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A Complex Interview with James Clarke

ANTON ROVNER

British composer James Clarke is associated with the New Complexity movement.

ROVNER: Professor Clarke, you are a composer of great merit and your works are frequently performed in Europe. As is known, you are a member of the trend in contemporary British music known as the New Complexity movement, which gained a reputation during the last few decades. Among these composers, Brian Ferneyhough is the most well-known. Could you tell us what constitutes the New Complexity movement? I am referring to your lecture presented at the *Europe-Asia Festival* in Kazan in April 2000. How is this trend of new music accepted in Britain and Europe?

CLARKE: I mentioned that the music of the majority of British composers is often performed in Great Britain and seldom in mainland Europe. Among these composers, I could name Peter Maxwell Davies and James MacMillan. However, there also exists a smaller group of composers, whose music is performed more often in Europe and seldom in Great Britain. These are, for the most part, the composers who make up the trend known as New Complexity. It includes Brian Ferneyhough, as well as James Dillon, Richard Barrett, and myself. Most of the composers in this group have an international but not a local reputation; their works are frequently performed in Europe and elsewhere in the major festivals by the most prominent contemporary music ensembles. However, it is very rarely that their music can be heard in Britain. Occasionally, maybe once every few years, the BBC Symphony Orchestra will program something by Ferneyhough or by Dillon, just to pretend that they are not biased, but this music is mostly ignored in Great Britain.

ROVNER: Do all of these composer live in Britain?

CLARKE: Most of them live in Britain, except for Ferneyhough, who has taught for many years in the USA, first at the University of San Diego in California, and now at Stanford University, and Barrett, who lives in Germany.

ROVNER: Could you describe the stylistic features of the New Complexity? What are some of the main principles of this style and how does your music fit into it?

CLARKE: The New Complexity style, as its name implies, aims to enrich the musical language in a maximal or inclusive manner, leading to a very complex type of music -- complex both in the immense technical requirements made of the performers, and in the extraordinarily large amount of musical material and information presented. The New Complexity style pays great attention to detail and precision; the performers are required to perform extremely intricate, refined instrumental material individually and produce the most complex polyphonic combinations together, all of which adds up to create a whole macrocosmos of sound. A large amount of information is presented within each short period of time, which is certainly not the case in more simple music. The music could sometimes be likened to a big city, where an enormous number of events take place simultaneously. It is like the human brain, with a complex combination of different thoughts and reactions happening. Generally speaking, I think that it is a mistake to try to over-simplify things. There are relatively few certainties in life and there are few in this music; there are always questions being asked, for which it is not always easy to give immediate answers.

An extreme opposite trend to this one would be the new religious composers like Arvo Pärt and the British composer John Tavener, who write very simple music, and who have perhaps one question, to which they feel they know the answer.

ROVNER: One could presume that such a complex type of music as that of the New Complexity trend must be enormously difficult for the performer to learn, by him- or herself and in ensemble. How would you describe the relationship of this music to the performer and the approach that a performer must take towards learning this extremely complex music, both in their own individual parts and in the overall ensemble?

CLARKE: In this type of music, the individual parts for the performers, as well as the problems of coordination for the overall ensemble, are of course frequently extremely difficult technically, requiring an immense amount of effort and will-power on the part of the musicians. The assumption of the composers of this trend is that the technique of each of the musical instruments is capable of being continually expanded and refined to a higher level of development. Presenting difficult music for the performer to learn encourages him or her to meet new musical challenges, but equally the expertise and virtuosity of the performers and their enthusiasm in creating new possibilities are a huge inspiration to us composers to write still more difficult music! It gives listeners new challenges to meet in order further to develop and expand their sense of aural perception, and to appreciate and enjoy the most complex types of musical thinking. This type of music is not meant to be listened to casually as some sort of light music, it is not "entertainment" (which literally means something to fill in time between other more important activities), but it requires the listener to apply his or her intellect and to expand his or her listening skills in order to learn to hear a multitude of musical materials travelling by and developing quickly, and in the end still to perceive this as part of a unified, coherent musical composition.

ROVNER: Does the music of the New Complexity presuppose any solid structural basis in the vein of serial music, with definite pre-set structural parameters, or is the musical material used much more freely and developed at will in a more freely textural manner?

CLARKE: The music labeled New Complexity includes a mixture of the intuitive and the structural, though it normally never becomes purely intuitive nor purely structural. It would be a misunderstanding to imagine that the style ignores the emotional and intuitive aspects of music, and much of this music has extremely strong expressive qualities. At the same time, it also utilizes solid structural means fundamentally, sometimes approaching a degree of rigor similar to, or indeed sometimes far greater than, that of serial, twelve-tone music. Unlike serial music where the parameters are pre-set from beginning to end, in this type of music the parameters are usually not so rigidly one-dimensional -- they could be firmly established in the first few bars of a composition only to be drastically altered and modified as the composition proceeds, or they could be changed to produce completely newly composed parameters, which might be applied to the next or another section of the composition. The "intuitive" element is often very strong in this music, since the parameters can be changed entirely during the course of the composition. However, the intuitive element is not given free rein to wander where it will: it is harnessed by the structural logic of the development of the composition, as well as by decisions about the parameters taken at the beginning of work on the composition.

This interconnection of opposite, conflicting, adjacent or divergent elements within the music can also lead to new and interesting large-scale formal structures. It is this curious mixture and interaction between strict structure and free intuition, which gives the music such an enriched sound-world and a vibrant, subtle, complex and dialectically charged musical language, having many more dimensions than a traditional serial composition with all of its parameters pre-set, or a freely written sonoristic composition, which merely uses sound-color as the basis of its musical language.

ROVNER: When did you become associated with the New Complexity movement? When did you meet Ferneyhough and the other composers connected with the trend?

CLARKE: When I was studying composition in Britain, there existed a gap between the greater part of the composers, who had a more moderate, traditional "new music" style and who were not so interested in the latest European avant-garde trends, and those few of us who were interested in more radical, experimental musical directions, who were keen to explore the musical trends of mainland Europe. Those of us who were the most internationally outward-looking composers were interested in the music of Finnissey and Ferneyhough, who at that time were making their first appearance on the musical scene and whom we perceived as important figures. Their musical outlook was international and different from that of the mainstream of British music. I met Finnissey when I was sixteen and still a school student, thanks to a friendship with a very fine composer, Nigel Osborne; I met Ferneyhough when I was in my early 20's and studying in Finland. (Note that I did not meet him in England!) Ferneyhough was and is a quite remarkable man, extremely intelligent and perceptive. I have learnt much from meetings with him, and his musical style was certainly an influence on me. He immediately taught me that everything, the brain, life itself, is a complex mixture of stimuli, impressions and ideas. Later on, I met James Dillon and Richard Barrett in the early 1980's. They are more or less my contemporaries (we were all born in the 1950's) and I greatly admire their work. I conducted the premiere of one of Dillon's works at that time.

ROVNER: As in the case with each composer who belongs to a particular trend, your own music does not merely reflect the overall aesthetics of a trend common to several different composers, but your music also has distinct, individual features, different from the music of your colleagues. How is your music similar to and different from the other composers of the New Complexity movement?

CLARKE: Sometimes I think that my music is not as complex as that of some of the other composers of this trend. It has roots in some other musical trends as well as in the New Complexity movement - as does the other composers' music, of course. Ferneyhough's music is the essence and the epitome of the New Complexity movement. Dillon's music is complex, but with some influence of the French composers. Barrett's music is complex with improvisational aspects. My music is sometimes complex and sometimes very clear. It particularly owes this quality to the influence of German composers such as Hans-Joachim Hespos, Matthias Spahlinger and Dieter Schnebel, amongst other influences.

ROVNER: As a frequent participant of the *Darmstadt Ferienkurse*, you must have strong musical and cultural ties to Germany and to German musicians. What is your relationship to the contemporary German composers? Does your music show the influence of contemporary German trends?

CLARKE: Though I have never studied or lived in Germany, I have a strong affinity with some contemporary German composers. I would say that my music, as well as having some of its roots in the New Complexity movement, is also strongly connected with some of the contemporary German musical ideas. Some of the composers whom I admire most are the German composers just mentioned, as well as Lachenmann and the Swiss composers Klaus Huber, Heinz Holliger, and Gerhard Zinsstag. I greatly admire their work. Amongst the most important composers for me I would also list Luigi Nono, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Iannis Xenakis, as well as Wagner, Schoenberg and Brahms.

ROVNER: It would be interesting for our readers to find out how you began your musical training. Where did you study composition in your youth?

CLARKE: I started studying composition entirely by myself with nothing much more than derision from my school teachers, but then I was very lucky to meet Nigel Osborne, who was very helpful in encouraging me and very informative. I studied at universities in Britain and then at the University of Tampere in Finland with the composer Usko Meriläinen. After that, I established contacts with European musicians and composers, and attended festivals in mainland Europe.

ROVNER: Lately, I have met you at a number of festivals which we have both attended, prior to this visit of yours to Moscow. Have you attended many contemporary music festivals and events in Russia and some of the other former Soviet republics?

CLARKE: During the last few years I have been invited to a number of festivals in Russia, Ukraine, and Moldova. Among these were the *Two Days and Two Nights Festival* in Odessa, the *Europe-Asia Festival* in Kazan, and two festivals in Chisinau, Moldova. One of the festivals which I attended in Moldova was the *ISCM World Music Days Festival*, when it was held in Romania and Moldova in 1999. In this festival my composition *Delirium* for six instruments was performed. Six months later, I was invited to the *Days of New Music Festival* in Moldova, in which an orchestral work, *Pascal, pensée 206*, and another ensemble work, *Delmenhorst*, were performed. I have also been invited three times to Azerbaijan -- the first time in November, 1999, to a festival of British Arts, Science and Culture, and the second and third times this year, when I was appointed Professor at the Baku Music Academy. I plan to travel two or three times a year to Baku for a month or so each time to teach there. I have been to Moscow once before (apart from a visit in 1974) -- in April 2000, when I was en route to the Kazan festival. I lectured at the Theremin Centre and the Composers' Union. During my present visit (in November 2001). I have lectured at the Conservatory and the Arditti Quartet, together with Catherine Milliken, have performed my *Oboe Quintet*. They also performed the same work in Ekaterinburg, from where I have just returned, and where I lectured at the Ekaterinburg Conservatory.

ROVNER: I attended the concert by the Arditti Quartet and Catherine Milliken on November 7, 2001, where there was the fine performance of your *Oboe Quintet* in the Small Hall of the Conservatory. During the same concert they also performed works by Edison Denisov, György Kurtág, Brian Ferneyhough, James Dillon and Iannis Xenakis. You have worked with the Arditti Quartet before.

CLARKE: Yes, I have been acquainted with the Arditti Quartet for many years. My *Oboe Quintet* was written for them in 1992, commissioned by the *Darmstadt Internationale Ferienkurse*.

ROVNER: And in 1992 it won the Kranichsteiner Musikpreis awarded by Darmstadt. You have many performances of your music in many countries in Europe. Could you say something about your performances and in what countries they take place?

CLARKE: My music has been performed in many European countries and throughout the world -- probably the most frequently in

Germany but also in the Nordic countries, France, and the Netherlands. There have been performances and broadcasts in Japan, Korea, the United States, and Argentina. I have often taken part in the *Darmstadt Ferienkurse*, as well as the *ISCM World Music Days Festival*, at which I have been lucky enough to have music performed many times in the various countries in which it takes place. In the past I frequently attended the *Gaudeamus Festival* in Amsterdam.

Concert Reviews

Arch Mehitabel

DAVID CLEARY

New England Conservatory Honors Orchestra in Schwartz's *Mehitabel's Serenade*. October 3, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA.

Elliott Schwartz's *Mehitabel's Serenade* (2000) is a welcome addition to the modest-sized canon of concerti for alto saxophone and orchestra. The solo part is a fine test of its player's mettle: figures that bellow, croon, and chatter nervously are found here, and special effects such as changes in spatial orientation vis-a-vis the ensemble and playing into an open piano lid are required. Orchestration is highly colorful and varied, containing a broad gamut of timbres that range from early 20th-century opulence to mid-century astringency; surprisingly, it sounds all of one piece, not scattered. Though serial techniques occur, the harmonic language consistently puts forth a grounded scalar feel. And despite projecting an episodic sense of self, the piece flows well. Kenneth Radnofsky gave the solo part excellently. Directed by Richard Hoenich, the New England Conservatory Honors Orchestra lent solid support.

Malcolm Peyton's Place

DAVID CLEARY

New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble. October 18, Jordan Hall, Boston, MA.

The most recent concert by the New England Conservatory Wind Ensemble primarily featured music that expressed itself in a highly charged, often personal way. While not all these selections ultimately proved successful, none failed for lack of reach or ambition.

Two Fantasies for Winds, Brass, and Percussion by Malcolm Peyton is perhaps this composer's most Expressionist utterance. Its densely active yet never turgid textures, weighty yet never depressive moods, unconventional yet clear formats, and dissonant yet scale-oriented sound world at times suggest Alban Berg's *Three Pieces for Orchestra Op. 6* and similar fare. This is no style study, however; Peyton's manner of speech compels without parroting anyone. And whether the feel is outgoing or inward, the music possesses an innate rhythmic energy that engages. The tripartite *Symphony in B-flat* simultaneously illustrates the best and worst features of Paul Hindemith's oeuvre. Here the scoring betrays both a Schumannesque density that grows wearisome over time and a block-like mode of expression that cries out for a soupçon of suppleness. But no one can fault the piece's learned craftiness and sincerity of intention—and as these works go, one can certainly find stodgier. In balance, it's one of his better large-ensemble listens.

Perusing the four movement titles ("Annonciation" and "Evangile," for two) of Henri Tomasi's mid-century brass and percussion choir entry *Fanfares Liturgiques* might lead the listener to expect a cataclysmic opus that recalls those of Messiaen. But the facile gestural universe employed, combined with a harmonic language redolent of Dukas, Ravel, and Holst's *Planets*, inadvertently conjures up visions of Wookies and Ewoks instead of apocalyptic religious images when heard today. Sadly, the piece lacks weight and sufficient personality to convey a compelling sense of self. If one truly wants the Armageddon listening experience, look no further than the percussion sextet *Persephassa* by Iannis Xenakis. This is music to end the world by: fierce, loud, and exciting, as visceral as an atomic explosion. It uses both conventional and exotic percussion tellingly, relying primarily on *Ionization*-influenced drums but also finding room for wood planks, prayer stones, small metal tubes, and even vaudeville-style siren whistles (humor has its place in Armageddon, apparently). And the work's gripping manner of speech and unusual sense of structure please greatly. Wonderful stuff indeed.

Performances were generally excellent. Charles Peltz's conducting not only proved clean and helpful for ensemble coordination but also contained a sensitive ear for color and voicing as well as careful awareness of phrasing and large architecture. Special kudos go to student percussionists William Klymus, Jeffrey Means, Eliseo Rael, Timur Rubinshteyn, David Victor, and Brian Vogel, whose stunning rendition of *Persephassa* took no prisoners whatsoever. And thanks are to be expressed for Peltz's programming, which demonstrated that composer egotism can result in distinctive, sometimes fascinating listening.

Composer's Place

DAVID CLEARY

The Composer's Series. October 23, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA. October

This concert could have easily been subtitled "what the New England Conservatory composition faculty's been up to lately." All but one piece presented this evening was written during 2001, and all save one were products of current or recently retired tonemeisters from this illustrious music college. The event proved a solid showcase for their efforts.

Boston Modern

DAVID CLEARY.

Boston Symphony Orchestra in Dutilleux's *The Shadows of Time* and Takemitsu's *Dreams/Window*. October 25, Symphony Hall, Boston. Through October 27.

Toru Takemitsu's *Dreams/Window* (1985) is an atmospheric, colorful, gorgeous single-movement delight that suggests an updating of Debussy's oeuvre. And it does so in many ways other than indulging in sumptuous, understated orchestral textures. One also hears rhythmic gestures that are washy yet sinuous, melodic ideas that charm without being athletic, and a structure that is loose yet nicely balanced. The harmonic language, while not triadic, has a certain vague tonal focus able to delineate progressions that unfold in the gentle manner of the great French Impressionist master. Only the unusual orchestral layout would appear strikingly foreign to turn-of-the-century Parisians: here, one finds the strings separated spatially into two equally balanced top-to-bottom choirs that flank each half of the stage, as well as a small Baroque-style concertino of flute, clarinet, and string quartet drawn from the orchestra's main body. But even here, restraint is the order of the day; there are no dramatic string stereo effects or starkly drawn solo-ensemble squabbles. The contrasts are invariably subtle. It's a fine piece to hear.

The Shadows of Time (1995-97), by Henri Dutilleux, is a challenging listen in the good sense of the word. The overall mood of this five-movement entry is uneasy and enigmatic, exploring an intriguing middle ground between the forced optimism of the finale to Mahler's *Seventh Symphony* and the bleak pessimism of the last movement to Tchaikovsky's "*Pathétique*" *Symphony*. For example, the scherzo-like second movement "Ariel maléfique," while fast and full of notes, is nervous almost to the point of being eerie. And the interlude following movement three puts forth energetic forcefulness without indulging in either histrionics or heroism. Forms here do not project any sort of tidy clarity -- a fact that somehow serves to bolster the piece's anxiousness rather than provide a source of listening irritation. Disquieting it all is, and worth judging for oneself.

The Boston Symphony Orchestra, directed with intelligence and sensitivity by Ozawa, gave both works excellently on Saturday. Special notice should go out not only to the Takemitsu solo sextet (flutist Elizabeth Ostling, clarinetist Bill Hudgins, violinists Malcolm Lowe and Haldan Martinson, violist Steven Ansell, cellist Martha Babcock) but also to the contrabass section and timpanist Everett Firth for particularly notable playing in exposed passages. The unison solo singing in the Dutilleux by the young foursome of Max Greenfield, Melina Harris, Melody Martin, and Ezra Pollard contained an able mix of innocence and concern.

Extensions (2000) for solo piano is arguably Robert Ceely's finest single-instrument foray. This colorful bravura essay contains felicitously idiomatic keyboard writing that makes the instrument sound great and outlines a balanced yet unconventional format that bristles with humor and drama. And the harmonic world here, while grounded in a rock-ribbed East Coast ethos, is softened sufficiently from avatars of the genre to demonstrate a confident sense of self. *Apparitions* for flute, piano, and tape might not have worked had any composer besides John Heiss attempted it. Here, style shifts that range from quasi-tonal early 20th-century leanings to spiky mid-century idioms to jazzy upper tertian sonorities all rear their heads. But Heiss harnesses this seemingly incongruous mix in support of both a thoughtful (if much varied) overall mood and a flute line that invariably proves felicitous and supple. And structural thinking pays off here as well: two of the ten interconnected sections of the work are backed by evocative pre-recorded materials (composed by John's son Frank Heiss) and temporally placed in such a way that they anchor the overall architecture much like the upright supports of a suspension bridge. Malcolm Peyton's masterful *String Quartet No. 2* excellently combines gestures oozing with a strong sense of profile with a remarkably sophisticated multi-level feel for form. One can experience this work as a series of seven substantial character pieces, a set of variations (each movement contains audible seeds of the "Prelude"), or a rondo (certain selections, such as the "Intermezzo" and "Soliloquies," show more obvious kinship to the opening movement than their neighbors). Peyton's harmonic language expertly takes scalar material from the relatively dissonant to the nearly triadic without sounding inconsistent—and owes little to Bartók or anyone else who has ever tried such a trick. Many composers have drawn inspiration from Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Michael Gandolfi is the most recent in this long line; his *Themes from a Midsummer Night* for thirteen players is a friendly, charming incidental music set. Much of its frankly triadic material is tune driven, though the melodies are frequently plucked from the surrounding intricate, often pattern-based, accompaniments like verdant limes being harvested from amid green leaves. These accompaniments reach their apotheosis in the penultimate movement, "Time Dream," which fetchingly fragments and overlays a large clutch of process-type snippets in countless permutations. Mark Kuss, the only non-Conservatory composer heard tonight, contributed a heartfelt, attractively penned *Elegy for String Quartet and Recorded Sound*. Frequent showcase appearances of what appears to be a traditional black spiritual tune prove a bit of a double edged sword, though; while lending a welcome rondo like underpinning to the work's otherwise loosely sonata derived format, they become a bit wearying after a while. But the piece's sincerity is undeniable, and Kuss's handling of its predominately triadic sonics shows good variety. And the aforementioned melody is surrounded by material that seems a natural outgrowth of the tune's gestural world.

Performances were excellent. The Ciompi Quartet gave the Kuss and Peyton splendidly, sporting fine ensemble interplay and a tone quality that was all of one piece regardless of mood or manner of bowing. Shen Wen executed Ceely's challenging keyboard opus with deceptive technical ease and a powerful yet sensitive sound. Backed tastefully by Eileen Hutchins on piano, flautist Vanessa Mulvey produced sinuous yet substantial timbres and demonstrated attentive melodic shaping in *Apparitions*. And Brian Vogel's conducting of the Gandolfi resulted in a product that was sweetly sculpted.

New Gallery Concert

DAVID CLEARY

New Gallery. October 25, Community Music Center, Boston, MA.

It can be great fun to critique the younger, lesser known performers and series that present new music. The New Gallery Concert Series is one such venture, and their most recent event contained much worth hearing.

Avoidance Tactics #1 (2001) by Curtis K. Hughes had been encountered in its piano/percussion duo version a few months prior. Hearing it again, this time in a more practical piano-and-tape incarnation, confirmed earlier impressions of it being a first-rate selection. The piece's excellent ear for form (an imaginative take on the idea of small rondo) and risky yet successful notion of sectional balance have been noted previously, but an audible kinship between materials employed within the two primary contrasting ideas imparted a second level of listening pleasure. And no one can miss the exhilarating intensity of gesture or gripping spikiness of harmony displayed. While preferring the live interaction inherent in the all-acoustic scoring, this listener has no quibbles with the variant presented this evening. Pianist (and concert series director) Sarah Bob's top-flight performance was an ideal combination of all-stops-out abandon and sure-footed technical control, though the playback assistant had the tape cranked up awfully loud, at times to the point of distortion. Violinist Biliana Voutchkova joined Bob in giving an able rendition of Arvo Pärt's *Fratres* (1980) that contained surprisingly little of the reserve one often associates with this composer—and resultantly made one hear this piece with fresh ears. Pärt's classically unadorned use of variation procedure demands music that is both spotless and evocative, and it's a pleasure to report that he stuffs this structure with perfectly turned sonic jewels. Like all this composer's best output, it's wonderful to experience.

The splendid duo *Odd Appetite* (Ha-Yang Kim, cello and Nathan Davis, percussion) illustrates the axiom "good things are worth waiting for." And good they were, displaying careful chamber music interaction, a well-tuned ear for ensemble balance, and technical dexterity to burn. The more successful of the two works they gave was Ken Ueno's *Contemplation on Little Big Muff* (2000), a gritty yet stylish essay obsessed with a frozen mid-range cello pitch and embellishments thereof. It manages to offset its slightly loose overall architectural sensibility with an appealingly dogged sense of determination and laser-beam vehemence of gesture that ultimately wins the day. *Fodder* (2001) by Dennis DeSantis nicely cobbles together a clutch of itchy pop-like fragments in repetitive if not exactly process-like fashion, judiciously introducing these snippets and then incorporating them into older material. Unfortunately, the piece simply stops rather than reaching a convincing conclusion.

What all the above had in common with Todd Almond's five vocal-piano selections, unabashed pop songs in a style that for the most part combines elements of Tin Pan Alley and folksy singer-songwriter, was anyone's guess. While their melodic material proves serviceable enough, it's the lyrics that supply the lion's share of the interest, often containing clever riffs and twists on expected prosody and a Christine Lavin like sauciness. The best was *Why Don't You Come Over* (2001), a clever musical-in-miniature with patter-song vocal delivery and boogie-based keyboard figures that presents an insecure woman's attempt to coax her object of desire over for a holiday tryst. Singer Pamela Bob came forth with a pleasant medium weight pop voice and effective stage presence. Almond's piano backing was capable and his light pop tenor vocals were okay. The audience devoured it all like hungry kittens at a bowl of cream.

Jenufa II

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

San Francisco Opera presents Janáček's *Jenufa*. November 19, War Memorial Opera House, San Francisco, CA. Through December 9. Reviewed December 9.

Subject matter in music theater doesn't have to be pretty. Leos Janacek's third opera *Jenufa* (1894-1904), his first to enter the repertory, has subject matter which is still pretty outré. A young woman falls in love with a man, gets pregnant by him, is abandoned, and bears his child. Her stepmother, in her desire to protect her daughter, and fearing the life her daughter's child might have, commits a perceived mercy killing to save both.

Jenufa is kitchen-sink melodrama, and a northern verismo piece alla *Cavalleria Rusticana* (1890), replete with the same kinds of jealousy and blood feuds. Janáček's music is entirely, uniquely his, and written on his own terms. His score takes and then transforms the gypsy-inflected folk music of his native Moravia (Falla was doing the same thing with his Spanish and gypsy zarzuelas). And his non-traditional but perfectly appropriate orchestration, which is nowhere thick, succeeds. Though the writing for strings isn't lush, it's completely expressive when necessary, and Janacek's percussive, clear scoring works wonders. It was a joy to have Czech conductor Jiri Kout in the pit, who, though less famous than Janáček specialist-editor Charles Mackerras, is a more emotionally precise and instinctively-motivated conductor.

It certainly helped that the entire cast seemed inspired by Francesca Zambello's intelligent, coherently dramatic direction. No one made a gesture that wasn't clearly motivated by text and music, and all actions contributed to a solidly thought-out whole. The drama in Act I was played on Allison Chitty's almost perilously raked stage, which recalled the stylized yet naturalistic staging Nijinska gave Stravinsky's *Les Noces* (1914-18). The subsequent two acts played out in a big room of Jenufa's house, which was lit by ace designer Jennifer Tipton in powerfully suggestive psychological terms.

Soprano Patricia Racette's heroine fit perfectly into this scheme, and she was appropriately radiant, and trusting of the two men she's caught between -- the seduce-and-run Steva (tenor Jay Hunter Morris), and the devoted yet impulsive Laca (lyric-dramatic tenor Richard Berkeley Steele, here in a perfectly convincing rug), while legendary mezzo Helga Dernesch provided solid and solidly sustained low tones in her role as Grandmother Buryjovka. Everyone else was perfectly cast, and each delivered far more than credible realizations of their parts -- from the piece-of-work mayor's wife in a garish purple dress and a big hat (everyone else is defiantly matter-of-fact, near monochrome), sung by mezzo Victoria Livengood; to the foreman at the mill, played by 2001 Adler fellow baritone Philip Horst.

The singing actress who made the biggest impression was British soprano Kathryn Harries, in her company debut as Jenufa's stepmother, Kostelnicka Buryja, a role she's played many times. This is a nutso character and Harries played her to the hilt; she also conveyed her character's vulnerabilities -- the misplaced faith/conviction. Hers, like Maria Callas's or Lorraine Hunt-Lieberson's, is not a pretty voice, but like them she invests everything she does with dramatic conviction, and, more importantly, honesty. We go the opera for theatrical revelation, and Harries provided that in spades.

Kout's orchestra responded with pinpoint attacks and releases (the stark and surprising coloristic effects were thrilling), and made much of the several ostinati accelerandi in the score. This is direct, excitable, and spontaneous-sounding music, which paradoxically enough is the fruit of Janáček's long and careful study of his region's folk sources. The music is conversational yet ritualistic, and therefore tailor-made for the stage. Janáček is one of the greats. "Each spoken word has a life attached to it," he wrote. That certainly seemed true here.

Ottorino Respighi shares the bright hues of Berio, but is a melodist par excellence (almost to a fault in some modernists' ears). Program annotator James M. Keller makes a case for a maverick as an over-the-top assimiliist of early modern trends, and Thomas put the case on display convincingly. On this program, it was easy to hear *Roman Festivals* (1929) not as a timeworn war-horse, but as the vibrant work it was and is.

Mavericks, Italian-Style

MARK ALBURGER

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in *Italian Mavericks*. Berio's *Epiphanies*, Scelsi's *I presagi* (*Premonitions*) and Respighi's *Roman Festivals*. December 5, Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through December 8.

Mavericks come in all shapes and sizes, nationalities and ages -- at least Michael Tilson Thomas thinks so. And he made a pretty good case for renegades across the waters and across the ages in his *Italian Mavericks* program with the San Francisco Symphony on December 5 at Davies Hall.

The only performance misfire was the opening "Sonata on 'Sancta Maria'" from *Vespers of the Blessed Virgin* (1610), by Claudio Monteverdi. Certainly this great early baroque composer's quixotic work was appropriate for the program -- it radically breaks up a traditional chant in strange, magical, and humorous ways; and certainly the reading had its joys -- the San Francisco Girls Chorus voices were wonderfully ethereal; but this piece needs more life, accuracy, and early-music acuity than was heard here.

The Luciano Berio *Epiphanies* (1993) lived up to its name as a series of revelations large and small. Despite the recent compositional date, many of the divine messages were dated, based as they were on one of the composer's earlier works dating from 1959-65. But Thomas and soprano soloist Lauren Flannigan kept things fresh in a series of boffo readings. The orchestra came into its own cinematically in the raging fifth movement, while Flannigan kept expert pace in moanings, emotional outpourings, soulful high notes, dramatic recitations, and stylistic contrasts -- grippingly presented in no less than five languages. She was utterly present and carried listeners to the human and natural worlds found in text-settings of Marcel Proust, Antonio Machado, James Joyce, Eduardo Sangineti, Claude Simon, and Bertolt Brecht.

As Berio's writers were concerned with the natural, the cryptic Giacinto Scelsi seemed caught up in the unnatural. In his otherworldly *I presagi* (*Premonitions*, 1958), he presents a group of brass (counting a tenor sax among 'em) and percussion growling and warbling through uncertain landscapes -- improvisational grand ruins of decaying musical consciousness. It's all engaging in a tone-color sort of way. While Scelsi is, with Berio, a colorist, his palette is darker and more crabbed; and neither composer, of course, has much use for traditional melody.

Record Reviews

Seeing Through the Music

MARK ALBURGER

Muhai Richard Abrams. *The Visibility of Thought [Duet for Contrabass and Piano. Duet for Violin and Piano. Baritone Voice and String Quartet. Piano Duet No. 1. The Visibility of Thought. Piano Improvisation]*. Muhai Richard Abrams, Thomas Buckner, Philip Bush, Jon Deak, Ralph Farris, Mark Feldman, Joseph Kubera, Dorothy Lawson, Todd Reynolds, Mary Rowell. Mutable.

Big Black. *Ethnic Fusion [China Lake. Pavan. Jigs. Afro-Cuban Lullaby. Trinidad]*. Big Black, tumbas and bongos; Anthony Weaton, guitar. Mutable.

Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton. *Jump the Circle, Jump the Line*. Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton. Mutable.

Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner. *8 O'Clock: Two Improvisations*. Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner. Mutable.

Muhai Richard Abrams is in good company on his Mutable release *The Visibility of Thought*. For his compelling compositions, he has assembled a sterling cast of collaborators, including the rich-toned Jon Deak and commanding Joseph Kubera in *Duet for Contrabass and Piano*. Kubera joins the soulful Mark Feldman in *Duet for Violin and Piano*, where blues bass lines break in on rumbling ruminations.

The beautiful voice of Thomas Buckner is backed by ETHEL (violinists Todd Reynolds and Mary Rowell, violist Ralph Farris, and cellist Dorothy Lawson) in the more-colorfully-constructed-than-named *Baritone Voice and String Quartet*. Buckner's vocalises are set off by solo and ensemble string ramblings that emphasize the individuality of lines, building into a fever pitch finale.

An uncompromising *Piano Duet No. 1* from Kubera and Philip Bush, has at times a kind of severe rhythmic wackiness reminiscent of Nancarrow, but it ultimately evolves into a work of headstrong virtuosic focus. Abrams saves his own impressive performance contributions for last -- first on computer, synthesizer, and sequencer in the neo-Varèsian title work and then on a more traditional console for a meditative, hip, and transporting *Piano Improvisation*, that has elements of Cage and Crumb and Kagel and Stockhausen and barrel house piano, all of which suggests it's very much itself -- and wonderful! Whew! The pianist's voice may be heard humming in the mix. By far the longest work on the album, there's nowhere to go but pound away to a resounding conclusion.

Another revealing addition to the Mutable Music catalogue is Big Black's *Ethnic Fusion*, a re-release of Buckner's previous LP label, 1750 Arch. The fusion notion is apt in classical guitarist Anthony Weaton's tasteful and hip collisions with the energetic percussionist Big Black. Much of the music connects not only generally with the classical and African, but specifically with the Spanish and Caribbean. Weaton offers a sedate *Pavan*, answered aggressively and lyrically by Afro-Cuban responses in percussive hands and vocals. The third-track *Jigs* pays homage to Joaquin Rodrigo. The haunting final boogie, *Trinidad*, sails out in style.

Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton join improvisational forces in a third intriguing Mutable release *Jump the Circle, Jump the Line*. Buckner notes that

Thirty-five years ago when I began to explore solo and group improvisation the idea was to make improvisations that sounded like compositions. I've evolved away from this idea gradually to the point where I want my improvisations, both solo and group, to sound (and be) unpredictable -- to take me, my fellow improvisers and the audience to places we haven't been before.

For this piece Tom Hamilton and I decided to carry independence as far as we can. Each part is developed independently, and the goal is not to modify our independent ideas in the act of putting them together. The "wild card" in this practice is that live electronic processing of the voice, for which Tom has developed a system that guarantees unpredictability while integrating the voice into the electronic soundscape. The result is an organic whole with independent but integrally connected parts.

Buckner's like an opera singer gone wild, lost in a maze of Hamilton's bewitching and bewildering electronics. Buckner is the Mad King searching for his eight songs, the fearsome growler of the apocalypse, the fearless innovator, and capable of lovely lyricism to boot. Boing. Grrr. Hmm. Eee. Ahh. Oh. Ooh. Drowning in a sea of gentle dissonance near an echo-chamber electrocution. Yabba-Diabolical. Fire! Have an ice cream! Noh!

As varied as it all is, there's a feeling of sustain throughout, no doubt much due to the bed of electronics. With the all-acoustic sound sources used by Buckner and wind player Roscoe Mitchell in yet a fourth release *8 O'Clock: Two Improvisations*, the length of a breath and an acoustic sustain come much to the fore, as well as a sense of whimsy. There is more silence, but just as much excellence and sense of a creative, improvisational meeting of masters. Mitchell's ever-surprising sax and flute, Buckner's multiphonics and multiethnic allusions, and the diverting use of small percussion instruments are all welcome sounds here.

German, War, AIDS, Yizkor

MARK ALBURGER

James Adler. *Memento Mori: An AIDS Requiem*. [Requiem aeternum, Now I Am Dead, Requiem aeternam, Dies irae, Mors stupebit, Judex ergo, Yizkor, The Wounded, Lacrymosa, Narrative, Sanctus, Pie Jesu, Lamb of God, Lux aeterna, The Park Flickers, Survival]. AmorArtis Chorale and Orchestra, conducted by Johannes Somary. Albany.

Thomas Beveridge. *Yizkor Requiem* [Reader's Kaddish, Requiem Aeternam, Psalm 23, Remember!, Hostias, Sanctification, El Malei Rachamim, Lux Aeterna, Justorum Animae, Mourner's Kaddish and Lord's Prayer]. Choral Arts Society and Orchestra of Washington, conducted by Norman Scribner. Naxos.

There's a growing tradition of heterogeneous liturgical music, exemplified by such works as Britten's *War Requiem* and Bernstein's *Mass*, where traditions and tropes intermingle to intriguing effects. James Adler's *Memento Mori: An AIDS Requiem* and Thomas Beveridge's *Yizkor Requiem* may be numbered among these. In the Adler there are not only additions but substitutions, or stand-ins, from Hebrew and English texts, in the latter case of Quentin Crisp, Philip Justin Smith, Denise Stokes, and Bill Weaver.

Memento is for soloists (two sopranos, mezzo-soprano, tenor, and baritone), male chorus, and a full-sounding chamber orchestra of flute (piccolo / alto flute), oboe, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, horn, trombone, piano, organ, harp, percussion, four violins, viola, cello, and bass. Adler's handling of the opening "Requiem aeternam" ("Eternal Rest") is appropriately solemn and beautiful, with a stolid bass pedal and lamentoso flourishes from the winds. The insertion of Crisp's "Now I Am Dead" pretty much works due to the composer's striking lyricism.

The "Dies irae" ("Day of Wrath") continues to inspire inspired music, and Adler is no exception here with his bouncing instruments and menacing male vocals. There's a suggestion of the original Latin sequence ricocheting among the sonorous organ chords and ragged bursts of brass. The multi-stanza'd "Dies" has been subdivided ad libitum over the centuries. Here, Adler resists a discreet setting of "Tuba mirum" (so brilliantly set by, among others, Mozart, Berlioz, Verdi, Britten, and Stravinsky) and instead goes for the "Mors stupebit" ("Death and Nature"), which many composers simply treat as the second stanza of "Tuba." Adler's choices are distinct enough that they welcome comparison.

Mozart	Berlioz	Verdi	Strav	Lloyd-Webber	Adler
Dies	Dies	Dies	Dies	Dies	Dies
Tuba		Tuba	Tuba		
					Mors
		Liber			Judex
	Quid	Quid			
Rex	Rex	Rex	Rex	Rex	Rex
Recor		Recor		Recor	(Yizkor)
	Quarens				
		Ingemis		Ingemis	(Wound)
Confu		Confu			
Lacry	Lacry	Lacry	Lacry		Lacry
				Pie	(Sanctus) Pie

Like the "Tuba" calling forth peals of brass, the "Rex tremendae" ("Majestic King") invites a certain theatrical pomposity, which again Adler avoids. Our composer replaces the Latin remembrance ("Recordare") with the Hebrew ("Yizkor"), and seems particularly contented in his eastern chamber allusions for solo baritone, chorus, flute, piano, and double bass (the latter two sounding together produce a bassy pseudo harp at times). A subsequent switch puts Crisp's "The Wounded" in the slot for "Ingemisco" ("I groan"), with a mezzo middle-of-the-road sentimentality.

If there's little edginess in the music, there's plenty in the added text from Smith's unfinished play "Chosen Family" -- "condom catheter," "filled with blood." As for the choice of narrative recitation for this narrative text, and the narrative style chosen for this performance: both seem problematic. The end of the altered plagal cadence provides relief.

The "Sanctus" combines Latin, English, and Hebrew. Some may enjoy it. Lacking an "Offertorium," the piece continues with a "Pie Jesu," misplaced for no apparent reason ("Sanctus" is the next major division of the Requiem Mass after the multi-part "Dies"; "Pie" is the final line of the "Dies") and concludes with a translation of the "Agnus Dei" ("Lamb of God"). Wow. "Lux aeterna" ("Eternal Light") and interpolated texts (Stokes's AIDS-consciousness-raising "The Park Flickers" and Weaver's "Survival") conclude; the second interpolation tacks on a Latin Lazarus text and the end of the "Responsory," which recapitulates the opening lines in a moving setting.

Among composers in the above comparison, Adler is closest to Benjamin Britten and Andrew Lloyd Webber. Like them, he succeeds in his Latin settings; his English at times is also quite effective, but can trespass into the campy, cornball, and maudlin (also sometimes true in the Britten, so again he's in good company!).

Beveridge's *Yizkor* shares with Adler's *AIDS* the use of the same three languages and two religious traditions. Yet there are numerous dichotomies. Adler often writes gentle lyricism dedicated to the multitudes who have suffered with AIDS. Beveridge produces demonstrative neoromanticism on the death of two people -- his parents. Adler asks "What's a nice Jewish boy doing by setting a catholic and Catholic liturgy?" (certainly he's among friends with Bernstein and Golijov). Beveridge notes that his *Yizkor* is in part for his father, "who studied for the Episcopal priesthood and spent 25 years as Professor of Speech and Music at Virginia Seminary." While Adler writes an altered Requiem, but a Requiem nonetheless, the Beveridge is more a melding than an alteration. The idea of the Yizkor Service precedes that of Requiem Mass in the title.

Beveridge writes for soprano, mezzo-soprano, tenor, mixed chorus, and a small full orchestra of two flutes, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, two trumpets, horn, percussion, timpani, and strings. A "Reader's Kaddish" gets right down to business with brass fanfares, impassioned tenor cantor outpourings (in Hebrew), timpani strokes, choral chants (in English, providing on the spot translations), and a 3+3+2 lilt.

So much for the need of supertitles here, and in the segueing dark and impassioned "Requiem Aeternum," which mixes it up in all three languages. This "trope as you go" approach, which Bernstein touched upon more stridently in his *Mass*, evolves into a gentle-then-energetic mixed meter music that refuses to stay put in a mere 3+3+2 or 3+3+2+2. The evolution suggests a spin on a "Te Deum" chant, complete with organum-like parallel perfect-interval harmony. Wonderful.

Beveridge abandons the "Dies irae" entirely. Like Fauré, he has no use for a "day of wrath" in his cosmology, certainly not when memorializing his parents -- so he appropriately turns his musical theatrics elsewhere. He also turns, as Brahms did entirely in *A German Requiem*, to other comforting Biblical passages, here to "Psalm 23," which he sets in English, with East/West allusions (like a *Fiddler on the Roof* wedding with a bit of Holst's "Mars" "in the valley of the shadow of death").

"Remember!" remembers something from Glass in its arpeggios, but more from other directions. After a subdued a capella "Hostias," the call-and-response "Sanctification" boogies along into a burly "Sanctus" section. The final "Hosanna" passage evolves from unlikely solemnity into ecstasy, concluding with a Haydn-esque grand pause and final smack. "El Malei Rachamim" ("Lord of Compassion") includes chorale passages. "Lux Aeterna," "Justorum Animae" ("The Souls of the Righteous"), and "Mourner's Kaddish and Lord's Prayer" build to a transfigured conclusion. No one beats tenor Alberto Mizrahi in soulful outbursts. Amen. Like Adler, Beveridge cannot resist a little narrative. Oh well. Like Bernstein and countless others have said, "The mass is ended. Go in peace." Fade to flute.

Bottje Rights

MARK ALBURGER

Will Gay Bottje. *Sounds from the West Shore* [Capriccio for Two Trumpets, Strings, and Percussion. *Sounds from the West Shore. Concerto for Two Flutes and Small Orchestra. Opener. Concerto for Horn and Small Orchestra*]. New Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rossen Milanov. Capstone.

William Gay Bottje has a bit of Stravinsky and Shostakovich, a bit of academia and saucy jazz, and a lot of experience in such works as *Capriccio for Two Trumpets, Strings, and Percussion*. This and other music collected on Capstone's *Sounds from the West Shore* are from the composer's later years after an exemplary educational career (graduate of Juilliard and Eastman; studies with Gianini, Hanson, and Boulanger; professorships at the Universities of Mississippi and Southern Illinois).

The *West Shore* in question is that of Lake Michigan, where the composer resides on a dune (one assumes in a house, and wonders of the Biblical and science-fiction connections). The title work is atmospheric, geographic, and downright meteorological. The weather shifts in all sorts of ways from distant breezes provided by the Bulgarian New Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rossen Milanov. The snow in the "Quiet Winter" second movement sounds like Mahler's goats in the *Symphony No. 7* -- little random jingles that permeate the texture. The concluding "Ebullient Spring" is filled with energetic schizoscherzic grotesqueries.

Since both the composer and his wife are flutists, it seems appropriate that Bottje has produced a fine *Concerto for Two Flutes and Small Orchestra*, particularly in the second movement passages with harp. The conclusion has a nice balance of the measured and jaunty, including sustained chorale-like suggestions and Shostakovichian double-eighth-quarter rhythms. By rights he should be a hornist as well with the related command he brings to *Concerto for Horn and Small Orchestra*. Befitting its brassy soloist however, this work has a more demonstrative quality and bursts forth with a bit of Strauss's *Til Eulenspiegel* near its conclusion. Ha ha.

Opener is one of those short overtures that tries its darnedest to impress by setting off all the Bartókian bells and American whistles of color and rhythm. It almost closes the album. OK, fine. Why not?

Bringing Basics

MARK ALBURGER

Allen Brings. *Music for Keyboard Instruments* [Five Pieces. *Tre esercizi. Sonatine. Six Praeludia. Concerto da Camera No. 4*]. Genevieve Chinn, Bradley Brookshire, Allen Brings, Stephen Tharp. Capstone.

Despite the complexities often offered, there is something in Western music that suggests getting down to the basics when composing keyboard music. There are no color supplements or distractions (depending on the point of view). It's all about pitch and rhythm, line and harmony and form. So we're happy to report that Allen Brings brings the right stuff to the table when that table is full of keys -- be they of the piano, harpsichord, or organ.

The composer characterizes *Five Pieces* (1980) as pianistically "serious divertimenti," and he's got that paradox right. In the related piano *Sonatine* (1972), he worries that there "have been many Kalkbrenners for every Chopin," but, hey! perhaps another paradox is that the Kalkbrenners write pretty well, too...

Medium remains a powerful notion, however, because the coloristic tendencies of harpsichord and organ bring us completely into other worlds. The environment is a skeletal one in the harpsichordic *Tre esercizi* (1986, the title is after D. Scarlatti) -- with its second-movement grim-reaper steady bass flanked by active, truculent outer exercises -- but warmed and punched up quite a bit by string ensemble in *Concerto da Camera No. 4* with its baroque-and-Bartók overtones. The soundscape turns another corner in the austere, grim, flamboyant, and liturgical *Six Praeludia* for organ.

The performers -- pianists Genevieve Chinn and Brings, harpsichordist Bradley Brookshire, organist Stephen Tharp, and a string ensemble under the composer's direction -- carry off all with aplomb.

Brooklyn Sax Maniacs

MARK ALBURGER

The Brooklyn Sax Quartet. *The Way of the Saxophone* [David Bindman. *Climate Conditions. Gadzo* (based on Ewe music). *Pier Sketch*. Fred Ho. *Hipster Harvey*. Duke Ellington. *In a Sentimental Mood*. Fats Waller. *Jitterbug Waltz* (the latter two selections in arrangements by Bindman)]. David Bindman, Fred Ho, Sam Furnace, Chris Jones. Innova.

Cheap shot the title of this review, but it's true. You know you're in for trouble when you see Fred Ho in the credits. And, true to form, he and they deliver. But this album is certainly much the product of Ho's co-founder of the Brooklyn Sax Quartet, David Bindman, who gets credit for many of the compositions and arrangements herein.

Because of early familiarity with the sax quartet music of Terry Riley, this reviewer can't help but hear these works in that light. But certainly a quartet of matching instruments suggests contemporary classical chamber music as easily as progressive jazz, and all the works on *The Way of the Saxophone* (Innova) can be heard from a variety of perspectives.

Bindman's steamy *Climate Conditions* (talk about neohot jazz!) and Ho's hip *Hipster Harvey* both jive a line between the composed and improvisational to exciting effects -- the riffs are kicky and solid, the solos frantic and thoughtful, the ensemble energetic and tight. And even a bit sentimental and silly...

Marvelous is *Gadzo* music, credited to the Ewe people of Ghana and Bindman. It shines in glorious West-African minimalist rhythms and boogies like Brooklyn (alas, I was endeavoring to write this entire review free of any form of the word "boogie," and have now failed twice-over. Probably same with minimalist...). Oh my, how it shrieks -- happy, sad, mad. How 'bout a little Mexican hat dance somewhere in the middle to confuse things? Pretty exhausting.

Electronic Alaskan Portals

MARK ALBURGER

Matthew Burtner. *Portals of Distortion: Music for Saxophones, Computers, and Stones* [*Portals of Distortion. Fern. Split Voices. Mists. Incantation S4. Glass Phase*]. Innova.

Ah the wonders of electronics! Alaskan composer Matthew Burtner can come in from the lonely cold to the warmth of multiples in a high-tech studio. In *Portals of Distortion: Music for Saxophones, Computers, and Stones* (Innova), Burtner becomes nine saxophonists (the title piece), "stone trio" (*Mists*), and computer-electronics (*Fern* and *Glass Phase*). *Split Voice* and *Incantation S4* split the difference as music for solo saxophone and computer-generated tape. He works with sustains, overtones, difference tones, resonances, repetitive structures, and feedback. The music is as monolithic as an icefield and as rich as a complex urban environment.

When he sustains in the saxes, he recalls La Monte Young, when he trills he evokes Terry Riley's *Poppy No Good and His Phantom Band*, but in a very large arena overlain with all manner of unsettling material. *Fern* is about as far away from the gully as can be imagined -- a powerful ambient work to keep one alert through the night. The calming ping pong balls of the stone trio in *Mists* serve as antidote. And despite the potential minimalist pun, *Glass Phase* takes its pains on the panes, not the composer, piping to an atmospheric conclusion.

California Pavilion of Dreaming

MARK ALBURGER

Michael Byron. *Music of Nights Without Moon or Pearl* [*Music of Nights Without Moon or Pearl. Invisible "Seeds" for James Tenney. Entrances*]. Cal Arts New Century Players, David Rosenboom. Cold Blue.

There really is a quintessentially Californian aesthetic. You can't substitute any other geographic place names in America in the below and get the same effect.

Hearing this piece tonight takes me back to the orange groves of Piru, when we were all young and dreamy. Or to some beach near Oxnard, waves "flopping" in And to those soft, slow improvs we used to do with Peter Garland and others in the big, empty, unfinished concert hall at CalArts. Or drinking Mai Tais at Tip's with Harold Budd and Jim Tenney.

Thus spake Richard Teitelbaum, evidently about Michael Byron's *Music of Nights Without Moon or Pearl*. Belying the record label, Cold Blue, this is a warm sunny of strings and keyboards -- the CalArts New Century Players (violinists Mark Menzies and Cindy Moussas, violist Ray Tischer, cellist Guenevere Measham, contrabassist Barry Newton, pianists Bryan Pezzone and Vicki Ray, and synthesizerist Brent Crayon [!], conducted by David Rosenboom.

The title selection is all isolated antiphonal quick piano strums, pizzicato strings, and synthesizer sustains. Perfect for orange groves and canyons and beaches and mai tais. Sound quality is as lush as the late afternoon sun. *Invisible "Seeds" for James Tenney* turns to sustained strings and quixotic punch chords for the pianos. Seeds for thought.

Entrances is more like *California Nightmarin'*. David Rosenboom crashes about diabolically in a realization on multiple pianos. Its minimalism gone to madness.

Master of the Stone Cold Soup

DAVID CLEARY

Evan Chambers. *Cold Water Dry Stone: New Music with Traditional Roots*. Albany.

The vernacular idioms of numerous countries intersect in the recent oeuvre of Evan Chambers: Albania in the title track (1998; sextet of violin, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, piano, percussion), Scotland in *Three Tannahill Songs* (1999; soprano and piano), Ireland in *The Fire Hose Reel* (1998; violin/piano duo), and rural America in the first and third movements of *Come Down Heavy!* (1994; threesome of saxophone, violin, and piano). Unique in this regard is the saxophone/piano/percussion trio *Crossroads Songs* (1999), which blends influences from all the above and more, including hints of early 20th-century neoclassicism and Copland-style Americana.

These are not mindless recyclings of folk song, however. Even *Come Down Heavy!*, whose movements sport titles of basis tunes such as "Steel Drivin' Man" and "I Gave My Love a Cherry," can most correctly be understood as imaginative deconstructions of these elderly chestnuts. Throughout, Chambers spins out music of his own that smoothly incorporates fragments of folk-like material as well as other rustic touches such as glissandi and microtones. Modal-based tonality is retained, but in an unusual way; rather than delineating a rock-solid sense of functional harmony, one hears dense overlaps of line and complex textures suggestive of heterophony that retain scalar roots and impart an amorphous harmonic feel. Surprisingly, this fuzzy sense of progression suggests vague parallels to the internal workings of process idioms while containing none of the sonic fingerprints of that bare-boned style. Structure is loose yet somehow satisfying, maintaining a good feel for balance both within and between movements. Best of all, this music sounds genuine and deeply rooted, respectful of the past yet forging a cogent personal style; it never comes across as phony or precious the way some classical composers' reinterpretations of rock stylings do. Warm, dreamlike moods are often evoked, but always underpinned with a certain perceivable energy. Other selections, notably *Fire House Reel* and the finale of *Come Down Heavy!*, display an irresistible slash-and-burn rhythmic drive. In sum, this is gutsy, evocative stuff that speaks with a compellingly original voice -- a pleasure to experience.

Performances by the sextet Quorum are excellent throughout. Singer Jennifer Goltz is a bit less convincing, at times betraying a rather uncentered sense of pitch particularly in fast figures and high tessitura passages. Sound quality is odd, though normally of good quality; Chambers writes in the CD booklet that the recording attempts to "achieve a heightened presence for the instruments while maintaining a natural sounding representation of the music" rather than capturing an auditorium-oriented aural experience. This is all fine enough, though a few selections, notably the first and third of the *Tannahill Songs*, come across a bit stuffy and distant sonically despite attempts at micro-management. Production values are excellent. This unusual release is strongly recommended.

Cogan and Escot Gavotte

DAVID CLEARY

Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot. *Polyutterances*. Music and Arts.

Robert Cogan and Pozzi Escot, husband and wife as well as members of the New England Conservatory composition faculty, present music on this release that shows a far-reaching, ably-spoken take on the experimental ethos (both American and European) of the 1950's and '60's.

Escot's works span an especially broad range of chronology and approach. The newest, *Your Kindred Valors Bend (Trio No. 2 -- 1989)*, is scored for the same vocal-based threesome encountered in Schubert's *Shepherd on the Rock*. The sound world, while dissonant and employing some special effects, is warm, contemplative, and highly alluring without being devoid of energy and profile; ideas are cleanly delineated and cogently put forth. The chamber orchestra piece *Christos* (No. 2 from *Trilogy for the Six Million--1963*) could not provide more of a sonic contrast. It manages to discover an unusual middle ground between the music of Varèse and Feldman, placing the former's percussion-heavy scoring and raw method of speech into a block-like means of presenting material, liberally interlarded with silences, in which the inattentive listener may find little sense of continuity. But this is a surprisingly compelling entry, challenging its audience to go beyond the work's flinty, static gestures to discover a larger means of organizing and pacing its seemingly disparate events. The least attractive listen is the *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra or Chamber Orchestra* (1982). Escot here shows a good feel for expressing contrasting moods within a sound mass approach (notably in the contemplative central movement) but fills the companion movements with heavy, undifferentiated linear material that ultimately serves to submerge the piano soloist.

As in much of Cogan's oeuvre, one encounters open-ended pieces on this release -- perpetually fluid entities consisting of events that can be rearranged in any order or have material added/subtracted from them as the composer sees fit. While they negate the long-cherished concept of the musical work as chiseled-in-marble masterpiece, this is not to say that the two pieces heard here are ineffective works of art. Far from it, in fact. Both *Polyutterances* (1977) for two solo voices and the *String Quartet "America Is"* (1992) are crammed to the rafters with dramatic, well-crafted material that exhibits a convincing sonic integrity despite utilizing a strongly varied gamut of special effects and gestural figures. The *Quartet*, for example, manages to express the notion of pointillism in ways that recall Penderecki and Carter without seeming incongruous. And while *Polyutterances* can trace lineage back to Luciano Berio's voice entries from the 1960's (note the fractured text setting and presence of stuttering extended techniques), the howling, swooping vocal writing that predominates this version imparts a compelling and unique sound to the proceedings. Perhaps because of its more prescribed boundaries (both movements' beginnings, middles, and endings are fixed), the *Quartet* comes off as the stronger of the two works structurally.

Performances vary in quality, but the best are splendid. One can most enthusiastically cite sopranos Joan Heller and Patrice Pastore and the curiously named New Events String Quartet as exemplars. Pianist Randall Hodgkinson (when he is not covered up) and the New England Conservatory Chamber Orchestra (Tamara Brooks, conductor) also supply noteworthy presentations. *Kindred Valors* suffers from weak clarinet playing that betrays insecurity with tremolos and soft high notes. Sound quality on the Cogan pieces is excellent, rather thin and dry on the Escot selections. *Christos*, with its wide extremes of loud and soft, suffers most here sonically, some of the quietest events being barely audible. All appear to be live performances (applause is heard at the end of each selection), though your reviewer detects what might be a subtle splice or two in the first movement of the Cogan *Quartet*. Despite its flaws, there's much worthwhile listening to be found on this release.

Socratic Saxophone

DAVID CLEARY

Neil Leonard. *Timaeus*. Cedar Hill.

On *Timaeus* (Cedar Hill), Berklee College faculty composer Neil Leonard presents a sizeable sampling of his music for soloist (usually a saxophonist) and computer-generated electronic playback (usually of the interactive kind). The harmonic language and melodic figuration employed in the solo parts strongly betray Leonard's jazz background: this is music modal in orientation and loaded with free jazz style riffs. Often, the electronic undercurrent serves as a complex rhythm section, at times highly suggestive of drum timbres or trap-set gestures. But like all generalizations, one finds exceptions. For example, *Sacred Bath I* (1993) shows its live performer striking bells and tooting on an ocarina, unrolling the music from these instruments onto a taped backing heavy with sounds that suggest running water. And *Timaeus I* (1999) liberally festoons its Lydian Chromatic Concept saxophone line with pitch bends and microtones.

Most of these selections are brief, in the three to seven minute range, which proves very much to their advantage. Formal considerations are often extremely loose, as one might expect from music that sounds (and probably is) improvised -- and as any listener to Schoenberg's tiny Opus 19 piano pieces will tell you, structural considerations can be intuitive or lacking and still not be especially bothersome in short duration entries.

The longer works on this disc, such as *Legacy: San Lazaro* (1989) and *M87* (1996) tend to sew together frozen planes of activity without imbuing them with a clear pitch underpinning, resultantly making them seem a bit too sizeable and wandering. And many of these pieces simply stop rather than end convincingly. Best in this regard is one of the disc's two strongest selections, *Caxionics* (1994), which sets up its conclusion well and neatly outlines a narrative curve shape that expertly masks the boundaries of its tripartite form. The other highlight, *Inner Path* (1993), is for soprano saxophone alone, spinning its fetchingly rhapsodic melody from a group of intervals selected using Golden Mean operations.

In general, Leonard demonstrates a well developed sense of character contrast from piece to piece: nervous aggression in *Passage* (1996), contemplation with overtones of the ominous in *Sacred Bath III* (1993), a seemingly incongruous mix of the mournful and sparkling in *Timaeus II* (1999), Latin derived cheekiness in *Sacred Bath II* (1993). Despite this, your reviewer feels the release is a bit short on variety, in part because the pieces exhibit a sameness of scoring, similarity of harmonic language, and generally slow unfolding of idea. Devotees of the downtown New York school of composing will probably be especially sympathetic to this disc.

Leonard performs all instruments heard and does so excellently. His saxophone playing shows a felicitous feel for interaction with the computer-generated material, projects a solidly substantial tone, and demonstrates able finger work. Sound quality in *Caxionics* is weak, very stuffy with a tendency to swallow up softer electronic events, but fine elsewhere.

Song of the Bass Nightingale

DAVID CLEARY

Susan Nigro. *The Bass Nightingale*. GM.

Being a virtuoso contrabassoon soloist might seem a daft idea on the order of raising racing sloths or operating a Central Park pushcart specializing in the sale of fried grasshoppers. But Susan Nigro is turning all the usual notions composers have of this behemoth bassoon topsy-turvy. For a number of years now, Nigro has been commissioning and recording pieces for her instrument of choice, and this recent CD is the latest in a convincing line of such releases.

The big work featured here is Gunther Schuller's *Concerto for Contrabassoon* (1978), billed in the liner notes as being the first ever written for this instrument. Assuming that to be the case, it sets the bar very high indeed for those composers following in his footprints, being a most effective showcase for its soloist. Long breathed lyric lines, intricate passagework, and grumbling, clownish gestures are encountered in abundance. The CD booklet states that Schuller worked hard to ensure that the contrabassoon part would be prominent, not covered up or coming across as misplaced accompaniment figures, and in this he is eminently successful. The sound world here, surprisingly more scalar than in much of his concurrent oeuvre, may have been deliberately chosen in order to facilitate soloist clarity -- thereby avoiding dense overtone clangor that can cloak this easily-covered instrument. Structurally, the piece is sturdy and well balanced; Schuller cleverly offsets the weighty and outsized ternary opening movement by combining the third movement and finale (interweaving their material in the process) into an entity that provides an effective counterweight. It's a fine piece.

The music of Ervin Schulhoff, one of a number of worthy talents murdered in Hitler's concentration camps, has been enjoying a well-deserved renaissance over the past couple of decades. His solo contrabassoon work *Bass Nightingale* (1922) is delightful frothy fun,

full of flippant charm. It's in three tiny but nicely paced movements: a curtain raiser both yearning and unctuous, a bellowing and elbow-swinging centerpiece, and a jovial, goofy fugal closer in which the illusion of two separate voices is neatly conjured up. The name of Burrill Phillips was unknown to your reviewer before hearing this release. Judging from his *Concert Piece* (1940), originally for bassoon and strings and arranged here for contrabassoon, he appears to have been a workaday, Hindemith-influenced composer analogous to Alec Wilder or Paul Creston. The selection itself is sturdy and ably put together, if a little square and short on distinction.

Nigro's playing in these three works is simply superb, possessing a huge, full tone (especially lovely in expressive passages), startlingly nimble finger technique, and spot-on intonation. Despite the fact that the Phillips and Schuller call for large ensemble backing, they are presented here with piano accompaniment; Randall Hodgkinson (incorrectly given the first name "Russell" in the liner notes) and Leslie Amper provide pianism both supportive and sensitive. The liner notes should also credit these pianists as appearing on certain *pieces*, not *tracks*, as some of the pieces here are spread over multiple tracks. Sound quality and editing are excellent. Assuming one doesn't mind hearing piano reductions instead of original orchestrations, this release is definitely recommended.

Calendar

February 1

Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA. Also February 2.

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony and Chorus in Ives's *Symphony No. 4*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through February 3.

Composer Jazz Portraits: James Black, with Eric Reed. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

David Shimoni. Swarthmore College, PA.

February 2

Crumb's *Ancient Voices of Children* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* (in the Schoenberg arrangement) performed by Orchestra 2001. Kimmel Center, Philadelphia, PA. Repeated February 3, Lang Concert Hall, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore.

February 3

John Cage's *James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp, Erik Satie: An Alphabet*, with Merce Cunningham and Mikel Rouse. Zellerbach Hall, University of California, Berkeley, CA.

February 4

Guy Livingston in *60 Seconds for Piano*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

February 6

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Schoenberg's *Five Pieces for Orchestra* and Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through February 9.

February 9

Chinese New Year Celebration, with members of the San Francisco Symphony, in a program including music from Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Bang on a Can All-Stars. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

February 12

Composer Portraits: Sofia Gubaidulina, with Continuum. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

February 15

John Adams's 55th birthday. Berkeley, CA.

WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne in Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 11*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

New York Philharmonic in the premiere of Tan Dun's *Twelve Births*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY. Through February 19.

February 16

Xenakis: Complete Works for Piano. Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

February 17

North/South Consonance presents Beeson's *Practice in the Art of Elocution* and Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

February 19

Piano on the Edge. Miller Theatre, New York, NY.

February 21

Terry Riley and Bach, with the New Century Chamber Orchestra, including Riley's *Remember This O Mind*. St. John's Presbyterian Church, Berkeley, CA. Through February 24, Osher Marin Jewish Community Center, San Rafael, CA.

Nevada County Composers' Co-operative. Winery, Nevada City, CA.

February 22

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in the premiere of Mackey's *Pedal Tones*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through February 24.

The Beata Moon Ensemble. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

February 24

St. Petersburg Philharmonic in Prokofiev's *Piano Concerto No. 2* and Shostakovich's *Symphony No. 5*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

February 27

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony, with Renée Fleming, in Strauss's *Four Last Songs* and the conductor's *Songs on Texts of Emily Dickinson*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through February 3.

February 28

Composer Portraits: Julia Wolfe, with Ensemble Sospeso. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

Chronicle

December 1

Stanford Symphony in Chen Yi's *Violin Concerto* and Mahler's *Symphony No. 5*. Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University, CA.

Wind Music of Elliott Schwartz, in honor of the composer's 65th year, presented by the Harvard University Wind Ensemble. *Chiaroscuro*, *Zebra Variations*, *Scatter*, *Celebration*, and the premiere of *Hall of Mirrors*. Lowell Hall, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

December 2

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center in Carter's *Remembering Mr. Ives* and *Figment*, Kernis's *Trio in Red*, and Marsalis's *MEEELAAAN*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

Kurt Erickson's *O Magnum Mysterium* performed by San Francisco Girls Chorus. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Italian and Pan-American Mavericks Symposium. Herbst Theatre, San Francisco, CA.

Aurelio de la Vega: Complete Piano Music. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

December 3

Juilliard Symphony in Barber's *Piano Concerto*. Avery Fisher Hall, New York, NY.

San Francisco Contemporary Players in Lindroth's *Light*, Higdon's *rapid fire*, Levine's *Glimpses*, Campion's *Domus Aurea*, and Dzubay's *Dancesing in a Green Bay*. Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, CA. Repeated December 10, LA County Museum of Art, Los Angeles.

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA.

December 5

Friends and Enemies of Modern Music in music of Stephanía de Kenessey. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in *Italian Mavericks*. Berio's *Epiphanies*, Scelsi's *I presagi (Premonitions)* and Respighi's *Roman Festivals*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through December 8.

December 6

Alex Hills. Campbell Recital Hall, Stanford University, CA.

December 8

Derriere Guard Winter Salon, with Michael Dellaira. Studio 1/2/FW, New York, NY.

Music of James Dillon. Miller Theatre, New York, NY.

December 9

Tenor Paul Groves sings Ives's "The Greatest Man." Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY. "When Mr. Groves began 'The Greatest Man' . . . it felt like an electric shock. The corset of seriousness suddenly fell away, and the singer came alive" [Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, 12/13/01].

Metropolitan Opera Orchestra Percussionists in Steve Reich's *Clapping Music* and *Drumming*. LaGuardia High School, New York, NY.

December 10

Ultimate Romantics, including Webern's *Six Bagatelles* and *Pieces for Cello and Piano*. Green Room, Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

December 11

Death of Copland's librettist for *The Tender Land*, Erik Johns, of smoke inhalation in a fire at his home, at 74. East Fishkill, NY. "When he was 19 in 1946 he met Copland at a New Year's Eve party in New York, and the two began a relationship. Mr. Johns remained in Los Angeles with Copland visiting him while working on film scores until 1948, when Mr. Johns moved into Copland's house in Sneden's Landing, NY. For the next several years Mr. Johns was Copland's secretary. In 1952 Copland and Mr. Johns began work on an opera based on *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, the James Agee and Walker Evans book of photographs of Depression-era sharecroppers. Mr. Johns devised the story of a poor farming family in the Midwest changed by the arrival of two drifters, and he wrote the libretto under the pseudonym Horace Everett. The work was commissioned as a television opera by NBC but was later rejected by the network. The New York City Opera performed it at its premiere at City Center on April 1, 1954, in a short two-act version. Over the next year Copland and Mr. Johns expanded it into a longer, three-act version. . . . Copland and Mr. Johns parted in 1954 but remained close, and Mr. Johns served as an adviser to the board of Copland House, a composer's retreat in Copland's residence in Peekskill, NY. Copland died in 1990" [The New York Times, 12/18/01].

Performance Ideas: Myth and the Contemporary, with Meredith Monk and Mary Lucier. Location One, New York, NY.

Marimbist Mika Yoshida in music of Steve Reich. Weill Recital Hall, New York, NY.

December 12

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in *Pan-American Mavericks*. Brant's *Ice Field*, Varèse's *Déserts*, Piazzolla's *Tangazo*, and Villa-Lobos's *Choros No. 10*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through December 15. "The San Francisco Symphony's Mavericks series could never be fully certified without the appearance of Henry Brant, so he showed up in Davies Hall here on Saturday night ready to cause more trouble. Eighty-eight years old, exceedingly small but very much on his feet,

his white tie and tails accessorized by a poker dealer's visor, Mr. Brant banged away at the organ as Michael Tilson Thomas and the orchestra brought a stunned and happy audience *Ice Field*, written for San Francisco and scored for just about everything you could think of. . . . A lot of [his music] has been meant for the outdoors, with various war parities stationed at far-flung positions and calling over various distances to one another. The Brant aesthetic, when brought under a roof, shrinks to a form of encirclement. Here the audience, Custer-like, receives incoming fire from every direction. From one balcony bass drums jar the bones, from another a jazz drum set bristles with energy. The double reeds operate from behind the stage. Brass players lay on heavy fire from their positions. *Ice Field* lies somewhere between precision planning and controlled chaos, a mixture of smart bombs and dumb ones. Things happen regularly but never in quite the same way at every performance. Mr. Brant's organ chords and manic passagework seem to cue each new onslaught, and an audience more familiar with classical-music order and civility offered little resistance. . . . According to the dictionary, the first maverick was the American pioneer who did not brand his calves; later mavericks were those who simply wandered away from the crowd. . . . Varèse's *Déserts* is an uncompromising study of raw nerves and dense conflict, elements not unknown to anyone. . . . [I]f its taped elements seem obsolete next to present-day weaponry, this is still a powerful piece: clear-eyed, clear-headed, if lacking Mr. Brant's cheerfulness. . . . [E]ven handing the principal solos to a solo horn [in *Tangazo*] does not obscure the irresistible sensuousness and slender athleticism of the Piazzolla style. The Villa-Lobos *Choros No. 10* is supported by a small core chorus chanting vibrating, almost violent rhythmic patterns. A larger chorus softens the textures as the orchestra assembles elements of Brazilian and local Indian music. The composer embraces the sentimental tune and the street-mob dancing without a hint of censorship" [Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*, 12/18/01].

Old Testament in the New World, including Davidovsky's *Biblical Songs* and Copland's *Vitebsk*. Merkin Hall, New York, NY

All-Stravinsky program. Manhattan School of Music, New York, NY. "Stravinsky wrote everything: dirges and ditties, songs and dances, choruses and fanfares, an arrangement of *The Star-Spangled Banner* and several choice moments from his ballets. . . . More than 40 instrumentalists and singers took part in the succession of short works and movements that made up the bulk of the program. . . . Great music from the still remembered past was presented with enjoyment, eagerness and generosity [The New York Times].

December 14

NOW Music Festival. Mark Alburger's "The Fire" from *The Bald Soprano* (with Tisha Page), Alexis Alrich's "Pine" from *California Trees*, Anne Baldwin's *911* (with Patti Deuter), David Bamberger's *Talking Bird*, Aaron Bennett's *C*, the Bottomfeeders' *Subway*, Beau Casey's *Azimuth*, George Cremaschi's *Omaggio a Lohman*, the Decoursey-Harkins-Sammon *Trouble in Paradise*, Rocco Di Pietro's *Tears of Eros*, Mark Francis's *Four Pieces*, the Goodheart-Allen-Powell Trio's *Hand Count* and *Fragment*, Thomas Goss's "Strange Imagination" from *The Other Angel*, Robert Hall's "Lullaby" from *Sacagewea*, John Hersch's "Unit 7, No. 6" from *Proliferations*, JJ Hollingsworth's *Penny Candy*, Brent Lerner's *Music for Gu Zheng*, James Livingston's *Brief Notes on Borges*, Charles Nichols's *Strata 2*, Lisa Scola Prosek's *Ballate Non Pagate (Dances not paid for)*, Ches Smith's *Working Class Fashions (for the Unemployed)*, and Erling Wolf's *Devotion* and *Truth*. 400 Missouri Street, San Francisco, CA.

Kimmel Center and Verizon Hall, the new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, opens with no performances by the orchestra. The program includes with Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, Andre Watts in his piano transcription of Bernstein's *Candide Overture*, plus Paul Anka, Denyce Graves, Frederica von Stade, and Elton John (the latter being paid \$2,000,000 for his participation). Philadelphia, PA. "When [Eugene] Ormandy was the music director [of the Philadelphia Orchestra], no one complained about the acoustics [T]he [A]cademy[']s acoustics are fine" [Walter Annenberg, *The New York Times*, 12/9/01]. "[T]he orchestra is to retain ownership of the academy. . . . The orchestra plans to use it only for the annual ball celebrating the anniversary of the building, a highlight of the Philadelphia social season" [James R. Oestreich, *The New York Times*, 12/5/01]. "Rafael Vinoly's Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts, the new home of the Philadelphia Orchestra, is precise, luminous architecture for lovers of rich, cultivated sound. . . . Philadelphia now breaks ranks with cities that have regressed toward infinite infantilism in the quest to revitalize their downtowns. Mr. Vinoly's architecture is not nostalgic for ye olde city life. It's not ironic about it, and it's not cute. Apart from spatial amplitude, it makes few concessions to luxury or glamour. The exterior, particularly, may strike some concertgoers as harsh. It is only inside the building that the Kimmel Center reveals the elegance of its concept. . . . The Kimmel's exterior is brown brick and stucco, with a ceremonial entrance framed by walls of charcoal gray granite and glass. These elevations show integrity and intelligence. They are also dreary to look at. This is not the first time Mr. Vinoly has rubbed his integrity in the public's face. It is becoming a bore. All kinds of reasonable excuses can be made for it. I am tired of making them. . . . Yes, a good case can be made that the contrast between exterior rawness and interior refinement reiterates the classical precedent of relating architecture to landscape. In Philadelphia, moreover, there is the added precedent offered by the Academy of Music: a lushly gilded Italian opera house set within an old brown Civil War barn. Echoes of another brown building, the city's old Union League Club, an *Addams Family* charmer a bit farther up Broad Street, might also be noted. One could even say that the starkness is Quaker. I suspect that Mr. Vinoly's exterior will age well. At night, with the interior lighted up, the place will look swell. But I find its passive aggression hard to take. . . . The Academy will now be the main venue for the city's opera and dance companies. . . . [Kimmel H]all's unusual shape, which has been likened to that of a cello, is designed as an instrument in its own right. . . . Brown brick and all, Philadelphia has achieved a moral as well as an aesthetic feat" [Herbert Muschamp, *The New York Times*, 12/13/01]. "Vinoly has created an awesome yet welcoming public space covered by a huge, vaulted glass roof that houses the 2,500-seat Verizon Hall. The center includes the 650-seat Perelman Theater (still unfinished) The upper tiers [of Verizon Hall] extend in back of the stage, surrounding the orchestra. . . . Watts's piano sound was thin and distant, and the voices of Ms. Graves and Ms. Von Stade lacked bloom and presence. I assumed and hoped that the problem was the huge riggings of lights suspended from the ceiling that [John] had brought along" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 12/17/01].

December 15

San Francisco Youth Orchestra in Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*. Davies Symphony Hall, San Francisco, CA. Repeated December 16.

Unsilent Night, a boombox parade led by Phil Kline. Washington Square Park, New York, NY.

Philadelphia Orchestra performs for the first time at Verizon Hall, in a program including Aaron Jay Kernis's *Color Wheel*. Philadelphia, PA. "[T]he sound [of the hall during rehearsal] was, if anything, overly bright and reverberant. . . . [D]uring the concert with people in all the seats the acoustics seemed much better. The local media had already reported that Wolfgang Sawallisch . . . and many of the players were thrilled with the new home. Finally, they said, they can hear one another from the stage, which was a problem at the Academy of Music. . . . [Kernis] describes *Color Wheel* as a 15-minute concerto for orchestra, and it's a whirlwind of spiraling riffs, pulsating *Rite of Spring* poundings and a moody Gershwinesque middle section with an ambling electric bass" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 12/17/01].

December 16

Prokofiev Marathon, all nine of the piano sonatas in a four-and-one-half-hour presentation. Miller Theatre, New York, NY. "Prokofiev appears to have become the poor relation among the great 20th-century Russian composers. The music world spends plenty of time examining and agonizing over the life and music of Shostakovich, and Stravinsky looms over the lot despite the relatively small percentage of his music -- virtually all of it early -- that has become part of the standard repertory. . . . Prokofiev seems to be lingering at the corner of the table, present but not making a fuss. It isn't as if his music has fallen off the map. The favorites . . . turn up most seasons . . . No doubt casual listeners can identify more works by Prokofiev than by Stravinsky and Shostakovich combined. Surely Prokofiev deserves a share of the analytical spotlight this year, the 110th anniversary of his birth. (He died in 1953.)" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 12/18/01].

December 18

S.E.M. Ensemble in Christian Wolff's *Ordinary Matter* and Morton Feldman's *The Turfan Fragments*. Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, NY.

December 26

Peter Schickele / P.D.Q. Bach. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "The music . . . is bad in a clever, funny way, which is to say that on its own terms, it's great. . . . Schickele is unable to resist a musical pun -- for example, juxtaposing famous melodies that happen to be based on similar harmonic progressions. . . . As always, there were groaners among the inspired moments. There were some of each . . . in his discussion of plans for a series of television shows and films meant to sneakily introduce the masses to classical music, among them updated adaptations of *The Wizard of Oz* (as *La Clemenza di Toto*) and *Das Rheingold* (as *Singing in the Rhine*) as well as several police and organized crime shows (*NYPDQ*, *Beverly Sills Cop* and *The Altos*). . . . Schickele . . . played the first prelude from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* at the piano as members of the orchestra added melodies that happened to fit the work's arpeggiated chords, including themes from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, Borodin's *Prince Igor*, Strauss's *Also Sprach Zarathustra* and a Joplin rag. A similar trick propelled *Swing Sweet, Low Chariot*, which combined 'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,' 'Danny Boy' and 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.' David Dusing, a tenor, sang the work, with some help on a final high note from Michele Eaton, as soprano. . . . His Songs From Shakespeare set some famous Shakespearean speeches as blues tunes and country songs. . . . *Oedipus Tex* . . . leaves more than a few musical bodies in its wake. The choral prologue, Tragedy, parodies Philip Glass's operatic style nicely, and J.S. Bach's *Jesu, Joy of Man's*

Desiring is fitted with an overlay of 'I've Been Working on the Railroad'" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 12/28/01].

Death of Edward [Olin Davenport] Downes (b. 8/12/11, West Roxbury, MA), at 90. New York, NY. "[He was a] musicologist, lecturer, professor and critic, best known as the longtime host of the *Texaco Opera Quiz* heard during the live Metropolitan Opera radio broadcasts The opera quiz . . . recently began its 61st season. Mr. Downes was its quizmaster from 1958 to 1996. His mellow baritone speaking voice, laconic manner and avuncular wit made him a beloved radio personality The questions that tend to get selected for presentation to the panel fall into two categories, Mr. Downes explained in 1996 to a reporter for *The New York Times*. 'There are the 'Who stabbed who in the third act?' questions,' he said. 'And there are the so-called discussion questions, where everyone can jump in, which make for better radio talk.' The latter type solicit opinions and recollections, not facts, Mr. Downes said, like: What ending to an opera plot would you like to rewrite? Or, What would you give Wotan or Tosca for a Christmas present? . . . His father, Olin Downes, who later became the chief music critic of *The New York Times*, was then a critic at *The Boston Post*. Mr. Downes began attending operas with his father and by age 9 was an ardent Wagnerite with a passion for *Siegfried*. Some might assume that this daunting opera (a five-hour evening) would be too much for a child; young Edward found it a great adventure story. 'When you think about it -- a magical sword, killing the dragon, throwing Poppa aside, climbing fiery mountains and waking the girl with a kiss -- what better stuff could there be?' . . . Without having completed high school . . . [he] attended Columbia University and the Manhattan School of Music. . . . and took courses at universities in Paris and Germany, but he never earned an undergraduate degree. 'I couldn't see why I needed one,' he said. Eventually, in 1958, he received a Ph.D. in musicology from Harvard University. He was 47. . . . He went on to a peripatetic career in academia, teaching at Wellesley College, the Longy School of Music and the University of Minnesota. When his father died in 1955, Mr. Downes became a music critic at *The Times*, staying for two years until taking the opera quiz job, which offered the same pay for just 20 weeks of work. From 1966 to 1983 he taught music history at Queens College. For 18 years, starting in 1960, he also wrote program notes for the New York Philharmonic. . . . An extensive tribute to Mr. Downes, with excerpts from his broadcasts and anecdotes from friends, is being prepared for a presentation on what is now called the ChevronTexaco Opera Quiz" [Anthony Tommasini, *The New York Times*, 12/28/01].

December 29

A brief tribute to Edward Downes is read during a Metropolitan Opera broadcast of Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*. New York, NY

Comment

By the Numbers

Number of articles on contemporary classical music in The New Yorker, June-December 2001 (24 issues)

1

Number of articles on contemporary classical music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, November-December 2001 (9 issues)

3

Total number of articles on contemporary classical music in the San Francisco Chronicle's Sunday Datebook, April-December 2001 (34 issues)

10

Communication

Dear Editor,

I was appalled by the naivete of Terry Riley's open letter concerning the attack on the World Trade Center. Does he think love would have defeated Hitler? Does he think the prisoners in the Gulag should have felt love for Lenin or Stalin? Does he not realize that doing nothing would only have encouraged more terrorism? Does he not see now that rather than destroying Afghanistan, we are rescuing it from the grip of the totalitarian Taliban, and that the people there are thrilled to be free once again? As George Orwell said during World War II, referring to the claim that England was fascist, so that there was no difference between England and Germany, some ideas are so absurd that only an intellectual would believe them. No doubt there are those who will see Riley's ideas as visionary; I see them as just plain silly, when they are not dangerous.

Yours sincerely,

Steven R. Gerber
New York, NY

Opportunities

Composition

Amherst College wishes to hire a composer with expertise in electro-acoustic music as well as in composition for traditional instruments and voices. The candidate must also have a strong interest in tonal and post-tonal music theory and in performance. Duties will include establishing new courses entailing electro-acoustic and mixed media composition, teaching composition across a broad range, and teaching music theory. Funds will be available for electro-acoustic equipment for both research and teaching. The Music Department would also find attractive an interest in non-Western or popular music. It is important that the candidate appreciate the teaching of music within a liberal arts context. This position is a tenure-track professorship at the assistant professor level. Teaching experience within the assistant professor rank is welcomed. The appointment will begin July 1, 2002; teaching will begin in September, 2002. Application deadline: Until filled. Please send a cover letter, curriculum vitae, recordings, scores (where appropriate), and three letters of recommendation (either together with other materials or separately) to: Amherst College, Composer Search, Jenny Kallick, Chair, Department of Music, Amherst, MA 01002.

Bowdoin College -- Composer, Assistant Professor or Instructor, tenure-track position. Teaching duties include composition in a wide variety of styles for undergraduate majors and non-majors, music theory (especially twentieth-century), and music literature classes for a general liberal arts audience. Teaching load is two courses per semester in a two-semester year. Expertise in a non-Western tradition or a folk tradition of North America or Europe highly desirable. Completed Ph.D. or D.M.A. preferred. Start Date: Fall 2002. Application deadline: 12/10/2001 or until filled. Materials, including three letters of recommendation and evidence of teaching effectiveness should be sent to: Bowdoin College, Mary K. Hunter, Department of Music, 9200 College Station, Brunswick, ME 04011.

Kansas State University -- Position: Music Theory, Composition and Electronic Music Studio. Duties: Teach courses in music theory, composition and electronic music studio techniques; participate in program development, remain active as a composer, advise and recruit students. Additional duties may be assigned by the Department Chair. Tenure-track position. Qualifications: Completed doctorate required. Successful studio and classroom teaching and evidence of significant performances of recent compositions required. Rank: Asst. Professor. Start Date: 6 August, 2002. Application deadline: 11/26/2001 or until filled. Application Procedure: Send a letter of interest, curriculum vitae, three letters of recommendation, and a cassette tape or CD of a recent performance of at least one significant, representative composition to: Kansas State University, Tod Kerstetter, Chair, Theory/Composition Search Committee, Department of Music-109 McCain, Manhattan, KS 66506-4702. Phone: (785) 532-3831

Metropolitan State University -- Music Theory and Composition Faculty, Full-time Tenure-Track Position. Responsibilities: Provide creative leadership in developing a strong music theory program and in integrating music technology into the curriculum. Qualifications: Required: A doctorate in music theory/composition or a masters in theory/composition with significant recognition as a composer at the local level or beyond. College teaching experience in the areas of music theory and composition. Start Date: August 2002. Application deadline: 10/29/2001 or until filled. Metropolitan State College, Larry Worster, Chair, Department of Music, PO Box 173362, Denver, CO 80217-3362.

Western Illinois University -- Tenure-track Music Theory/Composition Position; Full-time tenure-track position. Primary responsibilities: Teaching lower-division music theory including aural skills. Additional assignments in upper-division theory and composition courses. Doctorate required in composition or theory and composition. Evidence of experience in music theory teaching and commitment to teaching music theory. Rank: Asst. Professor. Start Date: August 19, 2002. Application deadline: 1/2/2002 or until filled. Applicants should submit letter of application, resume, and three current letters of recommendation to: Western Illinois University, James Caldwell, Chair, Music Theory/Composition Search Committee, Department of Music, 1 University Circle, Macomb, IL 61455-1390.

Musicology

Arizona State University -- Music History - Full-time, tenure-track positions. Teach music history all levels, MA thesis advisement. Required: Ph.D. in musicology, demonstrated teaching and scholarly excellence appropriate to rank. Desired: Preference given to specialist in Baroque or Classical or 20th Century music. Rank: Assoc./Asst. Professor. Salary: Commensurate with qualifications and experience. Start Date: August 16, 2002. Application deadline: Until filled. Send application letter, CV, three current letters of recommendation, scholarly work sample(s); evidence of successful teaching by Nov. 1 and 15th of each month thereafter until filled to: Arizona State University, Robert Oldani, Chair, Musicology Search, School of Music, Box 870405, Tempe, AZ 85287-0405.

Radford University -- Position: Music History and Literature; and Music Theory. Tenure-track position. Description: Teach undergraduate and graduate courses in music history and literature; and music theory. Other duties may include teaching of other courses for which qualified and/or responsibilities related to coordination of graduate studies. Qualifications: Musicologist. Doctorate required. Applicant must have college teaching experience in music history and literature and music theory. A record of appropriate research and professional activities required. Rank: Asst. Professor. Salary: Commensurate with qualifications and experience. Start Date: August 2002. Application deadline: Until filled. Application: Undergraduate and graduate transcripts, three recent recommendations will be required of all finalists. Send letter of application and resume immediately. Address applications to: Radford University, Eugene C. Fellin, Chairman, Department of Music, Box 6968, Radford, VA 24142.

University of California, Davis -- Musicology position, tenure track. Research interests in American music and/or music of the twentieth century are particularly desired. Candidates with the ability to contribute to the newly established Media Arts/TechnoCultural Studies Center would be desirable. The appointee will be expected to teach musicological courses at the graduate and undergraduate levels including general education courses, to direct dissertations, and to accept committee and advising responsibilities. Candidates should have demonstrated superior intellectual attainment in their research and possess a strong commitment to teaching. Candidates must have a Ph.D. or equivalent by July 1, 2002. Rank: Asst. Professor. Application deadline: 12/10/2001 or until filled. Applications should consist of a letter of application, curriculum vitae with full bibliographical citations, and the names, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of at least three references. At this time, please do not send letters of reference, programs, recordings, manuscripts, or offprints. Applications should be addressed to: Univ of California-Davis, Christopher Reynolds, Chair, Search Committee, Department of Music, One Shields Avenue, Davis, CA 95616. Phone: (530) 752-5537 Fax: (530) 752-0983 Email: spolley@ucdavis.edu

University of California, Los Angeles -- Tenure-track or tenured position in Musicology, all ranks considered, Assistant Professor preferred. Open to any specialization that will complement existing faculty interests and enhance the department's distinctive strengths. Completed or nearly completed Ph.D. and evidence of success in teaching and innovative scholarship required. Review of applications will begin on 10/29/01; position begins 7/1/02, pending budgetary approval. Send letter of application, curriculum vitae, and 3 letters of recommendation to: Univ of California-Los Angeles, Robert Walser, Chair, Musicology Department, 2445 Schoenberg Hall, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1623.

University of California, San Diego -- Music Scholar - Interdisciplinary Music Studies. The Department of Music invites applications for a tenure-track position in music scholarship/musicology. The Department is open to manifold modes of inquiry, including theories of globalization, post-colonialism, race, gender, sexuality, hybridity, and transnational networks of musical practice. The successful candidate will be expected to teach undergraduate historical survey courses placing Western music in a global context, play an integral role in the department's interdisciplinary graduate program in Critical Studies and Experimental Practices in Music, and participate in university service. A completed or nearly completed Ph.D. is required, as well as proven potential for distinguished scholarship and effective teaching at graduate and undergraduate levels. Candidates who demonstrate a significant commitment to interdisciplinary music studies, and whose qualifications complement and expand our multidisciplinary approaches to music, will be given strongest consideration. Rank: Asst. Professor. Application deadline: 2/11/2002 or until filled. To apply, send a letter of application, detailed resume, writing sample(s), and at least three letters of references to: Univ of California-San Diego, Musicologist Search Committee, Department of Music 0326, La Jolla, CA 92093-0326.

University of Montana -- Music History/World Music/Integrated Arts, tenure track position. Duties: Teach selected music history courses from the curriculum of those required for majors. Offer courses in "Music of the World's Peoples" each semester of regular academic year. Work with faculty in visual art, drama, and dance in designing curriculum and providing instruction in a team teaching configuration to undergraduate majors in the School of Fine Arts. Teach large lecture class of Music Appreciation each semester of regular academic year. Possible studio teaching. Additional undergraduate and/or graduate teaching responsibilities based upon qualifications of the candidate and needs of the department. Qualifications: Doctorate or equivalent preferred. Masters degree required. Evidence of a minimum of three years successful teaching at the college/university level. Proven success in effective teaching techniques in areas of music history, world music, and integrated arts, and with the ability to teach music survey sequence and upper division/graduate music history period courses. Membership and proof of active participation in recognized, appropriate professional organizations. Outstanding organizational and instructional delivery skills appropriate for effective teaching in a large-lecture setting. Ability and desire to provide outreach to music educators in the elementary and secondary schools in areas related to music history and world music. Experience with non-western instruments (i.e., gamelan, African drumming, etc.) desired. Rank: Asst. Professor. Start Date: August 16, 2002. Application deadline: 2/1/2002 or until filled. Send letter of application; curriculum vitae, official transcripts from all colleges/universities attended; and at least three recent (within last 3 years) letters of reference. Direct applications and inquiries to: Univ of Montana, Maxine Ramey, Chair, Music History/World Music/Integrated Arts Position Search Committee, Department of Music, Missoula, MT 59812. Phone: (406) 243-6880 Fax: (406) 243-2441 URL: <http://www.umt.edu> Salary: \$30,000-\$36,000, depending upon qualifications.

Recordings

Muhai Richard Abrams. *The Visibility of Thought [Duet for Contrabass and Piano. Duet for Violin and Piano. Baritone Voice and String Quartet. Piano Duet No. 1. The Visibility of Thought. Piano Improvisation]*. Muhai Richard Abrams, Thomas Buckner, Philip Bush, Jon Deak, Ralph Farris, Mark Feldman, Joseph Kubera, Dorothy Lawson, Todd Reynolds, Mary Rowell. Mutable Music.

James Adler. *Memento Mori: An AIDS Requiem*. [Requiem aeternum, Now I Am Dead, Requiem aeternam, Dies irae, Mors stupebit, Judex ergo, Yizkor, The Wounded, Lacrymosa, Narrative, Sanctus, Pie Jesu, Lamb of God, Lux aeterna, The Park Flickers, Survival]. AmorArtis Chorale and Orchestra, conducted by Johannes Somary. Albany.

Art Music Ensemble. *Look Both Ways [Luciano Berio. Sequenza I, VII, and IXa. David Sherr. Debussy Deb-You-Do Pt. 1 and Pt. 2. Sax Lines and Audio Tape. Sequenza VII / Palimpsest. In The Pocketa Pocketa]*. Art Music Ensemble. Innova.

Mark Applebaum. *The Janus ReMixes: Exercises in Auto-Plundering*. Innova.

Bang on a Can. *Renegade Heaven [Julia Wolfe. Believing. Arnold Dreyblatt. Escalator. Michael Gordon. I Buried Paul. Glenn Branca. Movement Within. Phil Kline. Exquisite Corpses]*. Cantaloupe Music.

Arthur Berger. Stefan Wolpe. *Form*. New World Records.

Jonathan Besser. *Mr. Darwin's Dances*. Atoll.

Thomas Beveridge. *Yizkor Requiem [Reader's Kaddish, Requiem Aeternam, Psalm 23, Remember!, Hostias, Sanctification, El Malei Rachamim, Lux Aeterna, Justorum Animae, Mourner's Kaddish and Lord's Prayer]*. Choral Arts Society and Orchestra of Washington, conducted by Norman Scribner. Naxos.

Daniel Biro. *Elegant Enigmas*. Sargasso.

Bitches Brew. *Goopy Dewey*. Flatbed Lamborgini Records.

Harold Boatrite. *Sonatas and Suites*. Capstone.

Bonk: Music from the Festival. Bonk Festival, University of South Florida.

Bonk Thy Neighbor: Bonk Festival of New Music. Bonk Festival, University of South Florida.

Susan Botti. *Susan Botti*. Susan Botti. CRI.

Will Gay Bottje. *Sounds from the West Shore [Capriccio for Two Trumpets, Strings, and Percussion. Sounds from the West Shore. Concerto for Two Flutes and Small Orchestra. Opener. Concerto for Horn and Small Orchestra]*. New Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rossen Milanov. Capstone.

Lili Boulanger. *Clearings in the Sky: Songs by Lili Boulanger and her Compatriots*. Cedille Records.

Martin Boykan. *Echoes of Petrarch. Piano Trio No. 2. City of Gold. Second String Quartet*. CRI.

Henry Brant. *Orbits. Western Springs. Hieroglyphics 3*. CRI.

Anthony Braxton. Scott Rosenberg. *Compositions, Improvisations, 2000*. Barely Auditable Records.

Bride of the Wind (music by Gustav Mahler, Alma Mahler, and Stephen Endelman). Deutsche Grammophon.

The Bride Unfastens Her Braids. The Groom Faints: Ladino Love Songs. New Albion.

Allen Brings. *Music for Keyboard Instruments [Five Pieces. Tre esercizi. Sonatine. Six Praeludia Concerto da Camera No. 4]*. Genevieve Chinn, Bradley Brookshire, Allen Brings, Stephen Tharp. Capstone.

The Brooklyn Sax Quartet. *The Way of the Saxophone [David Bindman. Climate Conditions. Gadzo (based on Ewe music). Pier Sketch. Fred Ho. Hipster Harvey. Duke Ellington. In a Sentimental Mood. Fats Waller. Jitterbug Waltz (the latter two selections in arrangements by Bindman)]*. David Bindman, Fred Ho, Sam Furnace, Chris Jones. Innova.

Earle Brown. *Times Five. Octet I. December 1952. November 1952. Four Systems. Novara. Music for Violin, Cello, and Piano. Music for Cello and Piano. Nine Rare Bits*. CRI.

Margaret Brouwer. *Crosswinds*. CRI.

Kyle Bruckmann. *Entymology*. Barely Auditable.

Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton. *Jump the Circle, Jump the Line*. Thomas Buckner and Tom Hamilton. Mutable.

Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner. *8 O'Clock: Two Improvisations*. Roscoe Mitchell and Thomas Buckner. Mutable.

Matthew Burtner. *Portals of Distortion: Music for Saxophones, Computers, and Stones [Portals of Distortion. Fern. Split Voices. Mists. Incantation S4. Glass Phase]*. Innova.

Michael Byron. *Music of Nights Without Moon or Pearl [Music of Nights Without Moon or Pearl. Invisible "Seeds" for James Tenney. Entrances]*. Cal Arts New Century Players, David Rosenboom. Cold Blue.

Susan Nigro. *The Bass Nightingale*. GM Recordings.

Terry Riley. *In C*. Bang on a Can. 45' 51". Cantaloupe, 2001.

Writers

MARK ALBURGER began playing the oboe and composing in association with Dorothy and James Freeman, George Crumb, and Richard Wernick. He studied with Karl Kohn at Pomona College; Joan Panetti and Gerald Levinson at Swarthmore College (B.A.); Jules Langert at Dominican College (M.A.); Roland Jackson at Claremont Graduate University (Ph.D.); and Terry Riley. An ASCAP composer, Alburger writes for Commuter Times and is published by New Music. He is Editor-Publisher of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, and has interviewed numerous composers, including Charles Amirkhanian, Henry Brant, Earle Brown, Philip Glass, Lou Harrison, Alan Hovhaness, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich, and Frederick Rzewski.

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

PATTI DEUTER is Associate Editor of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC and a Bay Area 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. He has also published poems in journals including *Mirage*, and written two theatre pieces -- *Touch and Go*, for three performers, which was staged at Venue 9 in 1998; and *Sight Unseen*, for solo performer. His critical pieces have appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle, San Francisco Review of Books, 3 Penny Review, California Printmaker, Antiques and Fine Art, The Advocate, High Performance, and In Tune. He writes for The Bay Area Reporter and heads the Bay Area chapter of The Duke Ellington Society. He co-hosted nine radio shows on KUSF with Tony Gualtieri with whom he now shares a classical-music review website -- www.msu.edu/user/gualtie3 -- which has also been translated into Russian and appears in Intellectual Forum.

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

NEW MUSIC
189 Rainier Circle
Vacaville, CA 95687
(707) 451-0714

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GOAT HALL

400 Missouri Street
San Francisco, CA

Upcoming Performances

Bernstein Banquet

An Evening of Songs and Scenes

8pm - Friday, March 8, and Saturday, March 9

Goat Hall Productions company members treat you to an elegant "supper show" featuring one of their favorite music theater composers: Leonard Bernstein. On the program will be Bernstein song cycles such as the delicious "La Bonne Cuisine" (aka Recipe Songs) as well as excerpts from *West Side Story*, *Trouble in Tahiti*, and a taste of GHP's fall production of *Candide*. Refreshments served!

San Francisco Composers Chamber Orchestra

Inaugural Concert

8pm, Friday, March 22

NEW MUSIC presents an evening of new works, with Mark Alburger, Alexis Alrich, John Beeman, Marcia Burchard, Richard Burdick, Erica Challis, Michael Cooke, Danielle DeGruttala, Thomas Goss, Michael Kimbell, Jab, Lisa Prosek, D'Arcy Reynolds, Bruce Salvisberg, Maryliz Smith, Erling Wold, Thomas Yee, and Laurel Zucker.

Arachne

Music and words by Sarah Michael

8pm - May 4-5, 11-12, 18-19

Michael's chamber opera retells the myth of Arachne, who challenged the goddess of weaving to a contest of skill. Provoked by the nymphs Magenta, Cyan and Yellow, and advised by the crones Martha and Mona, Arachne and Athena move through the stages of drama with authority and grace. Goat Hall Productions presents the work's first fully staged production, directed by Harriet March Page.