as a percussion instrument. He calls rhythm 'the basis of music' and adds, 'harmony is a European tradition. The assuredness and ardor that the director, Owsley Brown, brings to the film are in tune with the way Bowles, who died in 1999 at 88, felt about music. 'I still live in music in my sleep,' he confesses, and the film includes several of his compositions, each of which charts a time and place in his life. The earlier songs have the authority of Copland but sound slightly tentative [!]. . . . In later pieces we discover that Bowles expressed himself by taking on the coloration of his surroundings. His music reflects the people he saw and the places he lived; the compositions function as a series of notebooks and exhibit his immediate affections. . . . [A]s a young man, he persuaded a friend to arrange a meeting with Prokofiev at which he hectored the composer into agreeing to do something he never did: teach. But when the time finally came for Bowles to audition for Prokofiev, the prospective student decided to go for a hike instead. In *Night Waltz* we see that Bowles's absolute faith in the future spurred him to lead the most fascinating life one could imagine. . . . The documentary makes clear that Bowles's music varied so much because, at heart, it was as rootless and restive as he was. Of his time in Mexico, Bowles says, 'I invented themes that sounded like originals,' and it's obvious that his travels reflected his search for a place to land. . . . Bowles admits to giving up music once he moved to Morocco, and Mr. Born's cameras record him at peace with himself -- a bonus, given that much of the movie was shot during the final days of his life. 'Charm, simple attractiveness: the last thing anyone wants to be in America,' he states near the end of *Night Waltz*, which is itself unabashed in its attraction to the charm of its subject" [Elvis Mitchell, *The New York Times*, 1/3/01].

January 5

Death of Milan Hlavsa, of cancer, at age 49. Prague, Czech Republic. "[He was] the founder, composer and bassist of the Plastic People of the Universe, an underground Czech rock band that galvanized a movement for human rights and democracy" [Jon Pareles, *The New York Times*, 1/8/01].

January 7

North/South Consonance Chamber Orchestra in William Mayer's *East-West Surprise*, Randall Snyder's *Fictions*, Ana Lara's *Darkness Visible*, and Mark Alburger's *Symphony No. 1 in C Major*, Op. 21. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

January 8

105th anniversary of the birth of Jaromir Weinberger.

Focus on California. California EAR Unit in music of Paul Dresher. Los Angeles County Museum of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA.

Vakhtang Jordania conducts the American Symphony Orchestra in James Cohn's *Variations on The Wayfaring Stranger*, Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's *Peanuts Gallery*, and the restored manuscript edition of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

January 9

Christoph Eschenbach is named the 7th music director of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Academy of Music, Philadelphia, PA.

January 10

An evening with John Adams. Herbst Theater, San Francisco, CA.

Death of Claude Victor Palisca (b. 11/24/21, Fiume [Rijeka,] Croatia), at age 79. New Haven, CT. "His . . . books include . . . *Baroque Music* (1968) and revised editions of Donald J. Grout's standard history of music. . . . Palisca came to the United States with his family in 1930. He studied at Queens College and then served as an Army radio operator in Marrakesh and Casablanca. Before returning home, he managed to visit London, Paris, and Rome and resolved that his career would give him opportunities to return to Europe. In 1946 he started graduate work at Harvard, receiving a doctorate in 1954 After spending 1953-59 at the University of Illinois, he joined Yale, where he was chairman of the music department from 1969 to 1975 and in 1992, the year of his retirement. He was appointed Henry L. and Lucy G. Moses professor of music at Yale in 1980. He was . . . president of the American Musicological Society (1970-72) and a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (from 1986)" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 1/23/01].

January 11

Stravinsky's *Dumbarton Oaks Concerto* performed by Orchestra National de France. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

John Adams's *El Nino (A Nativity Oratorio)* performed by the San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Kent Nagano. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. "Adams turns orchestration on its head. I can think of no living composer with so original an ear for the sounds large ensembles can make. Whether it is the industrial ping of his chords, guitar figures against a pointillistic flute, massed pizzicato against mallet percussion, violent jolts of lower brass . . . the listener is made to see through every sonority. . . . Minimalism is only the excuse to set his descriptive imagination in motion. Symmetry is constantly under attack. Especially effective are the fractured and disrupted boogie-woogie patterns in the Herod sequences" [Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*, 1/15/01].

Ned Rorem Hosts John Harbison and Michael Hersch. 92nd Street Y, New York, NY. "Rorem is a charming raconteur, with amusingly cutting anecdotes for every occasion, but he is better as an interviewee than an interviewer. Mostly he asked questions and then answered them as if he had been asked. Mr. Harbison held his own: when Mr. Rorem ended the interview by asking Mr. Harbison if he had anything else to say, Mr. Harbison answered questions that he hadn't been given time to address or hadn't been asked (about, for example, the works at hand). Mr. Hersch, who seemed painfully shy, was apparently happy to let Mr. Rorem do most of the talking. Mr. Hersch's music speaks for itself eloquently. . . . What was most striking about Mr. Harbison's works was the sense of a sure hand. Where Mr. Hersch's works are explorations, with surprise encounters along the way, Harbison's sound as if they were conceived as a whole and set down on paper" [The New York Times].

January 12

Webern's *String Quartet*, op. 28. Goethe-Institut, Paris, France.

January 13

A Great Day in New York. Schickele's *Little Suite for Josie*, Lake's *Sketches 4 Saxophone*, Glass's *Piano Etude*, León's *Momentum*, Foss's *Fantasy Rondo*, R.R. Bennett's *Country Dances*, Currier's *Brainstorm*, Del Tredici's *Brother*. Merkin Concert Hall. Post concert symposium *What Is a New York Composer*, with Kernis, León, Wuorinen, Sherry, and Zorn. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. Programs through February 9, Alice Tully Hall. "[T]he [festival's] concept took a new shape when [director Fred] Sherry encountered Art Kane's 1957 photograph of 57 jazz musicians, *A Great Day in Harlem*, in Jean Bach's 1995 television documentary of the same name. Mr. Sherry conceived the notion of arranging a photograph of similar scope featuring classical composers, and then basing his festival on it. Suddenly the project, now committed to including 50 to 60 composers, had outgrown a mere weekend of [3] concerts at Merkin. So the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center signed on for six more concerts at Alice Tully Hall over the next month. In the end, Mr. Sherry assembled 52 'New York composers' (loosely defined) for the photograph, taken by Bruce Davidson. After program changes, there are 52 composers represented in the festival, each by a piece or two, many small, others sizable, but four of them, Wynton Marsalis, Fred Ho, David Del Tredici and Philip Glass, are not in the photo. Four composers in the photo, Lee Hoiby, Francis Thorne, Jack Beeson, and Elliot Goldenthal, will not have their work played. . . . Sherry, rather than tiptoe around quirky juxtapositions, highlights them, as in a concert on Sunday afternoon, with music by the arch-modernist Milton Babbitt and the experimentalist Meredith Monk. 'They live at the same time and in the same city,' Mr. Sherry said . . . 'They eat the same food and breathe the same air. And yet they write such different music.' But not all the composers breathe New York air so regularly. Mr. Sherry's expansive notion of a New York composer . . . includes the likes of Gunther Schuller, who has long been based in Boston, and David Schiff, who teaches at Reed College in Portland, Ore. 'David Schiff grew up in New York and went to school here, and it comes out in his music . . . Gunther Schuller was important in New York until he was about 40, and he remains part of the New York scene.' . . . Sherry said he started with thousands of names, and culled first to 200, then to 50-some. . . . Sherry says he has the most catholic of tastes. 'I dislike very little music . . . I don't necessarily play everything, but I appreciate almost everybody's music. With the list whittled down, the next problem was to pull all these busy musicians together at one time for the photograph. . . . From this process emerged what Mr. Sherry called the 'magic day,' Sept. 29, which worked for almost everyone. . . . The site chosen was the Alexander Hamilton United States Custom House in Lower Manhattan . . . Many a temperamental composer worried about being placed too close to some antagonistic presence. But general areas of a staircase were distributed by lottery, with only the composers over 80 -- Mr. Babbitt, Mr. Carter and George Perle -- given pride of place in the front row. The event, Mr. Sherry reports, turned into 'a kind of love fest.' . . .

'It was tremendous,' said Mr. Schiff . . . "For so long there has been a lot of emphasis on uptown versus downtown, academic versus nonacademic. But here there was a feeling that we were all in this together and all doing the same thing. Mr. Sherry's larger goal was to show the tremendous range and vitality of so many talents, styles and personalities too often lumped together under the single . . . 'new music.' Beyond the photograph that was so integral to the project, Mr. Sherry sees *A Great Day in New York* as a way to help establish the historical record. . . . 'Future generations will look back and say, 'Didn't these people have any music of their own?' Yes, we do. I think we're living in a golden age. We have many important composers, and we must present and celebrate their music. Mr. Sherry had the photo session filmed in hopes of making a documentary. Although he has not been able to raise money to see that project through, he plans this weekend to add to the 18 videotapes he has already compiled. 'Fred Sherry is valiant in this day,' Mr. Rorem said. It's nice to see composers' names bigger than performers' for a change. It's such a reversal of the terrible trend that we live in, at a time when performers of 19th-century music can make more in a night than some composers can make in a year, and every composer must be gratified by it. Even though it's a little slapdash, with a lot of snippets of pieces, this event is profoundly meaningful" [James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*, 1/12/01]. "[S]triking to see John Zorn . . . and Charles Wuorinen . . . sitting together on the stage . . . Zorn mostly grinned and muttered jokes to himself and had little to say. But there he was alongside Mr. Wuorinen . . . Tania León, the tradition-minded . . . Aaron Jay Kernis and . . . Peter Schickele . . . That alone represented the kind of coming together that the cellist Fred Sherry . . . had hoped for. . . . Sherry wanted diversity in his festival and he is getting it: 52 composers . . . ranging in age from 29-year-old Michael Hersch to 92-year-old Milton Babbitt. Musically the weekend programs were very mixed bags, and Mr. Sherry intentionally ordered the works on each to emphasize the stylistic differences. The idea was never to let the audience get too settled into any musical mode" [The New York Times].

January 14

Duke Ellington Society presents *My Favorite Ellington*, with Bill Susman playing *Lush Life*, *Caravan*, and *Take the "A" Train*. Fort Mason Center, San Francisco, CA.

Murray Perahia and the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

A Great Day in New York. Lang's *Wed*, Bermel's *Theme and Absurdities*, Rorem's *Three Easy Pieces*, Ho's *The Underground Railroad to My Heart Suite*, Babbitt's *Minute Waltz (or 3/4 + 1/8)* and *Playing for Time*, vocal selections by Meredith Monk, Davis's *Goddess Variations (III)*, Kernis's *Mrs. Midas*, D'Rivera's *Lecuoenerias* and *Danzon*, Reich's *Clapping Music*, Hersch's *Mistral*, Wuorinen's *Orbical of Jasp*, Kitzke's *The Animist Child*, an improvisation by John Zorn, and Tower's *Big Sky*. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY. "[T]wo spiky 12-tone works for piano solo by . . . Mr. Babbitt . . . were followed by a beguiling excerpt from *Facing North* by . . . Meredith Monk, that avant-garde inventor of otherworldly vocal effects. What came through the programs and the panels was a sense that in New York . . . musical creativity bubbles up from the diverse social, racial and ethnic backgrounds of its musicians" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 1/16/01].

No, Nonet, with the North/South Chamber Orchestra. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

January 16

A Great Day in New York. Marsalis's "Creole Contradanzas" from *At the Octoroon Balls*, Schickele's *Piano Quintet No. 2*, Corigliano's *String Quartet*, Hersch's *Sonata for Unaccompanied Violin*, Tower's *Rain Waves*, Reich's *Drumming (Part I)*, Lang's *Cheating, Lying, Stealing*, and Schiff's *Shtik*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "[A]fter 30 years [*Drumming*] comes out of [Steve Reich and Musicians'] minds and arms like a force of nature, wonderful and severe. The Bang on a Can All-Stars gave a tight, exciting account of David Lang's *Cheating, Lying, Stealing*, which keeps shuffling the details in its repeating figures: minimalism with a guilty conscience. . . . *Shtik* [is] a monologue by Lenny Bruce with jazz composed by David Schiff. . . . These people need to get together more often. As [director Fred] Sherry . . . dared to say, 'Do you want to hear the Trout Quintet, or do you want to hear these guys?' The response was clear" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 1/20/01].

January 17

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

Death of Gregory (Nuncio) Corso (b. 3/26/30, New York, NY), of prostate cancer, at age 70. Robbinsdale, MN. "To the literary world, Mr. Corso was considered less political than Allen Ginsberg, less charismatic than Jack Kerouac, but more shocking, at times, than either of them. . . . While Ginsberg and Kerouac came from upper-middle-class backgrounds and got to know each other through Columbia University, Mr. Corso's upbringing was troubled" [William H. Honan, *The New York Times*, 1/19/01].

Music from China Ensemble in Chen Yi's *The Points* and Zhou Long's *Rites of Chimes*. White Hall, University of Missouri, Kansas City, MO. Chen's *The Points*, for pipa solo, is another unequivocal success. . . . Three pieces from the massive seven-work opus *Rites of Chimes* by Zhou Long . . . were mesmerizing in their sheer focus and power. Zhou's is a remarkably lucid and distinctive voice. More, please, more. Music from China is music from heaven" [Mickey Coalwell, The Kansas City Star, 1/19/01].

Ricky Ian Gordon's *Only Heaven* presented by Encompass New Opera Theater. Connelly Theater, New York, NY. Through February 4.

Music tribute to Kurt Weill, including an unscripted "Moritat of Mac the Knife." Kaye Playhouse, New York, NY.

January 18

Luc Ferrari's *Far west news, Archives Génétiquement Modifiées, Jeu du hasard et de la détermination, and Collection de petites pièces ou 36 enfilades*. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Gershwin's *Piano Concerto in F* and Copland's *Inscape* performed by the Orchestre National de France. Théâtre du Champs Elysées, Paris, France.

San Francisco Symphony in Stravinsky's *Violin Concerto* and Benjamin's *Palimpsest*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

January 19

Concert of Two Orchestras, conducted by Pierre Boulez. Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire*, with Ensemble Intercontemporain, and Bartók's *Two Portraits* and *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

Live electronics I. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

Bartók's *Village Scenes*, Nyman's *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, and *A Poulenc Cabaret*. College of Marin, Kentfield, CA.

Dod Brody is appointed Director of the American Composers Forum's San Francisco Bay Area Chapter. San Francisco, CA.

Peninsula Symphony in Darius Milhaud's *Suite Provençale*, the premiere John Beeman's *Concerto for Electric Guitar and Orchestra* (with Paul Drescher), Charles Griffes's *The Pleasure-Dome of Kubla Khan*, Claude Debussy's *Petite Suite* (orch. by Henri Büsser). San Mateo Performing Arts Center, San Mateo, CA.

Brass Domain Quintet in music of Boyadjian. Follen Church, Lexington, MA.

Phill Niblock. Channel 56, New York, NY. "You will never be able to crank up the volume of your TV set to the required level, nor the image to the usual cinematic size, but still you will get a fair idea of Phill Niblock's very loud, extremely massive, drone music and matching films witnessing worldwide human activity" [internet release].

January 20

Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra* performed by the Santa Rosa Symphony. Santa Rosa, CA. Through January 22.

Charles Ferguson. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Boston Modern Orchestra Project, including the premiere of Bell's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, plus Schuller's *Journey into Jazz*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Death of Beverly Peck Johnson (b. 6/12/04, Portland, OR, at age 96. New York, NY. "[She was] a noted voice teacher, [accompanist,] and a member of the faculty at the Juilliard School of Music since 1964. . . . As a young woman she moved to New York and polished her skills as an accompanist in lessons with the conductor André Kostelanetz. Some years later she studied voice with tenor Hardesty Johnson, whom she married and with whom she toured as an accompanist. Her husband died in 1952. . . . No photograph of her was discovered in her files at Juilliard or her New York apartment, friends said. Besides keeping her age a secret, Ms. Johnson adamantly refused to have her picture taken" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 1/22/01].

January 21

Joshua Pierce and the Tifereth Israel Community Orchestra in Gershwin's *Concerto in F*. First United Methodist Church, Chula Vista, CA. Repeated January 23, Tifereth Israel Synagogue, San Diego.

ACF Salon, with Jay Sydeman, Lawrence Wayte, and Darcy Reynolds. Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco, CA.

Bill Susman's *Angels of Light* performed by the San Jose Chamber Orchestra. San Jose, CA.

Gunther Schuller conducts the Marin Symphony in music of Joplin and Blake. Veterans Auditorium, San Rafael, CA.

A Great Day in New York. Monk's *Atlas: An Opera in Three Parts*, Kolb's *Extremes*, Duffy's *Black Water*, N. Currier's *Sambuca Sonata*, Babbitt's *Phonemena*, Johnson's *Stone*, Laderman's *June 29*, Zwilich's *String Trio*, and Tan Dun's *Concerto for Six*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Music at the Anthology, with works by Kihlstedt and L. Bielawa. Orensanz Center for the Arts, New York, NY.

Dennis Russell Davies and the American Composers Orchestra roughly recreate 1931-1932 concerts in Paris, Berlin, and Budapest given by Nicolas Slonimsky. Ives's *Three Places in New England*, A. Weiss's *American Life*, *Scherzoso Jazzoso for Large Orchestra*, Ruggles's *Men and Mountains*, Cowell's *Synchrony*, and Roldán's *La Rebambaramba*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "[I]t was not quite a recreation. The composers, absent Varèse, were the same But the Ives and Ruggles works Mr. Davies offered were not the ones Slonimsky conducted. Mr. Davies cared more about representing these composers strongly than being slavish to history. The performance of *Three Places in New England* fortified Ives's position as the father of us all when it comes to American composers. With its hazy sonorities and harmonic meanderings, the music sounds like some vibrant and ruggedly American Impressionism. The piece holds the pivotal place in American music that *La Mer* by Debussy claims in European modernism. Mr. Davies and his fine players treated the work with utter seriousness, so that the snatches of polar songs and marches that keep appearing sounded like eerie, bold stokes, not bits of nostalgia. Weiss, who studied with Schoenberg, tried to blend a variant of 12-tone technique with jazz in *American Life* . . . (1928). In a longer work this uneasy mix of idioms might seem forced. But in this compact, urgent five-minute work the stylistic collision is bracing and inventive" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 1/23/01].

January 22

Hommage à Giacinto Scelsi. Chants diphoniques and Pranam II -- Okanagon. Paris, France.

Xtet in Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

San Francisco Contemporary Players in music of Jonathan Harvey. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA.

Pianist Stephen Drury. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

January 23

Toby Appel and Friends. Juilliard Theater, New York, NY.

Music at the Anthology, with works by D. Crumb, McLosky, and Hui. Orensanz Center for the Arts, New York, NY.

January 24

Ligeti's *Piano Etudes* and *Monument-Selbstportrait-Bewegung*, and Scelsi's *Pranam II*. IRCAM, Paris, France.

January 25

Portrait of Tan Dun. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

New Century Chamber Orchestra performs Bartók's *Divertimento*, Ellis Schuman's *In Memoriam for Strings*, and *Suites for Cello and String Orchestra* (music of Lou Harrison, adapted and orchestrated by Robert Hughes). January 25, St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA. Through January 28, Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael.

Tom Heasley. The Luggage Store, San Francisco, CA.

A Celebration of the Life and Work of Jonathan Harvey. Campbell Recital Hall, Stanford University, CA.

Philip Bush performs Messiaen's *Visions de l'Amen*. Lewis Slater Concert Hall, Wabash, IN. Through February 4, Amado Recital Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

Celebrating Joaquín Rodrigo's 100th Birthday. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

John Adams's *The Chairman Dances* performed by the Rochester Philharmonic. Rochester, NY. Through January 30, with the San Francisco Symphony, San Francisco (CA).

January 26

Dutilleux's *Mystère de l'instant*, Benjamin's *A Mind of Winter*, and Britten's *Les Illuminations* performed by the Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

San Francisco Symphony in Harbison's *Music for 18 Winds*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Repeated January 27.

Stanford Woodwind Quintet. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Violinist Magdalena Suchecka-Richter. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

A Great Day in New York. Glass's *String Quartet No. 5*, R.R. Bennett's *Cello Sonata*, Foss's *Solo Observed*, Perle's *Critical Moments*, Carter's *Tempo à Tempi*, Lerdahl's *Waltzes for String Trio and Contrabass*, Kitzke's *Mad Coyote Madly Sings*, Bresnick's *Three Stars*, and Torke's *Four Proverbs*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Composer Portraits. Composers Concordance presents Sebastian Currier's *Verge* and *Frames*, and Ornette Coleman's *Trinity* and *In Honor of NASA*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY. "[Coleman's] music held its personality when [these] classically trained musicians performed it" [Jon Pareles, *The New York Times*, 1/29/01].

Focus! Festival: 100 Years of Italian Music Since Verdi., including Berio's *Points on the curve to find...* (1974). Juilliard Theater, New York, NY. "[*Points* is] another brilliant work by this living master. It's like some crazed piano concerto, and Alpin Hong excitingly dispatched the fiendish solo part, replete with oscillating tremolos that made his arms a blur. Mr. Berio's ear for arresting sonorities is a wonder of our time. . . [D]on't expect to hear anything by Verdi" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 1/30/01].

Music at the Anthology. The X-ecutioners turntable group. Orensanz Center for the Arts, New York, NY.

January 27

Michael Nyman's *Concerto for Saxophone Quartet and Orchestra* performed by the Max Bruch Philharmonic. Sonderhausen, Germany.

Mark Alburger's *Antigone* (with Tisha Page, Harriet Page, Richard Mix, and Melissa Smith), Erling Wold's *Queer* (with Trauma Flintstone), Dwight Okimura's *Bern and Louise* (with Julie Queen), and Clark Suprynawicz's *Caliban's Dream* (with Amanda Moody and John Duykers). Z Space, San Francisco, CA.

San Francisco Symphony in Harbison's *Music for Eighteen Winds*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Rhythm: Classical Versus Jazz -- The Music of Leonard Bernstein. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

Ned Rorem Hosts Augusta Read Thomas. 92nd Street Y, New York, NY.

January 28

NEC Preparatory School Contemporary Festival, featuring the music of John Harbison. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Chen Yi's *Dunhuang Fantasy*. RLDS Temple, Independence, MO.

James Levine and the Met Chamber Ensemble in Carter's *In Sleep, in Thunder*, Harbison's *Between Two Worlds*, Cage's *Amores*, and Xenakis's *La Déesse Athéna*. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY. "If Mr. Levine and these players announced today that they were now a full-time contemporary music ensemble, they would shoot to the top of the competition. Mr. Carter, who was there, seemed elated. . . . Cage's *Amores* (1943) for prepared piano and percussion found three of the Met's intrepid percussionists and the pianist Linda Hall at home with the composer's wondrously clanky sound world and delicately undulant rhythms" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 1/31/01].

Composers Concordance presents Sebastian Currier's *Verge* and *Frames*, and Ornette Coleman's *Trinity* and *In Honor of NASA*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

January 29

Frank Wildhorn's *Jekyll and Hyde*. Willows Theatre Company, Walnut Creek, CA.

Gunther Schuller 75th-Birthday Celebration. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA.

January 29

Milton Babbitt's *All Set* performed by Speculum Musicae. New York, NY.

January 30

A Great Day in New York. Chen Yi's *Shuo*, Picker's *Invisible Lilacs*, S. Currier's *Vierge*, Lansky's *Ride*, Adolphe's *Piano Trio No. 2*, Lake's *Input*, and songs by Sondheim. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Houston Composers Alliance presents Kramlich's *Fanfare for Brass Quintet*, Thow's *Remembering*, Ochoa's *Whisper of a Moon God*, Paré's *Two Scenes from "Mirak,"* and Adams's *Chamber Symphony*. Duncan Recital Hall, Rice University, Houston, TX.

January 31

San Francisco Symphony in Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 1* ("Classical"). Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Earsay Composers Works. The Knoll Ballroom, Stanford University, CA.

Callithumpian Consort in Hyla's *We Speak Etruscan*, and Zorn's *Game Pieces, Bequique, Hockey, and Cobra*. Brown Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

ASCAP Foundation presents *Thru the Walls*. The Cutting Room, New York, NY.

Philip Glass's 64th birthday. New York, NY.

Comment

Mercedes Pickup Lines

WILLIAM OSBORNE

Statements made by Bush's Attorney General, John Ashcroft, about the arts, tells us something about cultural politics in America. Using timeworn methods of populist politics, Ashcroft suggested that opera is for the Mercedes crowd and does not interest folks who drive pick-ups:

Now, the opera gets a subsidy from the NEA, but by and large, Willie Nelson and Garth Brooks don't. Those of us that drive our pickups to those concerts don't get a subsidy; but the people who drive their Mercedes to the opera get a subsidy.

Is there more behind this statement than meets the eye? Ashcroft has worked to completely eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts, even though the funding it provides is already very small. The federal government spends about 100 million dollars annually on the NEA, which amounts to only 36 cents a year for every American citizen. No other government of an industrialized country spends so little on the arts. Vienna's three State Theaters, for example, receive one third more funding than the entire NEA.

Ashcroft has attempted to justify his stance through rhetoric which portrays the working class as uninterested in opera and other forms of "high culture." Such polemic is not only divisive, it is partially misleading. The Santa Fe Opera provides a case in point. New Mexico is the 49th poorest state in the nation, and yet many of its people, including the working class, recognize the value of the Santa Fe Opera (a high quality regional house that is something of an anomaly in America.) Even if they can't attend, the state's citizens know the opera lends the state prestige, that it brings the region many economic advantages, and that its presentations are valuable in themselves. Many working class families in New Mexico would jump at the chance to take their children to the opera if they could afford it (which most can't.) Like people everywhere, they want their children to have the better things in life, and they see the arts as part of those opportunities.

In reality, Ashcroft's "Mercedes crowd" frequents opera because they are often the only ones that can afford it, and even more, because there are hardly any significant opera houses at all in America outside of a few major metropolitan areas. Astoundingly, the Met is the only full-season, year-round opera in America. Even San Francisco, which is presumably one of the world's most cultured cities, only has a half-time opera. In the heartland of America, the usual fare consists of occasional slap-dash, semi-professional productions performed in and with improvised, rental facilities.

International comparisons provide troubling perspectives. In most European countries, public access to the performing arts is considered essential, something like public schools and libraries. In Germany, many cities with only 100,000 people have a full time, year-round opera house and symphony orchestra. Due to state funding, the average price of an opera ticket in Germany is about \$30. That's not cheap, but families can afford it on occasion. I examined the price list and seating plan of the Met and roughly estimated that the average price of a ticket is about \$150, or five times higher than the average opera ticket in Germany. Due to America's plutocratic system of "private" funding for the arts, the Met and many other cultural institutions have the character and ethos of exclusive cultural country clubs. By denying funding for the arts, politicians like Ashcroft create a form of cultural plutocracy, and then turn around and criticize the arts for being elitist.

Normally, America's policy of arts funding is thought of as a particular aspect of its highly libertine ideology of free enterprise. But this might only detract from a more problematic issue. The Federal Government does not hesitate to allocate trillions for scientific research. In many respects, the science departments of research universities are merely extensions of uncountable billions of government funding. In the case of science, there is little talk of "free enterprise" or "governmental interference" -- something that apparently applies only to the arts.

So why the seemingly arbitrary double standard?

Many politicians, such as Jessie Helms or John Ashcroft, do not even attempt to disguise that they reject public funding for the arts because they do not like the art world's "leftist" and "immoral" tendencies. Seen as such, the U.S. government's paltry funding for the arts is not only an economic philosophy, but also a somewhat less than subtle form of political censorship. If artists do not present what these politicians like, funding is reduced or even eliminated. These same politicians have directed similar forms of intimidation toward NPR and PBS, and even demanded they "reform" their programming.

Many feel that America's policy for the arts has had a devastating effect on its cultural and social identity that extends well beyond silencing "leftist" or progressive views. What is 36 cents a year compared to the sums people spend on mindless Hollywood movies and videos? How does 36 cents compare to the billions spent on advertisements supporting commercial television's endless banalities?

Over the long term, America's policies for funding the arts effect a form of cultural repression that degrades and demeans the identity of people and their society. The way Helms and Ashcroft castigate and economically confine artistic expression, suggests that the American government's negligible funding for the arts is not merely based on conservative economic philosophy, but also represents an ethos that functions something like a subtle, anti-leftist extension of McCarthyistic repression.

By the Numbers

San Diego Symphony's financial debt, 1998-1999

\$386,997.00

San Diego Symphony's financial surplus, 1999-2000

\$386,997.00

Number of full-time American symphony orchestras that have gone bankrupt in the last ten years

8

Number of full-time American symphony orchestras that have recovered from bankruptcy in the last ten years

7

Current budget of the San Francisco Symphony

\$47,500,000.00

Current endowment of the San Francisco Symphony

\$186,000,000.00

Current budget of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

\$50,000,000.00

Current endowment of the Los Angeles Philharmonic

\$50,000,000.00

Current budget of the San Diego Symphony

\$7,100,000.00

Current endowment of the San Diego Symphony

Less than \$1,000,000.00

Items

A dozen [childhood songs] prove as memorable to rhesus monkeys as they do in people, a new study finds. . . . "the perception of melodies depends on the structure of our nervous systems, not just on childhood and cultural experiences," [Texas Medical School psychologist Anthony A.] Write contends. . . . Two earlier studies, one in 1943 with rats and one in 1988 with dolphins, also yielded evidence of octave generalization. . . . Several other tests, including some with monkeys and songbirds, found no evidence for octave generalization. . . . [M]onkeys accurately identified repeats of any of 12 childhood songs . . . even when the melody shifted by one or two octaves. The monkeys succeeded whether the tunes sounded as if they'd been played on a piano, guitar, or other instruments. The animals also displayed octave generalization for new melodies, created according to a mathematical formula for tonal, well-structured tunes. . . . As previously reported for people's musical skill, the animals' ability to identify childhood songs plummeted when they heard tunes that shifted by either one-half octave or 1 1/2 octaves. . . . Similar problems arose when they heard octave shifts to single notes, random sets of notes, or atonal sequences . . . "Wright's group makes a good case that these monkeys perceive whole tunes, not just isolated notes," remarks psychologist Sandra Trehub of the University of Toronto.

Science News
9/16/2000

Recreated by the artist after disappearing in a warehouse theft seven years ago, a series of paintings of scenes from Kurt Weill's *Threepenny Opera* have surfaced at a Manhattan gallery. The 19 works by the painter and sculptor Arbit Blatas, who died in 1999 at the age of 90, are on view with a film by Mr. Blata's widow, Regina Resnik, . . . at Leubsof Art Gallery Blatas, a Lithuanian-born member of the School of Paris, attended the opera's premiere in Berlin in 1928 and based his paintings on a 1950's revival at the Theater de Lys in Greenwich Village. The production starred Weill's widow, Lotte Lenya, and included Ed Asner Many of the actors are recognizable in the paintings. The originals were to go to a Weill museum in Dessau, Germany, before they were stolen in 1994. Mr. Blatas recreated them from photographs.

The New York Times, 1/20/01

Communication

Hi Editor,

Keep up the great work. I am always delighted to receive 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

Joseph Pehrson
COMPOSERS CONCORDANCE
New York, NY

Dear Editor,

Mark Alburger is a great interviewer!

Katt Sammon
San Francisco, CA

Opportunities

Composition

The IBLA Foundation of New York announces the availability of applications for its 2001 IBLA Grand Prize International Composer Competition. The competition is open to all composers of all styles of music, regardless of age, sex, race or nationality. This year's Composer Competition judging will take place in New York City this spring. This will be the tenth edition of this internationally renowned event. Composer Competition deadline is April 15, 2001.

For further information, entry fees, application forms and procedures, visit the IBLA Foundation website at <http://www.ibla.org> or contact them in New York at 212-387-0111. Competition prizes include performances and recordings in venues throughout the U.S., Canada, Japan and Europe.

The Vassar College Department of Music is pleased to announce a one-year, full-time substitute appointment for 2001-02. The successful candidate will teach the following: a two-semester course in introductory composition, a one-semester course in advanced harmony, one semester of music appreciation, and one-semester survey of 20th-century music for majors. Applicants should hold the Ph.D. in composition; college-level teaching experience preferred. Application deadline: 3/30/2001. Please submit a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and three letters of recommendation to: Vassar College, Brian Mann, Chair, Department of Music, Poughkeepsie, NY 12604.

California State University, Long Beach. Full-Time Lecture - three-year appointment, Music Theory/Composition. Duties: Teach music theory and composition courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Share in academic responsibilities of music composition/theory area. Minimum Qualifications: Doctorate in Music Theory and/or Composition. Desired / Preferred Qualifications: Evidence of at least two years of successful college/university level teaching in Music Theory/Composition. Evidence of successful teaching in graduate level courses in Music Theory/Composition. Knowledge of Computer Assisted Instruction in Music. Record of published research and/or creative activity. Salary Range: Commensurate with candidate's qualifications and experience (Assistant/Associate level). Rank: Lecturer. Start Date: August 23, 2001. Application deadline: 3/15/2001 or until filled. Required documentation: Letter of application which addresses the Minimum and Desired/Preferred Qualifications, Resume, including a list of at least five current references with phone numbers. Semi-finalists will be required to provide official transcripts from the institution granting the highest degree, an SC-1 form (official university application form), letters of recommendation, as well as additional supporting material. Applications, required documentation, and/or requests for information should be addressed to: California State University-Long Beach, John Carnahan, Chair, Department of Music, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90840.

Writers

MARK ALBURGER began playing the oboe and composing in association with Dorothy and James Freeman, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick. He studied with Karl Kohn at Pomona College; Joan Panetti and Gerald Levinson at Swarthmore College (B.A.); Jules Langert at Dominican 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, and has interviewed numerous composers, including Charles Amirkhanian, Henry Brant, Earle Brown, Philip Glass, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich, and Frederick Rzewski. An ASCAP composer, he is at work on two music dramas, *Animal Farm: An Orwellian Comedy* and *The Bald Soprano*.

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

ILANA COTTON is a composer and pianist specializing in improvised and multi-arts performance. She has collaborated with other musicians and artists in visual and theatrical media, and extensively with dancers and choreographers. Her work has appeared on several Bay Area concert series, including the Dominican College NOW Music Festival, Marin Community Playhouse Contemporary Music Series, Alea II at Stanford University, City of Palo Alto Cultural Center, Trinity Chamber Concerts in Berkeley. She holds an M.A. in composition from UCLA, with undergraduate music study at San Francisco Conservatory. She has also Indian Classical vocal technique with Faquir Pran Nath, and studied gamelan with Max Harrell. Currently on the music faculties of Skyline College, College of San Mateo, and San Jose City College, she also teaches in her Menlo Park studio.

MARK FRANCIS is Lecturer of Music at Mississippi State University. He has previously held positions at Centenary College, Northwestern State University and the Louisiana School for Math, Science and the Arts. He holds a D.M.A. in composition from the University of Kentucky. A recipient of 6 ASCAP Standard Awards his compositions include works for chamber, orchestral and choral ensembles, electronic music and 50 art songs. His compositions and arrangements are published by Connors Publications and Little Piper Publications. He is President of the Southeastern Composers League and the composition board member for the College Music Society-South Chapter.

MICHAEL MCDONAGH is a San Francisco-based poet and writer on the arts who has done two poem/picture books with artist Gary Bukovnik, *Before I Forget* (1991) and *Once* (1997), the former being in the collections of the Museum of Modern Art, The Berkeley Art Museum, and the New York Public Library. He has also published poems in journals including *Mirage*, and written two theatre pieces -- *Touch and Go*, for three performers, which was staged at Venue 9 in 1998; and *Sight Unseen*, for solo performer. His critical pieces have appeared in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Review of Books*, *3 Penny Review*, *California Printmaker*, *Antiques and Fine Art*, *The Advocate*, *High Performance*, and *In Tune*. He writes for *The Bay Area Reporter* and heads the Bay Area chapter of The Duke Ellington Society.

WILLIAM OSBORNE is a Bay Area composer and writer.

ANTON ROVNER was born in Moscow, Russia, in 1970 and has lived in the United States since 1974. He studied piano at the Manhattan School of Music, Preparatory Division, then, composition at the Juilliard School, Pre-College Division, with Andrew Thomas and the Juilliard School (undergraduate and graduate programs) with Milton Babbitt, graduating in 1993 with an MM. In 1998 he received a Ph.D. degree from Rutgers University, where he studied with Charles Wuorinen. Rovner received a BMI Award in 1989 and an IREX Grant in 1989-1990. He attended the Estherwood Music Festival studying composition with Eric Ewazen. He studied music theory at Columbia University with Joseph Dubiel for two years. Since 1992 he is the artistic director of the Bridge Contemporary Music Series. His music has been performed in New York, Moscow, Paris, Kiev, Lvov, Kazan, Nizhni-Novgorod, Chisinau, and Bucharest.

Composer and writer ELLIOTT SCHWARTZ (b. January 19, 1936, Brooklyn, NY) studied at Columbia University (A.B. 1957, M.A. 1958, Ed.D. 1962) under Otto Luening and Jack Beeson, and also privately with Paul Creston. During the summers of 1961 to 1966 he worked with Edgar Varèse, Henry Brant, Chou Wen-chung, and Stefan Wolpe at the Bennington (VT) Composers Conference. He taught at the University of Massachusetts, (Amherst, MA) from 1960 to 1964 and then at Bowdoin College (Brunswick, ME) until the present. In addition to producing a large body of compositions, he has also written a number of books, including *The Symphonies of Ralph Vaughan Williams*, (Amherst, 1965), *Electronic Music: A Listener's Guide* (New York, 1967), and *Music: Ways of Listening* (New York, 1982). He co-authored *Music Since 1945: Issues, Materials, and Literature* with Daniel Godfrey (New York, 1993) and co-edited *Contemporary Composers on Contemporary Music* (1967) with Barney Childs.