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Andy Warhol - Marilyn Monroe

Gareth Farr's Out-There Interview

THOMAS GOSS

Gareth Farr has received commissions from Evelyn Glennie, the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, the New Zealand Symphony, and the Wellington Sinfonia.

GOSS: So now that I've got you at my mercy, I want to know...

FARR: Absolutely. [roars] Whatin'ell you wanna know?!?!

GOSS: ...why you never answer your e-mails.

FARR: Oh, that's not the worst of it. I haven't even answered the fucking telephone in a few days. This is panic time of year!

GOSS: What are you doing? Is it...?

FARR: Always. March.

GOSS: Is it *Beowulf*?

FARR: That was a bit of a bugger. And it's finished now. Umm. It's gonna kill the horn players. It is *going to kill* them. And not just the horn section! You should see the string parts.

GOSS: And they commissioned this?

FARR: That would be a bugger if they hadn't, wouldn't it? Spend three months of misery, and hear them tell me, "Oh, I think you must have misinterpreted something we said." It's this crazed piece that I've just written for the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra, and I was determined that it would be exactly what I wanted it to be, and not some *Celebration Piece with Pacific Island Drums* -- as I'm getting really sick of doing all that sort of stuff!... No, fuck it! I was going to write something 100 percent what I wanted to do. So it turned into this sort of underwater fight with this sea monster. I found this translation of *Beowulf* -- and oddly enough, it's just been retranslated, so it's rather timely. People will understand what the hell it's all about. A great, great theme for a piece - a *huge* monster, and an epic *battle* -- so the piece is just insane.

GOSS: So it's a tone poem, and not a setting of the text?

FARR: It is a tone poem, in a way. I mean, I always used to say I'd never write programmatic stuff. But. I think I love having visual images to go with music -- even if the visuals are just there to make an interesting program note. And I think this piece is a little more descriptive. I put a little bit in where the sword hits the plates on the side of the neck and just goes [makes horrendous scraping sound with hard palate]. It is so loud, and so bombastic...

And here's the other thing: [puts on an innocent sing-song tone] "Oh, we can ask that nice boy Gareth Farr to write us a nice little tune, with those nice little Pacific rhythms...ohh, what the fuck is this?!?" [chortles wickedly] Oh, well. *Sorry, guys!!!*

GOSS: So I was going to say, "You'd think Auckland would know better by now," but evidently...

FARR: Well, I think the *Rangitoto* was a bit of a shock...but I always come up with horrible stuff for the Auckland Phil, because *Queen of Demons* was another one of their commissions. But that's nothing compared to what the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra does. There's this huge competition -- verging on bitterness between the three orchestras on the North Island.. So I think that it's such a wonderful thing to welcome an Auckland orchestra into Wellington, rather than go (in a stentorian tone aghast) "You cawn't do thaht!" Anyway, enough about them, more about me!

GOSS: Does the sense of competition complicate your role as a commissioned artist?

FARR: Well, not with the Auckland so much, because it's never much of a reality as they're usually so far away and that's why we like them. The competition between the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and the Wellington Sinfonia, however, is interesting; because those are two orchestras basically fighting over the same city, the same players, and certainly the same audience; one of them saying, "Well, we're the national orchestra, and you're only a Wellington orchestra"; and the other one saying, "We've been here longer!" I've had little, little, little problems every now and then. When I did my orchestral album, the Wellington Sinfonia were actually going to take me to court... [giggles incredulously] ...because it was going to be a CD of all of my orchestral music, recorded by the New Zealand Philharmonic. However, *Ruaumoko*, which is a piece I really, really, really wanted, my most recent piece that I was the most happy with, was commissioned by the Wellington Sinfonia. And they had an exclusivity clause, which probably wouldn't have bugged them if it had been any other group than the New Zealand. But it was the fact that it was the Symphony recording it within the year of the exclusivity... It was going to be released well after a year, which was the contractual thing, but it was the fact that the NZSO were even going to use the parts within that year... And it turned into a bloody awful fight... Yeh, it was a pain. But, well, on the whole, no.

GOSS: It's not such a big deal for you.

FARR: Not really, not really.

GOSS: I noticed that you tend to write a lot of orchestra pieces, and maybe that's just what I'm seeing because of the visibility factor. Orchestral pieces just naturally attract attention, because there's just so much money invested in them.

FARR: Right.

GOSS: But it really seems, even from looking at your list of works in the *SOUNZ* catalogue, that you've really focused on orchestral music, especially in the past five or six years.

FARR: Yes, I have. Every now and then, I think I'm incredibly lucky to have been given that opportunity, because I remember very clearly from when I was studying at Eastman, in lovely Rochester...

GOSS: Oh, it's beautiful there...

FARR: Especially right now, in February! The students there that were my age, postgrad level, had lots and lots of workshops to give them the opportunity to hear one of their pieces played by the orchestra, because chances were, none of them had ever been in that situation. And by that time, I'd had pieces played by youth orchestras and the APO and the Symphony, and I still felt that I was at a stage where I would hear the piece and think, "Oh, God, I'm learning so much about orchestration -- did I make a mistake there!" And I can't imagine how you would become a very good orchestral composer without hearing your music again and again and again and just constantly refining. With the opportunities that most young composers have, I really think that it's almost impossible to become a good orchestrator. I mean, I think that orchestration is one of those things that you really can't learn in a classroom. It has been trial and error for me, and I think a reason that those kids overseas didn't have many opportunities is that there are just so many people vying for the same position. An American composer of my age is in a position that I just don't have any experience of... It's *so tough!* I mean, I really couldn't believe it. And it's not easy here because of the fact that there's less competition: of course that means that there's less funding, less interest, everything's on a smaller scale. But I think there are huge things in my favor, definitely, having come from Wellington. You end up meeting people you would never have met in the same situation in the United States, or something, because really big soloists come to New Zealand... Evelyn Glennie, for example, asked me to write a piece. It's just so easy in this country, because there are so few people, it's just such a small group and everything's much more intimate. She went out to the pub with us afterwards, and we were chatting away, and she'd heard about my music and wanted me to write her a piece. "Yeh, sure... When d'ya want it -- tomorrow morning?!? I'll start on it now!" So that's happening this year -- and that's another orchestral piece. Apart from all of that -- getting opportunities and being lucky and getting commissioned -- I love writing for orchestra, and it's a real hook. I think it's a lot to do with wanting to get it right, and hearing things and thinking, "Damn! I can do better than that. I really stuffed that up," or something. Or thinking [reverently], "Oh, wait a minute!"

Because it's such an endless realm of possibilities of different textures. It really is infinite. I'm starting to play around with my home studio at the moment -- slowly add little bits, buying toys, and really starting to wrap my mind around electronic stuff, because I've never done anything like that. I've always been a one-hundred-percent acoustic composer -- and if I can find the On button, I'm doing really, really well. [Moans] "Where is the button, ooh, how do you make it go? Just give me some presets, I don't want to deal with it." No, no, I'm just getting started. But I think this latest piece, *Beowulf*, will be a lot closer to what I really like. And also, it's massively inspired by Christopher Rouse, who was my teacher at Eastman, who writes the most stupendous, insane orchestral music. He's a fantastic orchestrator, but it's music from another planet! It's very violent and forceful and I always liked that. It pushes the realm of orchestral music to the extreme. I don't think I got that far -- I wanted to outdo him, but I don't think I did.

GOSS: I do notice that your pieces are marked with an extraordinary amount of energy. For instance, in *From the Deeps Sound the Great Sea Gongs*, I was amazed that the piece was as long as it was without getting boring, even though it was basically a percussion piece and the orchestra was jamming along with it. Somehow things just kept moving along and the sense of suspense was kept up all the way to the very end.

FARR: Fantastic. I'm glad you think that. Excellent! Because that was specifically one of the pieces that I listened to and thought, [wearily disgusted] "Ah, man!" It was commissioned to be the same shape and length as the beginning of Richard Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*... Initially, I thought, "If you want to play *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, why don't you just play it and leave me in peace?!" I totally went way outside the commission, anyway, because they wanted a really short fanfare, you know, real *2001: A Space Odyssey* stuff -- and in the big tone poem, I ended up with a ten-minute first section, which I thought was more useful, and it has been. It's been very useful. But the second half... When I finally started to listen to the recording, I was just saying to myself, "Oh, *shut up!*" The music got so lost in the middle. As you say, it's a bloody long piece, and I think it was the first time I structurally had to put together a piece of that length on such a focused subject. And it really was: I couldn't go too far from where I'd set myself up. And I really liked what I had done at the beginning of that second half, with all the swirly stuff and the almost Ravellian things, and I didn't seem to be able to keep it going. Then the music turned into Wagner, then it turned into Shostakovich, then it turned into bloody Mahler, even. At one point when listening, I was going [gritting teeth], "Oh god, Gareth, why didn't you just stay where you were, it was quite a nice idea..." I think that's a general problem with composers; not changing your mind every ten bars or so. That's what students do, and I always used to do it terribly. I would end up with a piece with 40 different ideas in it and none of them developed. So I revised the hell out of *From the Deeps Sound the Great Sea Gongs* -- I think it's the biggest revision I've ever done -- and I was really happy when the APO said, "Sure, that's fine, send us up some new parts."

Because I didn't know whether they might say, "Oh, we really don't want any more work, putting together a whole new set of parts," but they were cool with it. It was such a relief to hear it in rehearsal and think, [sighing] "Oh, that's better." It's nice to have the opportunity of fixing up the past!

GOSS: The other nice thing about that piece was the sense of outrageousness. I don't think that you were trying to be funny, necessarily; but there's this sense of cockiness and exuberance, and just a little bit of breathless hilarity...

FARR: I know exactly what you mean, and I don't think I do that in a contrived way. I like extremity, I really do. Partially in the case of *Sea Gongs*, you have the fact that the first ten minutes was performed by itself in the premiere, and then I had a little while to finish off the second part, [mutters quickly] not well enough, obviously. And I thought, "well, I've got the audience for ten minutes, and chances are, this is going to be the only contemporary piece that they hear -- this month maybe, this year maybe -- it might be my only chance to entertain them. I don't want them to miss it. I don't want their minds to wander and start thinking about what they had to do after the concert, or look at the program. To a certain extent, I think that's what I do in person as well. I do tend to be kind of bombastic and loud, and I think it's very much to do with being eager to make an impression. Certainly, in large groups of people, I tend to be the exactly same way. It's the way everything comes out; if I want to make things get out there and grab you by the neck, usually it astonishes me how over-the-top it comes out. The idea of the drums was definitely a rock-drummer thing. I wanted it to look like the way rock-drummers set themselves up: this sort of huge display of testosterone... ..And it is funny, absolutely funny, because I, on the whole, don't take myself really seriously; however, I'm 100 percent behind it. I think that's genuinely what I want to do, but sometimes... I remember listening to a string quartet of mine, and I deliberately put really silly things into it, as if I were having a conversation, la-la-la, bla-bla-bla, and just sort of go PPPPHHH! from out of nowhere. I think that sort of thing's really funny! I hadn't really heard it before, because I hadn't gone to the rehearsals of the New Zealand String Quartet, and I was just laughing and laughing. People were looking at me with horror! [incredulous dismay] "Wha..? Eh..? Is he having us on or something? Is he serious? How can he laugh at his own music?" And the music was like, "deedleedleedlup, deedlup, deedlup, bup, pppphhhhh!" like really stupid Shostakovich! -- only it was just me being very, very silly. And you're mostly not allowed to do that in classical music. "You can't laugh! This is serious music!"

GOSS: Even in New Zealand?

FARR: Oh, totally, totally. It's very strange. And I think that sense of humor is one of the most important things. I think some of this I've just written for Auckland may terrify people, but some of it is very funny. I've got this bit where the whole orchestra goes RRRRAAAUUUUGGHHHH! [roars like enraged elephant seal] And that's ridiculous! It's a horrible monster's scream, and I'm sure I'm going to laugh my pants off when I hear that. But the horns won't be laughing.

They'll be going [makes alien spaceship sounds] VWOOP! VWOOP - LOODLOODLOODL!!!

GOSS: That's really great! I don't even know what to ask you next -- so let's wing it!

FARR: Absolutely. I don't think anything you would do would prepare you for New Zealand! It's a funny place. My companion, Ryan, has just got his work permit here. He's from Rochester; I met him when I was doing my degree at Eastman. And I have absolute, overwhelming respect for him dealing with leaving the States and coming here forever, because I think that it's a very different thing than the other way around. New Zealanders are travelers; we're very well known for just getting up and bugging off. It's like, "I'm tired of being on a little island, let's go see this one over here!" I think also we've grown up knowing that we're not the world. That the world is the thing that you see on the news on the telly, in the papers; and a huge part of what we see as being that world is America, definitely. And there's a fascination about going over there. Or Britain, which has been the stereotype for New Zealanders, though I think recently it's to the States where all the students have been going. It's not a shock for a New Zealander to go to the States and find out that it's not quite what they thought, that it's not like a sitcom, and it is a world of extreme diversity, which you don't see at all: you see white middle-class America on telly. So we're sort of prepared for anyway. It's one of those things, like when you ask New Zealanders to do an American accent, they can do it. I mean, they might do a horrible one, or a really over-the-top one, but ask an American to do a New Zealand accent, and of course they can't. They don't turn on the television and see a New Zealand program. New Zealand has had nothing to do with Ryan's life. In his 30 years, New Zealand has only had something to do with me, so he's immersing himself in this completely different culture, which a lot of people don't realize how different it's going to be. If we didn't speak English, I think it would be easier for people to cope with the differences, because they'd be expecting them. [growls] "Oh, it's a foreign language, everything will be different!" But as it is, you have to think. The general personality of people is very different, I think. I get along with Americans really well; however, I must say, I've never dealt very well with [chuckles with chagrin] British people. I just can't do it! I don't know what it is! Well, I do know what it is! They're bloody repressed! The only attitude that will absolutely drive me insane is [becomes deadly calm and superior], "We don't do that."

GOSS: This is related to the attitude that if you've ever even touched, or even been in the same room as an electric guitar... you'll never be taken seriously again! As anybody -- a concert pianist, a composer -- certain people don't even want to know your name. Is that true?

FARR: Does an electric bass count? I used to play one as a teenager!

GOSS: Yes.

FARR: Yaaayy! I am very proud that I will never be taken seriously in Britain! That'd be right. And if you know that amps don't go up to "11." No, I think such an attitude is absolutely true, and I think we've inherited a little bit of that in New Zealand; because I do very much remember that sensibility from when I was a member of Composer Association of New Zealand.... Actually, I think I still am a member, but I haven't been to a meeting or read one of their newsletters for a really long time, because of two things. One, I think it would be really difficult to find a Maori member of the Association. And if you mention that to one of the diehard members, I'm sure they wouldn't say, "That's because we don't want them." It would probably be, "Well, what can we do? We can't force people to join this association." My response would be, "That's true, but maybe there's a reason for me not thinking it's a particularly relevant group for me to be in, considering all the work I do with Maori artists. Two, there are no rock musicians in the Association, or rather there are no composers who write in that genre specifically. There may be a few classical weirdos who've dabbled in it. "Oooh, whooo!" How condescending! And I'm just writing so much bloody dance music at the moment because, well, for a start I love it. I think one of my favorite experiences is going to a nightclub...for many reasons [wiggles eyebrows suggestively] "Hawhawhaw!" But also I think that some of the most exciting percussion music being written in the last ten years is techno club music -- it's entirely percussive. It's all electronic, but there's some really interesting stuff being done, and I'm doing a little bit of that myself. And I don't know what the attitude is towards me. Look, I don't have a bloody clue what the attitude is towards me in general. I think that I've managed to put myself into a pigeon-hole -- which it isn't at all, it's completely un-pigeon-hole-able. But a lot of people are all terrified of the drag thing. I do think that the classical music scene in New Zealand -- and I'm not sure that it's a "scene" at all -- is very conservative. I know that, academically, it's as conservative as you could ever imagine. There's a way that you should approach music as an academic. For a start, I've never, ever wanted to have anything to do with the university system, after spending ten years as a student. I used to think, "What the *fuck* am I doing??" I was halfway to a doctorate at Eastman, and I realized, "I don't have any interest in doing a doctorate." At that point, the only reason I wanted to be in the States was because the drag shows were so much fun; we were doing them twice a week.

GOSS: You could have been "Dr. Farr"..

FARR: Dr. Lilith!! That would have been great at the drag show! The only drag performer with a fucking doctorate!

GOSS: But not a Doctor of Drag...

FARR: No, not a doctorate in Drag, no... I pretend that I have a diploma from the School of Drag... But the Master's was a wonderful thing to do, not because of the degree. At all. Certainly because of the exposure to the teachers I had there. I mean, that was fantastic. A couple of academic things did me a little good there, like learning how to do harmony and counterpoint properly, because I was usually such a lazy bastard with it. No, it was generally good.

But apart from that, it was the experience of going overseas and finding out what the world's all about. And that was a *huge* change for me, it was a huge step in my career. I didn't need to go any further than that, because it wasn't an academic thing in the first place. The only paper I've done towards that degree was an ethnomusicology paper in which I managed to examine the subject of drag. It was a great course; the ethnomusicology teacher at Eastman, Lynn Koskoff, is as mad as a snake. She's a wonderful woman. We were doing this paper called *Ritual in Music* and we were talking about rituals and Catholic religion and African religions and all sorts of things, and well, how there's sort of like a real dictionary meaning of how rituals go. It's reasonably generic. There's often a shaman, they often go into a trance, they're often leading a group of people into some sort of ceremony. I thought, "This is amazing!" -- every single thing I read about it, sociologically speaking, I could draw so many analogies to a drag show! And I was thinking, "I've got to do it, I've got to do it!" And I said, "Do you think I could do the paper on the drag show?" And she said, "That's fan-*tas*-tic!" And look, I mean, if you look at it technically from a certain standpoint, there's no difference. And she *loved* it. And I thought, "I'm doing a doctorate in music, and I've managed to do my fucking first paper on drag! RRRH!" Actually, I still really like it as a paper. I think I want to look at it again and take it a bit further, especially the whole aspect of a drag queen going into a different personality. I interviewed a few of them and I asked, "OK, if you were out of drag, if I put you on stage, what would happen?" The response was, "Oh, forget it." No self-confidence, nothing. A different person. I don't think I share that with any of them, because I think I'm... a little bit...[dissolves into laughter]

GOSS: You're not putting it on.

FARR: No, I don't think I am. I don't think I turn into a different person with a frock on. A very common question that I'm asked is, "Is Lilith a completely different person?" Well...Yeah! Because of the fact that visually for most audiences there is no similarity at all and I try to make it as far from me as possible. And also... Lilith can get away with things that I can't get away with! Lilith can go and slap some cute guy on the arse, and he's not going to say anything because there's this seven-foot-tall drag queen behind him. Gareth Farr's not going to get away with something like that! Anyway.... [goes into Scots accent] "Ehh,, I got a bit off the topic a liddle bit, din't I?" Talking about academic stuff....

GOSS: Yeah, you were talking about...

FARR: The composer's association.

GOSS: The ethnomusicological ramifications of drag.

FARR: Yeah, yeah. Even then I was kind of off the topic.

GOSS: Well, you were talking about your doctorate.

FARR: I've had a couple of interviewers say that I was so frustrating to transcribe!

They get home and start listening and think, "You didn't finish that story..... oh, never mind, you'll probably come back to it.... No! Didn't finish that one either...."

GOSS: Well, it's interesting that, of the composers I've interviewed, their verbal styles seem to follow their composing style a little bit.! Don't take that as....

FARR: No! I won't! I reckon that's a study in itself!

GOSS: Well, I interviewed Eve de Castro, and she was extremely disciplined and brilliant and incisive, and then I interviewed John Psathas, who had this real groove and rhythm to his voice....

FARR: Babe! He's such a babe!

GOSS:and you seem to be following some of your tendency to explore different areas... along the same road.

FARR: That is one of those really fascinating things that no-one will never ever know about themselves, because you never talk to yourself! I think that you can't avoid writing music like you speak. I haven't really thought about this much, but then again, on the other hand, it's one of those things. It depends on whether you write music absolutely straight from the heart, and I think you've just talked to two people who do. They're two of my favorite New Zealand composers, without a doubt. And David Downes. He is, I think, the most underrated New Zealand composer ever. He's fantastic! He's written a lot of music for Michael Parmenter, who probably has the biggest dance company in the country. I was going to say, "The United States!!" Oh, where am I? That's an amazing sky color behind you, by the way!

GOSS: I've got a good backdrop as I grill you here!

FARR: And David wrote a piece for Strike! percussion ensemble just recently. I'm going to be playing with them. I'm not officially part of the group but it's nice to... [slaps some rhythm with the palms of his hands] keep drumming. Keeps me in shape. But um, yeh, yeh, yeh, John and Eve -- that'd be a really interesting study. So many things I want to study! I'm just going to have to wait 'til I get sick of music and I'm 86 and I've got nothing better to do.

GOSS: You can go over your old basement tapes.

FARR: Exactly. I kept an answerphone tape from Rochester. I just found it a little while ago! [Looks out window] It's getting really purple out there! Wow.

GOSS: So, we seem to be coming to the recapitulation here, back to New Zealand composers and which ones you like. Bring us back into a main subject, which is why you like them. If you can put it into words...

FARR: I probably could. On a very basic level, I like certain composers because their music grabs me immediately and I do see that as being an important part of entertainment.

At the risk of sounding like a dreadful commercial jingle-writer, I honestly think that, especially with an orchestral piece, you've been given the opportunity to entertain that group of people for ten minutes, and by God you'd better do it properly! Because you will not get that chance again, that orchestra won't do that piece again, and if they do you're bloody lucky. If you've written a piece that's designed so that after hearing it 20 times the listener thinks -- "Oh, there's an interesting thing.... Oh, you know, I'm quite getting the hang of this piece now!" -- then you've completely fucked up. Completely. Especially if your piece is not going to be recorded, and often it won't be. I was criticized quite a lot for some pieces -- *Sea Gongs* and *Te Papa* -- in that they were seen as being a little unsubtle. A little obvious -- instead of artisticness, going for a real sort of showmanship. Liszt as opposed to Chopin. Whatever.

GOSS: I don't know. I mean, what's unshowy about Chopin?

FARR: I mean, exactly! That's true.

GOSS: You're not tortured!

FARR: No. [slyly] Or if I am, I hide it well! [demurely] My response to that was..... "Fuck off!" And then my second response to that was: I'd been asked to write a piece for the 50th anniversary of the Orchestra, and that was *Sea Gongs*; and that really did have to make people feel good. One of my favorite parts of *DrumDrag*, my drag show, is the stand-up comedy bits. I love them! I think there is nothing more gratifying or terrifying than doing stand-up comedy. The gratification you get from a whole crowd of people wetting their pants laughing at some dumb thing you've just said is wonderful, and it's because of that absolutely instant response. I think it's not necessarily the humor that's the key to what I like about that. It's the response. It's like talking to somebody that just goes [blank look for a few seconds]. I'll last about ten seconds, if I'm not getting any response from them. Which is why there are good interviewers and bad interviewers. There are people who can't get me to talk for longer than 30 seconds, there really are! I get very monosyllabic, "Well, do you want me to talk or not?" A backhanded compliment there....

GOSS: You're welcome!

FARR: Those pieces were very specifically designed, and if I had written an academic piece that was designed so that when you analyzed it, you'd discover something wonderful about some series of notes! John doesn't do that! Eve doesn't do that! John goes for excitement. I reckon John's music is a lot cleverer than mine.... and I reckon that John is a lot cleverer than me, too!! [camps] "Eee, data's Greeks for yak!" I think that often John puts a *hell* of a lot of work into his pieces. Actually, I think that John and Eve put more work into their pieces than is appreciated by the audience, which is where entertaining yourself while you're writing the piece comes into play. Otherwise, we'd be bored writing music. But we're all just very different. We have very different styles. John's music can completely overwhelm you because it just seems to be an endless source of ingenuity. He doesn't repeat himself. Never! I do. I love repeats. I love getting stuck in a groove!

That's got to be a personality thing as well. And Eve is also a very visually dynamic person. She wears really bright clothes -- she'll turn up wearing a *bright* pink beret or something -- and she's a graphic artist as well. I think that if there's anything you can do to excite an audience during a concert, you've got to do it. And that means visually as well. What can you do? If an orchestra asks you to write a piece, you can't build in a whole visual display with it, because they haven't got the budget and they'll yell at you! But that was a sneaky trick of mine in *Sea Gongs*, to have the drummers really be a visual part of that. And it's a very different experience listening to the piece on a tape than it is watching it live, just because of that. I made sure the drums were way up on risers, with this huge line of roto-toms gleaming silver. The drummers don't do anything for the first minute and then they do a big cymbal roll, "Oh look!" Even in bloody any old classical symphony percussion part, usually the percussionists sit down and don't do anything for a long time, and then often they'll all stand up together to do the big climax, and someone's gonna go "Tang!" and someone's gonna go "Boom" and someone's gonna go "Ksssh," and it's not really that interesting. But nevertheless, the slight flicker of movement from the percussion section and the whole audience is like, "Gasp! Are they going to do something?" And it's, "Oh, cool, that was cool!" Then back to the music. And it's the only time that anyone ever moves onstage. Nobody else does unless the horns are sticking their bells up in the air or something. WHOOH!

GOSS: Or swinging back and forth like Motown.

FARR: Exactly. And I love that! I love whatever you can get away with as far as movement goes. There's a whole choreography to percussion that I'm just starting to really work on now. I did a ballet with three percussionists (in these huge towers, which sort of had ladders up the side and things that they could climb on -- very *Stompy*, actually. It ended up being nothing like *Stomp* whatsoever, but it looks quite *Stompy* and it was inspired by that jungle-gym type approach to percussion which I like) and ten female dancers. It was all choreographed by this fantastic choreographer, Shona McCullough. And I had sort of been thinking that, in general, multi-percussion setups are really interesting, because I was always the one doing those pieces in my student years, they'd be the really crazy ones. Eve wrote this wonderful "percussion all over the place" piece for *Strike*, in which I participated as a performer, with these huge white screens behind me. At certain points in the score there was a little pause mark and I turned around where there were three pots of paint in primary colors, and I just picked up a brush and went "Whhhhhshh!" on my screen. It was specified that it had something to do with what I had just done rhythmically, and the great thing was that the brush actually made a sound, as well. So there was this little bit that had the two metronomes going at different speeds, "tu-tu-tu-tu-tu," and the temple blocks, "po-po-po," with the paintbrush....and theoh! The very opening of the piece is "BRRWAAAAH!!!!" y'know, huge sort of thing, and then just "pwkkkwh!" a bright-red stroke, and people were just like, "That's amazing!" 'cause you actually associate all of those strokes with musical moments.

You'd remember what I'd done and they stay in the air, they sort of stay there throughout the piece, and the great thing is you end up with two paintings, which you can give to people in the audience. It's called *Conundrums*. (groans and laughter) Yay for Eve! Eve's got a sense of humor, too, that's another reason why I like her. But..... [assumes posh accent] "the point of that being"..... [goes into Glaswegian accent] "Eeyoooh, 'e's forgotten wha he were talkin' about!"

GOSS: You were talking about choreography.

FARR: Oh right. I remember a lot of times people would come up and say, "Look, it was a fantastic piece, it was so exciting, but.... I love watching you just desperately *running* to get to one instrument!!!" In the whole physical nature of a percussion piece, that's exactly what happens. I mean, it's choreographed, it has to be, or you just won't get to that instrument in time. And so I was thinking, "What if you deliberately put instruments awkwardly far apart, to make the absolute most of a movement?" Because you could play a piece, [quietly] "tin-tin-tin-ki-tu," no.....but if you put them apart, then you've got [reaches wide and strikes] "that, that, that!".... I thought of three guys doing that in synch -- or not in synch, in canon or whatever -- there's so many visual things that you could do with that... And there's a group of percussionists here, some of whom I've taught, who are around about my age -- and they are just such fantastically dynamic percussionists. They were just perfect to try out this, to try this sort of stuff out on, because they're all really, really fit, really enthusiastic, and stunningly beautiful. So I made this sort of setup that really wasn't that many instruments but it covered all of the different ways that you could reach out, to the point that there was a gong that was *way* beyond their reach, and they all had to leap up at the same time and hit these tiny little Chinese gongs... I mean, it's an amazing sight, but it's very, very funny. Especially in canon..... The piece was a first experiment into that area. It's got a lot further to go. In fact, Murray, the guy who runs this percussion ensemble, has totally taken it on as his mission in life (which means that I don't have to do it now and I can get on with writing something else). It's good, I've found a keeper of the, whatever, the choreographic mission, and he's doing great now. He's written a piece called *Cube*, which uses these 3 meter x 3 meter scaffolding cubes -- really big, basically one of them would fill this room -- and the inside of the entire cube is covered with percussion instruments. It's an extension of my *Vixen*. But it's more extreme -- hanging upside-down from things and really climbing up onto it, and I think going even further in the dance direction than mine. Mine was just kind of arm movements and things.

GOSS: That reminds me of Evelyn Glennie, because she's so dancy when she's performing.

FARR: Absolutely. And that was one of the things I loved about watching her.... knowing that I was going to be writing a piece for her. Bare feet, I love it! I thought that was fantastic: because of the fact that it made her so stealthy onstage. It was just like she could sneak around and not make a noise.

And I thought, "This piece *has* to be something about moving around onstage." So it's like this big journey from the percussion section....leaving home, basically. It's a journey from the percussion section out into independence. So she starts off as one of the percussion section, right in the middle, and she's wearing marching drums which sort of form part of the row of drum. But then she leaves it and moves forward, and docks amid a little percussion station a little bit further forward... and takes the drums off eventually and goes and does a marimba section, and finally there's this big romp at the end, right at the front of the stage. My first idea was that she would have bells on her feet because she was just so good at walking onstage and that's so hard for most musicians -- just to walk across the stage.... "Oooh, everyone's looking at me!" It is very hard to walk across the stage. I remember even having to go and play second timpani in the middle of a piece (and it was just bloody Elgar or something ridiculous!) and it was so difficult to do. It's like, "O.K., I know people are looking at me," because, if a percussionist moves, the whole audience is wildly excited, something's going to happen. Oh, she's very good at it. Very good. She just does it very slowly, she knows people are watching her, she knows she's gorgeous -- she's wearing PVC pants, for Christ's sake!

GOSS: Well, one last thing. Does this sense of motion tie in to your interest in working with Maori artists? Or do the two have nothing to do with each other?

FARR: They're bound to have something to do with each other. Two things: I can't say that I've ever really pushed myself into that area, or a Pacific Island music area. I just happened to be in a situation where I was available for it. And certainly, I stayed there, because I just love it. But I do think there's something very visual about Maori performance and Cook Island performance and the like that's such a profoundly exciting live experience. It's not intended for recording, it's not intended for appreciating later on your own, it's all about live energy, and I *love* that, I love that so much. And I think also there's a whole lot of things that Maori performance groups do that are absolutely visual. You know, all the facial features. And there is this thing that they do in a group, if there's one performer out in front... the whole group just goes like that (points hands at the ground, palm forward, twiddles fingers) and it's just to keep the visual energy going. Or spiritual energy, or whatever it is. But it's fantastic, it's very subtle. I can't remember what it's called; wiri, I think. It's great. It's this wonderful subtle thing that keeps the shimmering going. And....it does have something to do with my development, I'm sure it does. Not consciously, but of course all those things [lapses into Scots accent] go to make up the strange character that I've turned out to be!

Concert Reviews

Papal Ploys

ALICE SHIELDS

Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and Dance Alloy, with conductor Kevin Noe and choreographer Mark Taylor, in *Pope Joan: A Dance Oratorio* by Anne Le Baron. October 14, 2000, Pittsburgh, PA.

October 14, 2000, brought the world premiere of the dance oratorio Anne Le Baron's *Pope Joan*, a co-production of the Pittsburgh New Music Ensemble and Dance Alloy, choreographed by Mark Taylor. Kevin Noe conducted the ensemble of flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, and cello. The role of Pope Joan was sung by the soprano Kristin Norderval and danced by Gillian Beauchamp. Joan's lover was danced by Michael Walsh.

Le Baron's oratorio uses the elegant and evocative poetry of Enid Shomer on the shadowy, part-legendary figure of Pope Joan (*This Close to the Earth*, University of Arkansas Press, 1992). Le Baron had met the poet at an artists' colony, and was intrigued by Shomer's work on the bizarre early medieval legends of this learned woman who, educated as an ecclesiastical scribe (of course, disguised as a man, since no woman was considered worthy of education), then joined a Benedictine monastery at the insistence of her first lover, and later moved to Athens and Rome, where, still disguised as a man, she became cardinal, and finally, in 856, pope. She was stoned to death in 858, after giving birth during a papal procession [!].

In this premiere, soprano Kristin Norderval sang the title role in her clear, ethereal lyric soprano, while Gillian Beauchamp danced the same role with power and sensuality. There was a close physical resemblance between the two women, and since they wore identical costumes (leather top and pants) and since Norderval actually performed some dance movements (and it's so nice to see a singer do this!), on several occasions in the first half of the piece we were delightfully deceived. The splitting of a role into singer and dancer is of course common in Asian forms of theater and dance (such as Japanese Noh, or Indian Bharata Natyam). This was one of the most enjoyable aspects of *Pope Joan*, in addition to the fact that in the process of rehearsal, the performers had taught each other enough so that the dancers could perform some chanting and singing, and the singer could perform some dance.

The singer's part consisted of symmetrically arching melodic contours, and occasional spoken sections. The word-setting was syllabic, with an occasional brief melisma. Many of Shomer's words were set above speech range, and were thus not clearly discernible, though well sung. But it was the character of the melody that was important, and this was usually a lovely, arching lyricism, an interestingly feminine and gentle series of rises and falls, in which the pauses between vocal entrances were roughly the same, inducing a somewhat hypnotic effect.

Occasionally, a fleeting, impassioned high peak in the soprano's part was followed by a satisfying shift in orchestration, such as by phrases on tubular bells, offering a momentary cooling-down of the drama. Solo chimes were also used in a beautifully-lit blessing scene towards the beginning of the work; at other points, percussion and pizzicato strings gave good contrast with the singing voice.

Often dance illustrates and follows the power of the melodic line, which itself is shaped around the meaning of the words. But in other instances, such as in Hindu dance-drama (Bharata Natyam), the dance itself develops the meaning of the words, and the music follows, or forms a vibrating canvas across which the choreography paints.

The choreographic movements by Taylor were outstanding on the level of the individual dancer as well as on the level of group design and placement on the stage. The lighting by Barbara Thompson effectively supported and enhanced Taylor's choreography by using sharp-edged spotlights to isolate the dancers from the singer, using two crossed spotlights on top of the circular, writhing forms of six dancers, and using broader washes of light and subtle color change to bring the singer Joan into the dance action. Taylor made excellent use of group movement at the perimeter of the spotlights, increasing the dramatic tension by evoking the danger of the protagonist's situation.

Listening to the even rise and fall of the soprano's clear voice, one noted that the almost intellectual purity of the vocal line was being contrasted with the sensual aspects focused upon in the choreography. But although one or two non-sensual choreographic segments matched the pure, smooth, platonic arches of Norderval's singing, most of the dance scenes expressed strong sensuality. And as Shomer's elegant poetry could only be clearly grasped in the spoken sections, it could often not add its weight and complexity toward the expression of Joan's spirituality, in order to balance the strong sensuality of the choreography. Joan's scholarly and spiritual aspects were brought to our ears, whereas her female sensuality and bodily sufferings (sex, childbirth, and execution) were projected into our eyes. One was left wanting to experience in both music and dance more than was offered of Joan's early, erudite years, to better contrast her later, more sensual ones.

About halfway through the 45-minute work were a series of trills and a ritard in the instrumental music, letting both the musical and dance energy ease to its lowest point. From then on, the energy of the piece rose in increments towards the denouement, which included an unforgettable stylized birth scene in which the dancer Joan reclined on poles held by the other dancers. The thrust of the drama was then taken over by Le Baron's music, in fast sections of pulsing 4/4 meter separated by Norderval's speaking voice, electronically transposed down about two or three half-steps. These two elements -- the strangely altered speaking voice and the pulsing, percussive 4/4 meter, alternated back and forth for some time, creating the high point in the drama of the piece.

Although the transposition of Norderval's speaking voice could have been made more effective had the loss of high frequencies (and therefore consonants) been replaced by electronic timbral manipulation, nevertheless, this final section of the piece was dramatic and quite exciting, indeed reflecting Shomer's final words: "All births / are chaste: if heaven is repealed because I ruled not nuns / but men, I will celebrate the other, the Black Mass."

Fleet Suite

DAVID CLEARY

FleetBoston presents Judith Gordon. January 12, 2001, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

In the past, FleetBoston's Celebrity Series has not normally given events that focus on either Boston musicians or new music. Their new *Boston Marquee* program shows this presenter satisfyingly addressing both needs. One of Boston's estimable pianists, Judith Gordon, was the evening's featured artist; generously, she shared the stage with five freelance colleagues and an equal number of area composers.

Four voice-and-piano world premieres, all commissioned by the Series, were played. Alan Fletcher's setting of Walt Whitman's *I Saw in Louisiana a Live-Oak Growing*, is (like certain Franz Liszt or Hugo Wolf songs) sufficiently keyboard dominated as to almost be an independent piano selection with attached text. Its soulful sound world, essentially triadic in nature, appealingly projects a stylized blues-oriented spiritual ethos.

Slow, Slow and *Sweet Disorder* (words respectively by Ben Jonson and Robert Herrick), both composed by David Horne, are dissonant in sound, original in conception, and fascinating in effect. Both songs manage to subvert their texts' meaning while not seeming ineffective or projecting preciousness. The piano and vocal writing is jittery and furtive, expertly calculated to keep the listener off balance.

A lengthy prose text by ornithologist Alexander Wilson provides the basis for *Wilson's Ivory-bill* by Lee Hyla. Like the Horne, this strong work bristles with busy, nervous piano writing -- though here the effect is more forceful, less understated. Vocal writing is syllabic, containing a matter-of-fact, conversational quality. Recorded sounds of the now-extinct ivory-billed woodpecker are played during the course of this piece, and the piano part's material often contains clever variants on the bird's call. The work's wistful concluding section is especially effective. *Reasons for Moving*, by Martin Brody (to poetry of Mark Strand), splendidly delineates this composer's winsome personal take on East Coast expressionism. The vocal part here is very virtuosic, making significant demands on its singer's high register. Pamela Dellal (mezzo-soprano), William Hite (tenor), Mark McSweeney (baritone), and Lisa Saffer (soprano) all sang well, with Saffer's stratospheric pyrotechnics and Hite's carefully reined-in yet nuanced vocalism deserving special praise.

Gordon's sensitive accompaniment style, perfectly able to adapt to the wide-ranging demands of each entity, was perfection itself. Her solo playing was also a joy to hear. Besides a masterfully clean and thoughtful presentation of the repertoire favorite *Valses nobles et sentimentales* by Maurice Ravel, she also gave the Boston premiere of John Harbison's *Gatsby Etudes*. Stitched together from melodic material taken from Harbison's opera *The Great Gatsby*, these saucy, ingenious, well-balanced entities might be the result had Chopin composed in America during the Roaring 20's. Despite suffering from memory slip problems, Gordon played it convincingly.

It is heartening to see mainstream cultural organizations such as this one support new music and local talent -- and judging from the presentation, the series is off to an auspicious beginning. Your reviewer hopes he has witnessed the birth of a laudable Boston tradition.

Boston Celebration

DAVID CLEARY

Arcadian Winds. Celebrating Boston: Arcadian's Boston. February 2, Ellison Center for the Arts, Duxbury, MA.

This concert necessitated a lengthy train trip and a ride with a cabby one can only characterize as dubious. Given this, one could only hope the Arcadian Wind Quintet's performance would be worth the jaunt. Happily, the report is a highly positive one.

Two pieces especially impressed. Paul Brust's *Wind Quintet* shows a certain affinity with Varèse's oeuvre, sporting spiky shards of melodic material, periodic use of ostinato, and a by-and-large forceful, strapping ethos. It's a well-paced, wonderfully taut item, economically and lucidly derived from its opening few measures. And the work's surprisingly warm ending does not sound out of place at all.

Ballet, by James Russell Smith, contains an innate rhythmic energy that would in fact make it highly amenable to choreography. From a harmonic standpoint, it convincingly navigates the infrequently traversed region between Copland's *Americana* and Sessions' more clangorous cosmopolitan sound. Its unusual formal construct -- an overall fallback from busy, full textures containing little repetition into less dense, ostinato-laced slow music -- works excellently.

Owen Underhill's *Bay of Dew* and Arcadian clarinetist Mark Miller's *ca10min* took huge gambles and also came up winners. The latter's gruff serial sonic world and fire breathing, almost capricious manner of speech are nicely grounded Schoenberg-style in a tightly delineated rondo structure. Despite being one of Miller's first compositions after a lengthy silence, this is decidedly no amateur's dabble. Underhill's strong entity, scored for quintet and piano, is a set of character studies unlike any in recent memory. Each movement is rife with wild surprises in mood and texture -- which on reflection hang together well logically, helped in part by a decent dollop of motivic economy. Its harmonic language, dissonant but with some measure of tonal focus, is agreeably consistent.

The flute/bassoon/piano trio *Enchantments*, by Julian Wachner, was apparently written in great haste and, given its loose, gestural construction and unfolding, sounds it at times. But generally, this is a decent listen, featuring a bustling neo-Bartókian sound world, clear ABAB form, and appealing instrumental writing.

Michael Leese's *Caffeine Music (Cyberstrut)* unfortunately provides a demitasse rather than a mugful of aurally potent brew. It starts out fine but runs out of steam approximately one-quarter through its duration, becoming a series of plaintive accompanied solos interlaced with more contrapuntal sections.

Two guest keyboard players appeared this evening, both acquitting themselves handsomely. Alexandra Fol did a yeoman's job of last-minute pianism on the challenging part in *Enchantments*, while Sandra Hebert expertly sailed through the broad range of moods and colors in the Underhill. As always, the Arcadian Winds played with solidity and imagination, exhibiting thoughtful sensitivity, clean finger technique, fire in the belly, and an attentively blended ensemble sound.

Bravos go to this quintet for providing an enjoyable evening, one that proved well worth going out of one's way for. This reviewer can say with confidence that he would gladly walk the proverbial mile to hear the Arcadian Winds in future.

String Quartet à la Mode

DAVID CLEARY

The Lydian String Quartet. *Music of the Jewish Experience II*. February 3, Slosberg Recital Hall, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.

Much ado has been made (and rightly so) of Elliott Carter's recently attaining the ripe old age of 90. But compared to Leo Ornstein -- alive and well at age 108 as of this writing -- Carter's merely a young buck. The venerable centenarian featured prominently on this evening's concert by the Lydian String Quartet, one devoted to works displaying Jewish connections

Ornstein's *String Quartet no. 2 op. 99* (1928), while not as brashly experimental as his music from a decade earlier, must still have sounded notably *au courant* to its pre-Depression era audience. This sizable piece betrays influence of such composers as Kodály, Bloch, Bartók, and even occasional touches of early free-atonal Schoenberg. Minor-sounding modes, octatonic configurations, and periodic polytonal moments can be found here, as well as judicious use of ostinati and (in the finale) Eastern European motoric accompaniments. Whether the movement in question is fast, slow, or of moderate speed, the melodic material exhibits a plaintive ethos often redolent of folk or Hebrew cantor's origin. But this is no wallow in world-weariness, as all three movements contain an appealing intensity free from histrionics. And despite a bit of structural sprawl, it all hangs together convincingly.

Psalm 121 (1997) for soprano and string quartet, by Martin Boykan, is brief but very effective. While serial, it does not sound gritty or dissonant -- in fact, the sonic universe here sometimes leans towards more tonal-sounding harmonies. And despite periodic employment of snap pizzicato, the string textures are warm and fetching. Boykan's Hebrew text setting is splendid and his vocal writing delightfully idiomatic. Jane Bryden's singing, while somewhat plain in tone quality, featured a nicely secure high range, excellent projection, and fine diction.

A rare treat was Steve Reich's *Different Trains* (1988) for quartet and prerecorded tape. This worthy piece intriguingly synthesizes two rarely combined elements of the composer's oeuvre: speech-based gestural ideas rooted in pieces like *Come Out*, and large formal constructs delineated by abutting contrasted patterns as seen in entities like *Music for 18 Musicians*. Train whistles and train-wheel clacking (as well as spoken fragments) are both baldly stated on tape and imitated by the instrumentalists. The work's juxtaposition of tableaux that vary widely in tempo, source material, and relative length proves fascinating. And the last movement's overall feel of resigned poignancy is most effective.

The quartet (Daniel Steptner and Judith Eissenberg, violins; Mary Ruth Ray, viola; Rhonda Rider, cello) performed extraordinarily well. Exquisitely sensitive ensemble playing, flawless intonation, spotless finger technique, and a tone quality that was gutsy (not forced) and blended (not bland) were the order of the evening. Kudos deservedly go out to this tiptop foursome. And a special hat-tip is extended from this corner to Ornstein, an ageless tonemeister whose work still speaks vitally today.

New Directions Now

DAVID CLEARY

Alea II. *New Directions Now*. February 7, Tsai Performance Center, Boston University, Boston, MA.

Alea III is known and respected around Boston for its inclusive programming that presents composers from the famous to the unknown, the veteran to the fledgling. The group's February concert was a good example of this, being a broad-based evening respectively featuring pieces by a major name, two composers making the leap from mid-career status, and three youngsters

Henri Dutilleux's *Les Citations* for mixed quartet shows this master equally at home in the small chamber milieu. The work's fetching slow-tempo first movement features a prominent solo oboist surrounded by spare supporting textures. This critic has never associated the terms "light" and "bubbly" with Dutilleux, which made this work's finale all the more surprising -- and welcome. Here, the harpsichord, contrabass, and percussion parts are on equal footing with that of their double reed partner, each taking turns reveling in the splashy writing employed.

The middle-aged folks turned out top-shelf listens. Scott Wheeler's *Illyrian Rounds* for oboe, violin, viola, and cello excellently demonstrates that music in a bucolic mood need not be flaccid rhythmically. The piece's intricate instrumental writing manages to be simultaneously clean and edgy. And its manner of unfolding, featuring figures that twist back upon themselves, shows intriguing kinship to rondo construction without seeming slavishly old-fashioned. *Nocturne* for viola and digital sounds by Richard Cornell exhibits a number of strong attributes, including a clearly delineated arch format, tight employment of material, and perfectly succinct duration. The widely varied tape part imaginatively transforms and filters viola sounds to the point where one would be hard-pressed to identify this instrument as the sonic basis.

Karim Al-Zand impressed most of the junior set. His baritone cycle *Lelia* contains a deeply internalized folksy feel that proves convincing and sports an imaginative, often gorgeously scribed string-quartet-and-guitar accompaniment that pleases much. Text setting and vocal writing are tastefully done. *Monologue* by Alexandros Mouzas and *The Life of Death* by Apostolos Paraskevas share certain characteristics. Both are concerti that spotlight oft-neglected instruments (English horn for the former, guitar for the latter), employ a tonally focused yet dissonant harmonic language, and show predilection for a dramatic ethos (with Paraskevas' entry employing overtly theatric effects). Both also have similar difficulties, including the presence of exuberantly overwritten accompaniments that sometimes swamp the solo parts, a nebulous feel for structure, and an overall sense of post-Romantic angst and world-weariness that does not wear well. Give Paraskevas some credit, though, for refusing to fall into the trap of writing a spineless guitar concerto in the manner of Ponce or Rodrigo.

Both soloists and ensemble performed well. Special mentions go to baritone S. Mark Aliapoulos (who exhibited an easy, unforced sound and strong diction), violist Scott Woolweaver (whose well-controlled, all-out execution contradicted every joke about wimpy viola playing), English hornist Christina Pantelidou (whose full tone and comely phrase shaping pleased), guitarist Paraskevas (who attacked his solo part with youthful gusto and able finger technique), and the splendid Dutilleux foursome of Laura Ahlbeck (oboe), Mark Kroll (harpsichord), Edwin Barker (contrabass), and Timothy Genis (percussion), who arguably gave the night's finest presentation. Theodore Antoniou conducted with care and effectiveness. And salutations go to Antoniou and his group for mounting an enjoyably omnivorous event.

The Passion According to Golijov

DAVID CLEARY

Boston Symphony Orchestra in Osvaldo Golijov's *La Pasión Según San Marcos*. February 8, Symphony Hall, Boston, MA. Through February 10.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra gave the American premiere of *La Pasión Según San Marcos*, by Osvaldo Golijov, on February 8 at Symphony Hall. While undeniably a work with panache and surface appeal that doubles as an excellent outreach mechanism to Beantown's Latino community, it possesses little musical depth.

This piece can rightly be considered a stage extravaganza. There's a bit of everything here: solo singers from various traditions, an orchestra, subtle tape effects, dancers, Hispanic percussionists, and a chorus that performs in both antiphonal and *en masse* configurations. The music, dead-on triadic from start to finish, shows heavy influence of Latin American popular idioms and minimalist compositions, shadowed with hints of composers like Carl Orff and Michael Torke.

Perhaps the work's strongest suit is its keenly theatrical, even frankly populist bent.

A decent bit of attractiveness is encountered here, including unpretentious, punchy melodic material, flashy orchestration, and alluringly varied spatial arrangements of performing forces. In short, it is loaded to the brim with style.

But unfortunately, the work's strengths come at a price. This critic struggled in vain to discover deeper appeal in the music, the sturdy pillars that would make revisiting the piece a pleasure. The music crosses the line from lucidity to almost simple-minded rudiment -- Rossini-like in the less good sense of the word. Scoring, while glitzy, often exhibits minimal sophistication or inventiveness and tends toward the static. Melodic writing, while visceral, often lacks variety. Contrapuntal textures are extremely rare. There is no long-range sense of musical structure, nothing like the invention collection and symphony construct found in a piece like Berg's *Wozzeck*. Save for one passage reminiscent of stylized plainchant and another that sounds like recited prayer, little about the music itself suggests ties to sacred subject matter. And at nearly 90 minutes duration, the work is simply too long to sustain its uncomplicated compositional approach. This is not to say that the work lacks sincerity -- far from it, in fact. But like the proverbial dinner at a Chinese restaurant (or perhaps like Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Bernstein's *Mass*), it leaves one initially full, yet hungry again in short order.

With only a few reservations, the piece received a splendid, terrifically committed performance. Two particularly huge bravos are in order here. One goes to the Schola Cantorum de Caracas; this chorus boasted some of the most versatile, highly charged, lusty singing your reviewer can recall hearing, both as a unit and as individuals (some of the latter had extended solos). Yet despite such eagerness, the group sounded neither unblended nor unduly forced in sound -- wonderful indeed to experience. The other major huzzah heads out to conductor Robert Spano. There's no doubt Spano believes fervently in this work's attributes, and he spared no gesture in exhorting a fiery presentation from the players that really put the passion in this *Pasion*. Golijov could not have wished for a more supportive champion. The Latin percussionists (led by Mikael Rinquist) and members of the Boston Symphony played excellently. Soprano Elizabeth Keusch, exhibiting a lovely, willowy tone quality, sang ably despite rare struggles with a few demanding high spots. Vocalist Luciana Souza projected an appealing pop-oriented sound, though she found it necessary to utilize a microphone even in thinly accompanied passages. Reynaldo González Fernández was a good showman and dancer whose gritty, forthright vernacular vocal stylings sometimes betrayed pitch difficulties. Geraldo Ferreira's dancing may well have been authentically south-of-the-border, but it often seemed to resemble 1980's street-style break-dancing as much as anything else.

Fromm Players at Harvard for Martino's 70th

DAVID CLEARY

The Fromm Players celebrate Donald Martino's 70th birthday. February 16, John Knowles Paine Concert Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

At a question and answer session held during the middle of this 70th-birthday event in honor of Donald Martino (the first of two planned at Harvard this season), the guest of honor was asked what advice he would give to young composers. The emphatic reply was, "Follow your star." Martino's following of his own personal star has resulted in a highly successful career studded with splendid pieces that demonstrate a healthy breadth of influences. Featured on February 16 were both one of his finest serial concert works and some examples of his compositional flirtation with jazz idioms.

The *Triple Concerto* (1977) illustrates its composer's inimitable take on dodecaphonic writing. Not an ounce of desiccation is encountered here -- this is vital, colorful, highly dramatic music that pleases enormously and is complex in the best sense of the word. Martino having once been a clarinetist of ability, it's not surprising the three soloists in question (clarinet, bass clarinet, and contrabass clarinet) are given virtuoso level parts that sound highly idiomatic. Solo writing, while sometimes indulging in contrapuntal interplay, more often than not presents the three instruments as one gigantic-range clarinet, the three players' parts masterfully interwoven with one another. Its three movements, played without pauses in between, demonstrate an imaginative recasting of older formats like sonata and rondo. The piece was performed twice this evening (your reviewer followed along the second time with score in hand) and given extremely well. Michael Adelson conducted with vigor and intelligence. Clarinetist Ian Greitzer and bass clarinetist Gary Gorczyca were first-rate, exhibiting fine tone quality and spotless finger work. Bohdan Hilash's contrabass clarinet playing was somewhat less attractive, at times falling prey to unsure technique and a raspy, unfocused sound.

Four Jazz Compositions (1957) date from Martino's Manhattan freelance clarinet playing days. *Threeway* and *Canon Ball* (cast in a rescored version originally requested by the CORE Ensemble) are smart amalgams of Bach inventions and jazz stylings. Leslie Amper (piano), Ron Lowry (cello), and Robert Schulz (vibraphone) presented them well. Excerpts from *Cathy* (a jazz ballad with variations) and *Lover Come BACH* (a combination of Bach's *Brandenburg Concerti* and Sigmund Romberg's "Lover Come Back to Me" as filtered through a jazzy prism) were heard pre-recorded from a studio session dating from the 1950's; these featured Martino on clarinet accompanied by such legends as pianist Bill Evans and drummer Elvin Jones. Both proved fascinating artifacts to experience.

In short, the evening was an enjoyable, affectionate tribute to a composer whose music is stellar indeed.

Yesaroun' Clocks In

DAVID CLEARY

Yesaroun' Duo performs music of the Minimum Security Composers' Collective. February 17, Temple Ohabei Shalom, Brookline, MA.

The Yesaroun' Duo (Samuel Z. Solomon, percussion, and Eric Hewitt, saxophones and bass clarinet) gave the sort of presentation that is found in New York with some regularity but has pretty much disappeared from Boston since the early days of the Composers in Red Sneakers group: a concert with attitude that gleefully pushes the classical music genre into a head-on collision with pop idioms. As such, it was a welcome breath of fresh air around these parts. That it was also an enjoyable evening of high wire risk-taking and able music-making made it all the more special

Four pieces by members of the Minimum Security Composers Collective, all commissioned by this duo and written last year, provided the cornerstone here. *Smelting Solid Gold*, by Adam B. Silverman, shreds a bucketful of James Brown tunes and reassembles them John Zorn fashion into an irreverent, humorous, enjoyable pastiche. It's a hoot, more fun than a bathtub full of otters. Dennis DeSantis's +8 performs similar operations upon figures rooted in techno-style dance mixed with a dash of jazz. While not benefiting from the tune recognition inherent in Silverman's work, it's a solid entity in its own right, raw and obsessive in speech, just the right length, and never boring. *WATT*, by Ken Ueno, while possessing its strong points, is a bit less successful. Here, jazz, rock, and funk appear in more internalized fashion than in the preceding entries. Much of the piece concerns itself with wildly energetic, intense gestures (perfumed with hints of Lee Hyla's *oeuvre*) that somehow manage to up the ante as they unfold, becoming a riveting game of "can you top this." Unfortunately, the few scattered breaks in this texture (including a lengthy soft section devoted to bowed and struck tam-tam) frustrate rather than provide repose, and seem more dropped-in than organic. Roshanne Etezady's *Nothing if Not*, while the composition most likely to appear on a traditional contemporary ensemble concert, does not have a whiff of dryness about it. Cast in a dissonant harmonic language, it proves colorful, contemplative, translucent at times to the point of fragility -- and good to hear.

Of the rest, the most intriguing entity was *Le Corps a Corps* (1982), by George Aperghis. For percussionist alone, it requires the player to intone a French language text in quasi-*Sprechstimme* manner and play a small ethnic drum containing elements of conga and tom-tom. Like the Ueno, it is loaded with lengthy stretches of frantic, obsessed music, and like the Etezady, it pays careful heed to timbral possibilities—much imaginative drum writing is encountered here. It is also a bit long for this listener's taste. Evan Ziporyn's *Tsmindao Ghmerto* is a curious little exercise. Here, a traditional Georgian choral chant is scored for solo bass clarinet, the three- and four-part textures of the original being obtained through use of multiphonics and singing into the instrument.

It's a strange and unusual mix of the traditional and experimental. Robert Solomon's *Hashkiveinu* (1988), arranged for cantor, marimba, and tenor sax, is as tonal and tradition-steeped as any work one would care to name, essentially being a liturgical lullaby. While not a wildly cutting-edge entry, it is charming, warm, and sincerely felt.

Percussionist Solomon and saxophonist Hewitt were terrific, performing all selections with sympathetic gusto and accomplished sheen.

Bang on a Future

MARK ALBURGER

Bang on a Can All-Stars. March 8, Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA.

When the Bang on a Can All-Stars played at Yerba Buena Gardens three Octobers ago, one had the sense of listening to the cutting -- no, the raw, bleeding -- edge of music. Now, two-and-a-half years later, that dangerous quality was just as acutely felt in their bang-up performance on March 8, at the same venue.

The ensemble immediately lived up to its name in Phil Kline's *Exquisite Corpses*, which emphasized the basso-brutal side of this amplified sextet of clarinet, keyboards, guitar, percussion, cello, and bass. The two low string players hammered away, while electric guitar and drum kit pounded out altered rock rhythms to the minimalist/ecstatic figurations of clarinet and grand piano.

As if this weren't enough to grab listeners by the scruff of the ear, Bang on a Can Marathon co-founder Julia Wolfe offered the unbelievable *Believing*, a relentless, ripping tour-de-force for cellist Wendy Sutter, where energetic additions from the rest of the ensemble proved utterly exhausting. A mid-section wonderfully relaxed the tension by requiring the vocal intonings of each player (all had voice mikes in addition to instrumental amplification capabilities). This pseudo-ritual abruptly transitioned back in a brief return to the opening energy, this time mounting a sonic staircase to an abrupt cliff climax.

Instrumental and vocal music not enough for you? Don Byron's *Eugene I* was a multimedia work, with the additional inspiration of Ernie Kovacs's *Eugene*. Byron's music, structured to the film, was as dizzy and quirky as the 60's comic writer-actor's genius. A cartoon world of squeaks and pratfalls made this an entertaining divertissement.

The only miscalculation of the evening was the first two of *Three Improvisations* from clarinetist-composer Evan Zipporin. It was not that the music was unworthy; it was simply out of place. These microtonally evocative studies would have been more appropriate on an academic or uptown concert. Yes, we all appreciate diversity, but these simply came off like a couple of suits at a pool party, minus any comic effect. The third study, however, was a wonderfully haunting homage to East African wind-playing. The reverb or digitally enhanced delays caused a sinuous overlapping of lines that commanded (although that's too strong a word, really, for this delightfully gentle music) attention.

A movement from Brian Eno's classic *Music for Airports* in the becoming-classic arrangement by another Bang on a Can Marathon founder, Michael Gordon, holds one's interest in a related manner. Here the music does not bludgeon (as at times in the first half of the evening's program), but caresses and soothes. An early example of "ambient music" (the minimalists, Cage, and even Satie had earlier attempted similar soundscapes), Eno's ultramuzak washes over the listener in sensuous calm. Each detail is captivating, particularly in live performance, and the whole is of a calm peace. This is not music for everyone, but for those that can take it in, it can be transcendent.

I Buried Paul, also by Gordon, is also not music for everyone, but it is certainly for anyone who spent time in the 60's playing Beatles' tracks backwards looking for clues to the "Paul is Dead" rumor. Never has a composer so completely captured "backwards" and "fast forward" tape music in a live electro-acoustic setting. How often have many of us listened to such sounds and wondered if convincing music could be made of such material. The answer is a resounding "yes." Gordon's music was as relentless and yet multivalent as Wolfe's (the two are married -- can you imagine the noise if they ever have a falling out?). Both composers feature a basic default mode of everybody playing all the time. It is a powerful sound and concept, and run through a constantly changing set of densities, intensities, and propensities makes for a thoroughly alarming and engaging listening experience.

Tan Dun's *Concerto for Six* was played for a riotous encore. This fine composer, whose *Ghost Opera* for Kronos and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* for Hollywood have brought worthy attention, called forth a madcap, virtuoso escapade for all the players, including punky guitarist Mark Stewart, inside-the-soundboard pianist Lisa Moore, lithe percussionist Steven Schick, and caressing bassist Robert Black.

Shapero Celebration

DAVID CLEARY

A Celebration of Harold Shapero's 80th Birthday. March 8, Slosberg Recital Hall, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.

Harold Shapero, Professor Emeritus at Brandeis, was once one of our country's most promising young composers. Sadly, his output lessened considerably with age, but enough wonderful (if now infrequently played) pieces flowed from his pen before age 30 to rival such precocious 20-somethings as Robert Schumann and Richard Strauss. His body of work remains the great undiscovered treasure trove of American neoclassicism.

Of the three earlier-period pieces presented at this birthday concert in Shapero's honor, the *Sonata for Violin and Piano* (1941) is simultaneously his earliest and most clangorous. It demonstrates an unusually dissonant slant on Americana-styled harmonic language, presenting a sound world predating that of 1950's-era Arthur Berger and Harold Fine by several years. And here, Shapero is particularly successful disguising the traditional formats that generate this music. In short, it's a strikingly sophisticated work, especially for a 21-year-old composer. The *Variations in C minor* (1948), originally meant as the slow movement of a piano sonata, proves challenging in a different sense of the word. An unsympathetic listener might think it dry or block-like but would make a serious miscalculation in doing so. The theme layers in odd pitches that undercut the standard triadic notion of C minor, further emphasizing the off-kilter feel by coupling these notes with stuttering rhythmic gestures. Intriguing internal eccentricities and surprises jostle the old-fashioned formal framework employed, demonstrating a tendency to accumulate as the piece unfolds. And while variation sections are clearly demarcated, they clump together convincingly to form a larger overall dramatic schema. It's a work of great intensity, variety, and emotional depth, excellent to experience. Originally scored for string orchestra, the version of the *Serenade in D* (1945) heard this evening was reorchestrated for string quintet by Shapero in 1999. This sizable, ambitious entry at times seems almost self-consciously archaic à la Stravinsky, but retains its own distinct personality and remains fascinating throughout by employing odd twists in texture, harmony, and dramatic progression.

Shapero's recent output is small and not often programmed. It was thus a treat to encounter his wind quintet *Six for Five*, written in 1995. Frothy, fun, and charming, it belongs to the same lighthearted ethos as Ligeti's *Bagatelles* and Berio's *Opus no. Zoo*. The harmonic language, still redolent of Copland and similar folks, by now shows an inimitably effortless, internalized mastery.

Many of the performances were splendid. Steven Weigt's expert pianism in the virtuosic *Variations* ideally balanced passion and cleanliness. Equally impressive was the fiery presentation given by the Lydian String Quartet (Daniel Stepner, Judith Eissenberg, Mary Ruth Ray, Rhonda Rider) and bassist Edwin Barker of the *Serenade*.

Violinist Charles Dimmick and pianist Vytas Baksys turned out a well-considered rendition of the *Sonata* that had its share of friendly energy. Only the Ariel Quintet's *Six for Five* disappointed; while brimming with gusto, it also suffered from an unblended overall sound and numerous mistakes in intonation and ensemble playing. Shapero himself presented an encore, a *Bagatelle (E-flat minor Waltz)* for piano that came across as a delightfully cockeyed Chopin parody.

Other Pleasures

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Other Minds Festival 7. Music of Ezra Pound, George Antheil, James Tenney, and Hi Kyung Kim. March 9, Cowell Theatre, San Francisco, CA.

Good programming is an art, even at festivals. The second concert of San Francisco's *Other Minds 7* -- there were three -- was a musical menu which often felt like a buffet. And though these can be nourishing, each dish should complement as well as contrast. The connections between Ezra Pound and George Antheil were obvious -- two close and mutually inspiring friends -- but what did James Tenney and Hi Kyung Kim have in common? Still there were things to enjoy and the Pound took top honors in the esoteric department.

This consisted of the six-part *Fiddle Music: First Suite* (1923-24) which the poet composed for his companion, the violinist Olga Rudge. This work sounded spontaneous and intuitive, and vaguely like Virgil Thomson's music of the same time, and was played with conviction and discernment by Nathan Rubin. Six excerpts from Pound's second opera *Cavalcanti* (1931-33) followed. Originally written for performance on the BBC, it takes the life and poetry of the Italian Guido Cavalcanti (1250-1300) as its subject and text. The overture is an air for solo violin (Rubin again), and five other arias were sung here by bass-baritone David Cox, boy soprano Michael Bennett, and soprano Tammy Jenkins. Though Cox had an admirable command of tone and good projection, Jenkins made the strongest impression. She was lush and supple in her only, and all too brief "Tos temps serai", a long-lined lyric lament in Provençal by Sordello (1180-1235). Pound's music throughout was sincere but not terribly accomplished. Its homemade quality, however, stamps it with a certain honesty. Robert Hughes, who's a specialist in Pound's music, got an alert performance from his band. But the dour, funereal lighting didn't help, and it wasn't the bankrupt PG&E's fault.

Antheil's *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano* (1923) was also composed for Rudge. It's in the primitivistic style of the period in pictorial art (Gaudier-Brzeska, Picasso) and music (the stamping chords in Stravinsky's *Les Noces*). The static clusters in the andante moderato also sounded a bit like meditative sections in Ives. Still, Antheil's imagination holds the piece together, and he makes striking use of harmonics and on the bow effects in the violin. An even more amazing touch is the use of what sounds like a French song in the finale. This enters as a ground bass in the piano's lower register, with furious fiddling above. Toronto's Sabat/Clarke Duo gave a powerful performance of this abrasive -- and almost abusive! -- score. Violinist Marc Sabat had the requisite drive and sense of fantasy, and Stephen Clarke was tense, intense, and matter of fact.

Next came four James Tenney pieces for the same forces, though only two -- the 1974 Chorale and the 1997 Diaphonic Toccata -- were really engaging. The first was haunting and fragmentary, the second passionate in both conception and execution, its form being that of a palindrome which goes up and down the keyboard. Clarke played with superb concentration and admirable control.

The real crowd pleaser came last. This was young Korean-American composer Hi Kyung Kim's *Rituel* for violin, cello, clarinet, bass clarinet, and percussion (the redoubtable William Winant). The world premiere performance also involved the talents of the very attractive shamanistic dancer-drummer Eun-Ha Park, who was dressed in at least three layers of costume, including what looked like brocaded pajamas. Park also played the small hand gong kwoang-gari and the chang-go drum which was mounted horizontally, and there were lots of polyrhythms. Kim's music was either serene or made a terrible racket, and Winant marshaled all his intensity on the proverbial battery of percussion. As Ruth St. Dennis said to Martha Graham upon leaving a performance by evangelist Aimee Semple MacPherson -- "It's got to have theatricality!" Otherwise, you can always stay home.

International Velvet

JEFF DUNN

The Women's Philharmonic presents *A Concert in Honor of International Women's Day*. March 10, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater, San Francisco, CA..

Things went smoothly at another fine Women's Philharmonic concert: 70 minutes of music were well-rehearsed, competently conducted, and pleasing to the ear and audience. Smooth as velvet. Smooth as the black velvet-like curtains surrounding the sound-sucking rafters of the Yerba Buena Theater, an acoustic Dolby would be proud of. So smooth and pleasant the orchestra should consider changing the name to the Women's Pops -- no, that wouldn't be right -- say, the Women's Moms? No, not fair to singles.

Be that as it may, the concert began with a 15-minute welcome from Board President Leyna Bernstein, followed by music ready-made for a Travel-Channel soundtrack. This was the U.S. premiere of Eugenie-Emilie Juliette Folville's *Impressions d'Ardenne*, first performed in 1939 when its Belgian composer was 69 years old. Nice. Especially the second movement, *Cimetiere de campagne*, which gently illustrates a cemetery, with whiffs of the *Dies Irae* in the bassoon and horn. Velvet in the caskets, no doubt.

Emma Lou Diemer's *Suite of Homages* came next, a suite of five pastiches honoring male composers. Nice. For a change. Poulenc, Webern, and Ligeti were honored best, but was the Webern movement *way* too long to be true his aesthetic at 4' 52"? Homage was not quite as well-borne to Prokofiev and Stravinsky. Whatever spikiness that might have been in the music was soaked up by those rafters and velvet. Also, if Prokofiev should be known for any one thing, it would be melody and harmony -- not much in evidence in the homage. And Stravinsky the Mild was there, but not Stravinsky the Rhythmic Revolutionary. There is such a fine crop of women composers nowadays that it won't be long before a *Suite of Femmages* is written!

After intermission came the world premiere of Chen Yi's 17-minute *Chinese Folk Dance Suite* for violin and orchestra, with Concertmaster Terrie Baune as soloist. Chen Yi is a first-class orchestrator. This skill was most strikingly illustrated in the second movement, two thirds of which was accompanied by vocalizations from almost all of the orchestra members, none of whom were playing other than the percussionists. The third movement, a Turkish-style semi-frenzy practiced by the Uygurs of western China, was at last able to penetrate the scourge of Yerba Velvet, unfortunately at the cost of drowning out the soloist during the tuttis.

Reception was enthusiastic, and deservedly so. If only the Yerba Buena venue were stricken from the menu!

Catching a Bang on a Can

GAVIN BORCHERT

Bang on a Can. March 11, Moore Theatre, Seattle WA.

Whenever a classical composer says that he (and it usually seems to be male composers) was influenced by, or wants to incorporate, rock elements in music, my first response is defensive skepticism: OK, but why? Because there are sounds traditionally associated with the rock idiom that aren't traditionally associated with the contemporary classical idiom that you want/need to use in your work? (Good reason.) Or is it because rock musicians get more attention from our culture than classical musicians do -- because if your label is "classical" you have to eat lunch with the nerds, but if you manage to get some of the glamour of rock brushed off on you, you get to sit at the cool senior table? (Dumb reason.)

On March 11, The Bang on a Can All-Stars, a touring ensemble affiliated with the New York City contemporary music festival of the same name, came to Seattle to play music motivated by the good reason. The group's typical repertory is deliberately hard to pigeonhole. You can't label it classical or rock unless you draw a lot of lines -- between timbres (acoustic vs. amplified), venues (concert hall vs. club/arena), or methods of transmission (a written-down score on paper vs. a recording). Bang on a Can composers take what they like from either tradition, and often add a good dose of jazz improvisation. It's chamber music for an ensemble that would make most people, upon hearing it, think "rock" -- electric guitar and a drum set play prominent roles, along with keyboards, a cello, a clarinet, and an upright bass -- and everyone is (for better or worse) plugged in and amplified. Most of the music also embraced, even reveled in, a steady pulse -- a device pretty much banished from "serious" contemporary music for a good chunk of the last century, and which still makes some composers a little nervous. The two best pieces on the program played with rock/classical boundaries even more by asking live performers to recreate studio-manipulated electronic sounds.

Michael Gordon's *I Buried Paul* took off from the trippy coda to "Strawberry Fields Forever," wittily translating that collage-y sound-world into distorted instrumental gestures that faded in and out and imitated tape loops and sounds "played backwards."

Brian Eno's *Music for Airports* (1978) is hailed as an early example of "ambient" music, a sonic environment often made of tape-looped synthesizer tones intended as a soothing background in a public space. In the All-Stars' realization, the parts for each instrument were transcribed by ear from Eno's original recording. In the excerpt played on this concert, the piano provided tolling-bell notes in the bass, each followed by a gently arching phrase, while caressing sounds from the rest of the group floated past. In an oddly ironic sense, the group's version was not true to the spirit of Eno's original -- this was gorgeous and thoroughly absorbing music that commanded and rewarded close listening.

Arnold Dreyblatt's *Escalator* and Don Byron's *Dark Room*, fast and flashily chaotic, stayed closer to the rock border of the All-Stars' in-between zone. Phil Kline's beautifully crafted *Exquisite Corpses* was hurt by the amplification; regardless of the thickness or thinness of the texture, the delicacy or aggressiveness of the individual sounds, everything came out of the speakers at pretty much the same in-your-face level.

Guitarist Mark Stewart performed, deftly, Steve Reich's *Electric Counterpoint* for multiple guitars (one part played live, the others pre-recorded on tape). Only Tan Dun's *Concerto for Six* felt a little self-conscious, with a now-we-are-going-to-do-some-cool-stuff-to-impress-you air missing from the rest of the program.

Laura Kaminsky, faculty composer at Seattle's Cornish College of the Arts, led the post-concert discussion, and asked one wonderfully pointed question about how the All-Stars choose their concert programs and commission works. To put it less diplomatically than she did: Does Bang on a Can (either the traveling All-Stars group or the festival back home) have a party line, and only work with composers who will provide the sort of rock-flavored sound they've become known for? The musicians cheerfully ignored the question, but it's an unaddressed paradox of new-music groups who have a reputation for adventurousness, for freedom, for not recognizing musical style boundaries. Sure, simplistic labels like "rock" or "classical" or "jazz" were pretty useless for the works on this concert, but the works were a lot more similar to each other than the All-Stars' reputation might suggest. It's not hard to find classical concerts that offer at least as much stylistic variety as this show did -- the Seattle Symphony offered a head-spinning Bach-Respighi-Stravinsky-Scriabin program in early February, to take one example.

Kaminsky's question raised other unspoken ones: When does music-that-can't-be-categorized become in itself a rigid category? If you erase one existing boundary, but draw a new one around yourself, have you gained anything? How adventurous can you really be when you have the expectations of your fan base to consider? On the other hand, if your concerts include music as rewarding as *I Buried Paul* or *Music for Airports*, what difference does it make?

Night of the Two Composers

BRIAN BICE

Violinist Hilary Hahn and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Barber's *Violin Concerto* and Corigliano's *Tournaments*.
March 16, Detroit, MI. Through March 18.

Violinist Hilary Hahn joined conductor Carlos Kalmar and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra from March 16-18 to perform Samuel Barber's haunting *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*, op. 14, in a program also featuring John Corigliano's *Tournaments*.

The latter opens with the brass playing fanfare-like lines, with a three note motive serving as the basis for the piece. Corigliano describes this music as "a 'contest piece,' a sort of concerto for orchestra in which the first desk players and entire sections vie with each other to display their virtuosity." That is exactly what happened in this performance. Throughout the piece, sections of instruments "squared off" against each other to see who could attain the status of most impressive, in a manner calling to mind a jousting match. The argument shifted back and forth between slow, lyrical sections and more energy-filled "fighting" music. Grandiose brass lines underneath high and fast notes played by the strings rounded out the piece. The Barber *Violin Concerto* is haunting and lyrical, taking the listener on an intense journey. This performance was well-nigh flawless.

Calendar

May 2

Extension du domaine de la note. Théâtre Silvia Monfort, Paris, France. Festival through May 12.

Conservatory Classical Orchestra in Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

May 3

Soloists of the Goethe Institute in music of Hindemith, Ferneyhough, and Eisler. Goethe Institute, Paris, France.

Extension du domaine de la note. Luc Ferrari. Théâtre Silvia Monfort, Paris, France.

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Del Tredici's *Gay Life*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 5.

San Francisco Electronic Music Festival. Cellspace, San Francisco, CA.

May 4

Extension du domaine de la note. Music of Georges Aperghis and Giacinto Scelsi. Théâtre Silvia Monfort, Paris, France.

Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA. Also May 5.

Lara Downes. University of California, Davis, CA.

Premiere of Mark Alburger's *Henry Miller in Brooklyn* (words by Mel Clay), directed by Harriet March Page, with Rick Richetta (Henry), Tisha Page (June), and Elaine Romanelli (Jeanne). Potrero Neighborhood House Theatre, 953 De Haro, San Francisco, CA. Through May 20.

Uncommon Visions. The Paul Drescher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band with Joan Jeanrenaud, cello. Drescher's *Dark Blue Circumstance* (1982-86) for solo electric guitar and live digital looping; San Francisco premiere of Anthony Davis's *Blue Funk Into Darkness* (2000) for cello and electro-acoustic band, premiere of John Luther Adams's *The Light That Fills the World* (1999, revised 2001) for violin, bassoon, two electronic keyboards, two electronic percussion; Davis's *A Walk Through the Shadow* (1983, transcribed for Electro-Acoustic Band by Mark Grey, 1999); San Francisco premiere of Drescher's *Unequal Distemperment* (2000-01) for cello and electro-acoustic band; and Paul Hanson's *Pull of the Gold Rope*. The Forum at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, 701 Mission St. @ Third, San Francisco. Repeated May 5.

Chen Yi's *Dunhuang Fantasy*. St. Mary's Episcopal, Kansas City, MO.

Thru the Walls. Cutting Room, New York, NY.

May 5

Boston Cyberarts Marathon, with Auros, Dinosaur Annex, Marilyn Nonken, in music of Davidovsky, Reich, and Stockhausen. Slosberg Gallery, Brandeis University, MA.

Birdsongs of the Mesozoic. Somerville Theatre, Somerville, MA.

Jennifer Higdon, William Bolcom, and Jon Deak. Dia Center, New York, NY.

Orchestra 2001 in Varèse's *Intégrales*, Cage's *Second Construction*, Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Finko's *Quadruple Triangles*, and St. Pierre's *Memento Mori*. Holy Communion Church, Philadelphia, PA. Repeated May 6, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore.

May 6

Tom Heasley. Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

Muir Trio. University of California, Davis, CA.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Kyrie*. First Congregational Church, Palo Alto, CA.

Augusta Read Thomas's *Prayer Bells* performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony. Pittsburgh, PA. Repeated May 6.

May 7

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

May 8

Benjamin Boretz. Jack Straw Productions, Seattle, WA.

May 9

Jorja Fleezanis. University of California, Davis, CA.

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

The Pierre Boulez Workshop: Le Marteau Sans Maître. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

May 10

85th birthday of Milton Babbitt.

Extension du domaine de la note. Group de Recherches Musicales. Théâtre Silvia Monfort, Paris, France.

May 12

Extension du domaine de la note. Pierre Henry. Théâtre Silvia Monfort, Paris, France.

May 14

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

Birthday of Richard Kostelanetz, Lou Harrison (his 85th), Tania Leon, and Alvin Lucier.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Ascent to Victory*. Bel Air, MD.

Jennifer Elowitch. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

May 16

Portrait of John Cage. Cité de la Musique, Paris, France.

The Magical Cabaret of EAR Unit! Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, Britten's *Prince of the Pagodas* and Ravel's *Piano Concerto in G*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 18

Corigliano's *The Pied Piper Ballet*. Lincoln Center, New York, NY. Through May 24.

May 19

Scelsi's *Aiôn*. Salle Olivier Messiaen, Paris, France.

48th anniversary of the death of Charles Ives.

Seattle Symphony in Chen Yi's *Ge Xu*. Seattle, WA.

May 21

Stefano Scodanibbio. Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles, CA.

May 22

Scenes from Bernstein's *Candide* and Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites*. New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

North/South Consonance presents Euba's *Saturday Night at the Caban Bamboo*, Shapiro's *Trio*, Diemer's *A Quiet, Lovely Piece*, Whitman's *Ori*, and Kessner's *In the Center*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

May 24

Lost Objects, by Michael Gordon, David Lang, and Julia Wolfe, performed by the Bang On a Can All-Stars. Dresden, Germany.

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Steve Reich's *The Desert Music*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 26.

Premiere of Pinkham's *Partita for Cello and Double Bass*. Williams Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

Composers Concordance presents Rhoads's *Slam*, Rovner's *Hexagram*, Trefousse's *Hotel Brown Poems*, Burke's *Fury of Bloom*, Birtwistle's *Pulse Sampler*, Rowe's *Shells*, Mamlok's *Polarities*, and Beeferman's *Sonata Bombastica*. Frederick Loewe Theatre, New York University, New York, NY.

Steve Reich Redux. *Tehillim* and *The Desert Music*. Columbia University, New York, NY.

May 25

Orchestre Philharmonique de Radio France in Messiaen's *Turangalîla Symphony*. Théâtre du Châtelet, Paris, France.

May 28

Arditti String Quartet. LA County Art Museum, LA, CA.

May 29

79th anniversary of the birth of Iannis Xenakis.

Britten's *Simple Symphony* and Barber's *Adagio for Strings*. Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA.

May 30

Chen Yi's *Duo Ye* performed by the Munich Chamber Orchestra, Munich, Germany. Repeated May 31, Cologne.

San Francisco Symphony, conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, in Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through June 1.

Premiere of Chen Yi's *Ning*. Ordway Center, St. Paul, MN.

Chronicle

March 1

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

March 2

101st anniversary of the birth of Kurt Weill.

Other Minds Festival. Charles Amirkhanian and Carl Stone. KPFA FM, Berkeley, CA. Programs through March 10.

Boulez conducts the Vienna Philharmonic in Bartók's *Four Pieces for Orchestra* and Webern's *Six Pieces for Orchestra*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

March 3

Sarah Michael's *Waves*, with choreographer-dancer Anandha Ray, performed by Blue Boat, the instrument designed by Judith Blankman and Marilyn Hudson. Bedford Gallery, Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA.

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

March 4

86th anniversary of the birth of Carlos Surinach.

March 5

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

Convulsive Beauty: The Music of Pierre Boulez. The composer conducts Ensemble Sospeso in his *Le Marteau Sans Maître*, *Messagesquesse*, *Mémoriale*, and *Eclat*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

March 8

90th anniversary of the birth of Alan Hovhaness.

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

Other Minds Festival. Forum with Egoyan, Vrebalov, Bryars, Velez, and C. Brown. Glen Velez's *Ancient World*, Hovhaness's *Khaldis Concerto for Piano, Four Trumpets, and Percussion* (1951), Aleksandra Vrebalov's *String Quartet No. 2*, and Gavin Bryars's *Adnan Songbook*. Cowell Theatre, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA.

March 9

91st anniversary of the birth of Samuel Barber.

Chen Yi's *Chinese Folk Dance Suite*. Yerba Buena Center, San Francisco, CA. "Chen Yi is becoming the Amy Tan of the symphony world. Like the Bay Area's . . . novelist, Chen weaves materials from her . . . homeland into musical tales that compel" [Lesley Valdes, San Jose Mercury News, 3/12/01].

Other Minds Festival. Forum with Curran, Kim, Hill, Tenney, and Winant, moderated by Amirkhanian. Premiere of Ezra Pound's *Fiddle Music First Suite*, plus excerpts from the opera *Cavalcanti*; Antheil's *Sonata No. 1 for Violin and Piano*, James Tenney's *Chorale*, *Diaphonic Toccata*, *3 Pages in the Shape of a Pear*, and *Diaphonic Trio for Violin and Piano*; and Hi Kyung Kim's *Rituel*. Cowell Theatre, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA.

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Flowers by the Sea* performed by the San Jose Choral Project. Sunnyvale, CA.

John Luther Adams's *Coyote Builds North America* (with Barry Lopez). Arena Stage, Washington, DC. Through April 15.

Tower's *Tre lent* and *Platinum Spirals*, Messiaen's *Le Merle Noir*, Gould's *Pattern No. 1* and *7* and *Prelude and Toccata*, plus music of Ives, Beach, and Zaimont. Merkin Concert Hall, New York, NY.

March 10

National Association of Composers presents Owen Lee's *Nocturne*, Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *A Recollection*, Ilana Cotton's *Playthings 2*, Sondra Clark's *Florida Fantasy*, Carolyn Hawley's *Spanish Variations*, Joanne Carey's *The Wetlands at Dusk*, Bruce Hamilton's *Pacific Skies*, and Mark Alburger's *Antigone*. Art Center, Palo Alto, CA.

Other Minds Festival. *Ezra Pound and Music*, with Robert Hughes and Charles Amirkhanian. George Coates Performance Works, 110 McAllister, San Francisco, CA.

Other Minds Festival. Chris Brown's *Invention No. 7*, Andrew Hill's *Bellezza Appasita (Faded Beauty)*, the premiere of Alvin Curran's *Inner Cities 8*, and Gavin Bryars's *One Last Bar Then Joe Can Sing*. Cowell Theater, Fort Mason, San Francisco, CA. "There was a really beautiful piano piece by Alvin Curran -- very soft and pretty. The Gavin Bryars percussion quintet showed the composer's mastery and was also lovely, but the structure was difficult to decipher. Chris Brown had a fine furious frenzy of sound" [Ernest Waldheim, 3/21/01].

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

March 14

Berio's *Altra Voce* (1999), *Sequenza VII* for oboe (1969), and *Sequenza III* for voice (1966). 92nd Street Y, New York, NY. "Scored for flute, voice and live electronics . . . [*Altra Voce*] begins with the flute and voice repeating a single pitch and then moves gradually afield. In the end the interplay of the flute, voice and electronic sounds creates an appealingly tactile web of sound" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 3/20/01].

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

March 16

64th birthday of David Del Tredici.

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

Esa-Pekka Salonen and the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group in Stravinsky's *Abraham and Isaac*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "The highlight was an amazing performance of *Abraham and Isaac*, a pungent 12-tone setting . . . in Hebrew, for baritone and chamber orchestra" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 3/20/01].

March 18

American Baroque in Belinda Reynolds's *Solace*. Holy Names College, Oakland, CA.

Gunther Schuller conducts at a 75th-birthday tribute in his honor, featuring *Sandpoint Rag* and *Rush Hour* (with Joe Lovano). Sanders Theater, Cambridge, MA. "Jazz audiences have seen a lot of cellos in the last 10 years. And flutes and harps and oboes. This is a trend for which you can thank Gunther Schuller, the perpetually overcommitted composer, conductor, record producer and author. Mr. Schuller's notion of 'Third stream' music in the late 1950's advocated a rapprochement between jazz and classical music, and the result has been a rather natural link between the two worlds. He did not invent this, of course. Milhaud and Hindemith and others were mixing the two, obviously or subtly, much earlier. But Mr. Schuller agitated for it, and he theorized about it, and he wrote about it. . . . He became president of the New England Conservatory of Music in 1966, and during his 11-year tenure he instituted the first degree program in jazz, as well as creating a third-stream department in 1973, led then as now by the pianist Ran Blake. . . . Blake performed a solo piano piece. Wearing sunglasses, the white bearded Mr. Blake played 'The Mirror, the Moon, Mississippi' . . .

He is one of the true eccentrics in the jazz world, rarely playing with rhythm sections. He has a floating sense of time that often completely abjures a feeling of swing or funk, even while alluding to it. It takes a man of complete confidence in his own beliefs, like Mr. Schuller, to champion him." [Ben Ratliff, *The New York Times*, 3/20/01].

Esa-Pekka Salonen conducts the Los Angeles Philharmonic in Stravinsky's *Concerto for Piano and Winds*, *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra*, *Movements for Piano and Orchestra*, *The Firebird*, and his arrangement of *The Star-Spangled Banner*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. "Stravinsky's work for piano and orchestra are almost anti-concertos. By its scoring alone, the *Concerto for Piano and Winds* (1924) is unconventional. It presents Stravinsky in his neo-Baroque mode, though with crunchy harmony, pummeling rhythm and craggy counterpoint. In the beguiling and stylistically eclectic *Capriccio for Piano and Orchestra* (1929) Stravinsky evokes, in his fractured way, both breezy Poulenc-like salon music and exotic modal Hungarian gypsy dance. *Movements for Piano and Orchestra* (1959) is one of Stravinsky's astringent and striking works in the 12-tone idiom. It's as if an elaborate piano concerto has been compressed into 10-minutes of chiseled, restless and elemental music. To appreciate how seldom these works turn up, consider their performance history at the New York Philharmonic. The orchestra played the *Capriccio* two years ago . . . its first performance of the work since 1973; it has never performed the other two. . . . Once the tempo of a section of [*The Firebird*] was set, it was unyielding. Episode after episode of this familiar music seemed startlingly fresh . . . That Mr. Salonen's audience was no gathering of Stravinsky fanatics became clear when the blazing climax of the 'Infernal Dance' was met with scattered applause and brovos from people in the hall who mistakenly thought the performance was over. As his second encores, Mr. Salonen played Stravinsky's dazzling and somewhat mischievous arrangement of 'The Star Spangled Banner.' Since people were already on their feet for the standing ovation, they just kept standing for the national anthem. But no one sang. They were too busy listening " [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 3/20/01].

March 19

Parisii Quartet in Boulez's *Livre*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA. Program concludes March 21.

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 22

John Cage's *The Seasons* [Summer (Quietly Flowing Along), Autumn (Slowly Rocking), Winter (Nearly Stationary), and Spring (Quodlibet)] performed by the New Century Chamber Orchestra. Berkeley, CA. Through March 25, Osher Marin JCC, San Rafael. "A virtuoso performance!" [Peggy Deutsche].

Emanuel Ax and Evelyn Glennie in Birtwistle's *The Axe Manual*. Symphony Center, Chicago, IL. *Songbook for a New Century*, with music by Rorem, Bolcom, Beglarian, R.I. Gordon, Babbitt, Corigliano, and Picker. Kaye Playhouse, New York, NY.

March 23

Steven Gerber's *Spirituals*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

March 24

Premiere of Dan Locklair's *Freedom*. Linser Auditorium, Washington, DC. Through April 2, Carnegie Hall, New York (NY).

NewEar in Chen Yi's *Sparkle*. Kansas City, MO.

March 25

Herbert Deutsch's *Conversations* and *Woman in Darkness*. Monroe Lecture Center Theatre, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY.

The Art of the Piano and Percussion, with Evelyn Glennie and Emanuel Ax. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "Mr. Ax and Ms. Glennie ended the program with . . . bursts of virtuosity" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 3/27/01].

March 26

Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *The World is a Butterfly's Wing* and *A Recollection*. Palo Alto, CA.

San Francisco Contemporary Players in Mackey's *Micro-Concerto*, plus music of Ortiz, Harrison, and Kui Dong. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. "[A] dandy little 30th birthday party" [Joshua Kosman, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 3/28/01].

March 28

Owner Saul Levine switches KMZT's format from classical to Christian. San Francisco, CA.

Phillip Amautoff performs on his own version of his friend Harry Partch's harmonic canon. Jack Straw Studios, Seattle, WA.

March 29

New York premiere of Kernis's *Simple Songs* given by the New York Philharmonic. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Death of John Lewis, at age 80. New York, NY. "[he was] pianist and musical director of the Modern Jazz Quartet" [Peter Keepnews, *The New York Times*, 3/31/01].

March 30

Flux Quartet in J.L. Adams's *In A Treeless Place, Only Snow*. Church of the Ascension, New York, NY.

American Brass Quintet students present Hovhaness's *Sharagan and Fugue*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Colleagues

MARK ALBURGER is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. An ASCAP composer, he is currently at work on *Animal Opera: An Orwellian Comedy*.

BRIAN BICE is a composer and euphonium player at Bowling Green State University (OH).

Composer GAVIN BORCHERT writes for *Seattle Weekly*.

DAVID CLEARY is a staff critic for *The New Music Connoisseur* and 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. His music appears on the Centaur and Vienna Modern Masters labels, and his bio may be found in many *Who's Who* books.

THOMAS GOSS is a San Francisco composer, writer, and pianist.

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.

JEFF DUNN is a freelance critic with a B.A. in music and a Ph.D. in Education. He serves on the board of directors for New Music Forum and is a Bay Area correspondent for 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

ALICE SHIELDS received her Bachelor's degree in music in 1965, the Master of Arts in music composition in 1967, and a Doctorate in Music Composition in 1975, studying with Vladimir Ussachevsky, Jack Beeson, Chou Wen-Chung and Otto Luening.

Comment

By the Numbers

Number of contemporary classical composers memorialized in the annual "The Lives They Lived" issue of *The New York Times Magazine* (January 7, 2001).

0

Amount paid by the San Francisco Opera to Andre Previn and Colin Graham for canceling the commission of *Silk*.

\$300,000

Total budget of the Metropolitan Opera, 2000-2001

\$193,000,000

Total budget of the Opera Company of Brooklyn, 2000-2001

\$110,000

Items

For nearly half a century, lovers of classical music in the Chicago area have been turning to WNIB-FM (97.1) for eclectic and sometimes obscure programming . . . even, on April Fools' Day, broadcasts of . . . John Cage[']s 4'33"]. . . . Occasionally the barking of one of three dogs that make the studio their home can be heard in the background This mix of fine music and down-home warmth has been the station's trademark since it began broadcasting in 1955. It is still run by the same couple who started it, Bill and Sonia Florian, who virtually live in the studio and have made the station an extension of their own quirky preferences and personalities. But the station's long run as a beacon of classical music in the Midwest is apparently ending. The Florians, both now approaching 70, have sold it for \$164 million to an out-of-town company that is expected to switch its format to pop music. "We do it with a lot of regret," Ms. Florian said When the Florians bought their station, the FM band was just beginning to fill up They paid \$8,000 for theirs. . . . Later they bought a smaller station . . . that allowed them to cover a larger area including southern Wisconsin. Both stations, which now simulcast to a total of about 350,000 listeners, are included in the sale package. . . .

Prices for stations began rising steadily after the late 1950's, but they took a sharp jump after Congress amended the Federal Telecommunications Act in 1996 to ease restrictions on the number of stations that a single company may own. The couple turned down several offers in recent years but were finally persuaded to sell when they received the \$165 million offer from Bonneville International Corporation of Salt Lake City, a company affiliated with the Mormon Church. Bonneville already owns 18 stations across the country, including three in Chicago. The price is one of the highest ever paid for a radio station in Chicago. . . . [T]he only commercial radio station broadcasting mainly classical music in Denver, KVOD, was recently sold. Its classical broadcasts ceased on December 31. Chicago is one of the few cities with two classical music stations. The second, WFMT-FM, is expected to continue with that format. "Deregulation revolutionized radio and made the value of stations really astronomical," said Kal Rudman, who publishes a group of radio industry trade journals. "Now, with companies able to buy as many stations as they want, it's becoming very difficult for niche music like classical to survive. This certainly isn't a good trend, because when any kind of music disappears from the airwaves, that's more or less the end of it. National spot advertisers want to target the age group from 25 to 54 and the classical audience is heavy with the over-55 group. It shows you again that this business is not about music. It's about advertising." Mrs. Florian said she and her husband planned to use most of their newfound wealth to establish a foundation that would provide money "for the arts, for animals and for preserving habitats."

Stephen Kinzer
The New York Times, 1/31/01

Chen [Yi] . . . has been handed to her gift wrapped this year by the American Academy of Arts and Letters, which awarded her the Charles Ives Living, a \$225,000 grant paid over three years with one stipulation: Give up your day job and work full time as a composer.

Dee Wedemeyer
The New York Times, 3/27/01

Opportunities

Barlow Prize for a sacred song cycle. ATT: Lynda Palma, Administrator, Barlow Endowment, Harris Fine Arts Center, Brigham Young University Provo, UT 84602, (801) 378-204.

Sounds New seeks works for flute, clarinet, bass/baritone singer and piano, in any combination, for its fifth concert in 2001 at the Berkeley Unitarian Church. SOUNDS NEW, 38 Sunset Drive, Kensington, CA 94707.

Uncommon Visions

**The Paul Dresher Ensemble Electro-Acoustic Band
with Joan Jeanrenaud, cellist**

Program

**Paul Dresher - Dark Blue Circumstance, 1982-86
for solo electric guitar and live digital looping**

**San Francisco Premiere
Anthony Davis - Blue Funk Into Darkness, 2000
for Cello and Electro-Acoustic Band,
Joan Jeanrenaud, cellist**

**World Premiere - Revised Version
John Luther Adams - The Light That Fills the World, 1999, revised 2001
for violin, bassoon, two electronic keyboards, two electronic percussion**

**Anthony Davis - A Walk Through the Shadow, 1983
transcribed for Electro-Acoustic Band by Mark Grey, 1999**

**San Francisco Premiere
Paul Dresher - Unequal Distemperament, 2000-01
for Cello and Electro-Acoustic Band
Joan Jeanrenaud, cellist**

Paul Hanson - Pull of the Gold Rope

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701 Mission St. @ Third, San Francisco**

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\$20 General; \$16 Student/Senior

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