

21ST CENTURY MUSIC

JULY 2002

INFORMATION FOR SUBSCRIBERS

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

Subscription rates in the U.S. are \$84.00 (print) and \$42.00 (e-mail) per year; subscribers to the print version elsewhere should add \$36.00 for postage. Single copies of the current volume and back issues are \$8.00 (print) and \$4.00 (e-mail). Large back orders must be ordered by volume and be pre-paid. Please allow one month for receipt of first issue. Domestic claims for non-receipt of issues should be made within 90 days of the month of publication, overseas claims within 180 days. Thereafter, the regular back issue rate will be charged for replacement. Overseas delivery is not guaranteed. Send orders to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. e-mail: mus21stc@aol.com.

Typeset in Times New Roman. Copyright 2002 by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC. This journal is printed on recycled paper. Copyright notice: Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC.

INFORMATION FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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

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

INFORMATION FOR ADVERTISERS

Send all inquiries to 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC, P.O. Box 2842, San Anselmo, CA 94960. e-mail: mus21stc@aol.com.

21ST CENTURY MUSIC

July 2002

Volume 9, Number 7

INTERVIEW	Forms that Blur Boundaries: An Interview with Rocco Di Pietro J.D. HIXSON	1
CONCERT REVIEWS	Kazan III ANTON ROVNER	4
	North/South New Year MICHAEL DELLAIRA	4
	Diablo Detailed JEFF DUNN	5
	Spiderwoman in San Francisco MARK ALBURGER	6
	Sweet and Deadly THOMAS GOSS	6
	Civilization and its Disconnections MARK ALBURGER	7
	Don't Grieve, Work with Orchestra and Baritone JANOS GERE BEN	7

RECORD REVIEWS	Children and Adults MARK ALBURGER	8
	Good Night, Sweet Prince MARK FRANCIS	8
	Amen MARK FRANCIS	9
	The Final Frontier MARK FRANCIS	9
AUTHORS		9
CALENDAR	For July 2002	10
CHRONICLE	Of May 2002	11

ILLUSTRATION

Roy Lichtenstein - *Girl at Piano*, 1963

Forms that Blur Boundaries: An Interview with Rocco Di Pietro

J.D. HIXSON

Rocco Di Pietro is an artist whose work as composer-pianist, essayist, educator and habilitationist has crossed various disciplines. He has found that the path of the creative life has taken him like a "traveler" into interdisciplinary studies. As a result of various mutations, much of his recent work is difficult to classify. The journey has continually led back to composition.

I spoke with Rocco Di Pietro in January about music and his book *Dialogues with Boulez*.

HIXSON: What it was like growing up in Buffalo?

DI PIETRO: Imagine being a high school student who regularly goes down to concerts, let in the back door by Lukas Foss. There were many concerts... most of the Mahler symphonies, a lot of Ives and Stravinsky, some Schoenberg. I heard Ligeti's *Atmosphères* in 1965, the first American performance of Stockhausen's *Momente*. Ligeti was at the Art Gallery with the piece for 100 metronomes; Lutoslawski came, John Cage was there it seemed one Sunday every month.

HIXSON: Buffalo in the 60's was a center for contemporary music.

DI PIETRO: Yes. That went on for 20 years; after Lukas it was Feldman. He took the contemporary music scene over. At the time I was young, it was incredible. I was studying with an old German teacher, Hans Hagen, who fled Munich, and I received a really interesting education. He had played with people like Steinberg and Josef Krips -- that's a very particular tradition transplanted to Buffalo! It was all a really heady environment for someone who was very young, not only in music, but in other fields. At that time, there were two towns for poetry -- San Francisco and Buffalo, and there was a connection between them. There were people like Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Charles Bukowski. On a Friday night, you'd go to Onnetto's for a fish fry, just to get a table next to Olson, Bukowski, Creeley, Gregory Corso, Robert Logan, Robert Duncan. Incredible! These people were all in town, and that had something to do with the State University's English department. Then, even in the philosophy department, they had Michel Foucault from Paris for six months. It was very strange that it all accumulated at that particular time; I could test myself against all the modern currents that were happening. Because of Lukas, I was able to meet all these people, often many times.

HIXSON: What was it like hanging around Morton Feldman's atelier?

PIETRO: My wife was a waitress; she used to wait on him quite a lot! Just the other day I was listening to some of his pieces, *Flute and Orchestra*, *Piano and Orchestra*, *Cello and Orchestra*, and I remember when he was writing them. He would walk down Elmwood Avenue. He had one class a week; he taught and would come in and out of town for his performances. I would visit him, show him some of my work, from time to time. It was always so interesting to see what he would have to say. I played a one-note piece for him, and he liked it very much! Feldman's music is very interesting. Now, there's actually very little music of any kind that I can listen to...

HIXSON: How so?

DI PIETRO: I just don't listen to much anymore! Maybe I'm just filled up with all this music in one's environment. When you think of all the music you've heard, all the music you've studied... I can play music... as a musician, I'll go back in my piano class, and sit in a room and play Mozart sonatas and I'm just in heaven. But I can listen to Feldman, some Nono, some Boulez maybe, but I'm always listening in the sense of "as if." It's never listening the same way as when I was young.

HIXSON: You had important encounters with both Feldman and Boulez. Could speak about this perceived friction between their musical worlds? I think people are now able to take from both, but there has been definitely at least a superficial appearance of mutual exclusivity between the circles.

DI PIETRO: I think a lot of this comes from Boulez's concept of "values" as opposed to... I'm not sure what. He has a concept of values that is maybe at the core of that friction, whereas Feldman's approach was more exploratory. But they were both bad colleagues to each other. They both got very entrenched in their own positions which I suppose is understandable; at this point such an attitude is less understandable, but that was one of the hallmarks of modernism, this kind of fighting. It set up very superficially a kind of Paris / New York friction, but I definitely don't think it's there anymore.

HIXSON: As you developed and integrated diverse styles and aesthetics, how did you come to find your own set of values, or in Boulez's terminology, "tools" as a composer? For example, in your *Dialogues with Boulez*, he dismissed the importance of, say, Feldman or Scelsi as composers without technique, without tools... which completely overlooks the other dimensions of their music.

DI PIETRO: He's wrong of course! There were certain things I wasn't able to talk about with him; I didn't have time to go further. Sometimes a book takes on its own life like that. The conversations take on a life according to the circumstances at hand. I wanted to try and draw him out in another way, without being polemical. So, I kept my own personal ideas more in the background. I wanted to ask questions. I'm very skeptical of people who have answers, because there are many answers! Or perhaps there are no answers! I'm very skeptical of values. For Boulez, that's the very core of importance, but notion is what's wrong with the whole world! Values are like mold; they can grow on anything. Yet since we're meaning, creating creatures -- we can't live without the idea of values. I went to Germany this summer to see another man with extreme points of view: Stockhausen. Boulez and Stockhausen have extreme points of view; some people would say their egos are overdeveloped. There are at least three different ways to think about ego. You can drop it, develop it, be deceived by it. Some people drop the ego; but on the other hand, have you ever really met someone with a developed personality? To go back to Boulez and Stockhausen, my attitude was... I will simply ask questions; I'm interested. I didn't set out to establish positions.

HIXSON: You were also able to draw out a side of him that's not frequently shown in public or in print, when he spoke about his extremely intuitive process and how life is not black and white, but infinite shades of gray.

DI PIETRO: Yes, and this was extremely interesting. There are many aspects of Boulez with which I have points of contact; it's just his idea of values that I question. He's a very complicated character. He was a kind of father... I wanted to find these things out before he left.

HIXSON: What does "sound" mean to you?

PIETRO: Right now, it means research -- whether sound can be notated or not. I play with an improv group that uses semi-notated structures, and I also play in a trio which is entirely intuitive. I come away from these groups, and sometimes notate things from the sessions. As in the current piece, *Lost*, ideas start to proliferate. So in this particular piece, the research is lining up sound with my life. I'm trying to find out what sound has to do with my life. It's not easy to do. It seems that, after a number of years, certain things come together. And then, maybe, you can make connections. In *Lost*, the music is both notated and improvised, and in the improvised sections I create the opportunity to "go into" the sound, in the way Scelsi did, and to find connections with the notes and the motives.

HIXSON: I'm reminded of what Liza Lim says in her interview with Andrew Ford that her music is a balance between a fine and detailed apprehension of the inner life of sound, as in Scelsi or Nono, with structured, labyrinthine creations like those of Ferneyhough. How do you align yourself with such ideas, and does your music have other dimensions as well, perhaps social ones? And can you also give a response to someone who might say that there is too much attachment in the American new music scene to the experimental, to the exploratory.... How would you respond to the notion that these are simply essential components of any real creative process?

DI PIETRO: I think that we tend to take "experiments" and feel that we own them. But that's a social problem, isn't it? It's a way to gain power, like a fight between a father and a son. The son says, "I'm going to concentrate on what you didn't do, and what you didn't do is what I'm paying attention to, and that's your gift to me, but now I'm going to use it against you." If you put a label on what you do as Experimental Music, perhaps you're against anything that is not Experimental Music. Of course, the opposite of that is to react. To say that, "No, there are no values in Experimental Music. I'm the father and I'm telling you what values are..." That's all terribly boring. It's just so unfortunate that that's what a lot of people do, because such attitudes are limitations. I'm involved in both experimentation and values. I'm completely lost and that's why I'm working! About Liza Lim, I think that's extremely nice what she has to say, in fact I've just pulled that volume off the shelf and I'm looking at it now. Yes, I definitely feel that I can make the same kind of connection with sound and perhaps, also social ideas. And I think that's what's happening with *Lost*. The state of un-knowing is really what prompted me to go ahead and ask questions of Boulez. I'm in no way angry about his extreme point of view now that I've lost mine. It's like I've died in some sense, and survived myself. It's a very strange thing to say, but it's like you look over to your left, and you're just not there anymore. And at the same time, that change is very liberating...

HIXSON: I wanted to propose that perhaps every valid artist experiments, and is able to discard that which was simply exploratory in favor of something that succeeds in being new and strong and able to radiate out from itself.

ROCCO DI PIETRO: If you label things, you always get into trouble.

HIXSON: Aside from the whole label issue, I'm interested in exploring the possibility that there exists a widespread contemporary situation where people are satisfied to call the experiment the finished product...

DI PIETRO: Julius Eastman used to say that it's O.K. to fail in a piece. I'm of two minds about that notion. With my ensembles, we do a lot of experiments and sometimes we fail. But often, I come back the next time and I rework the same material, or I get a new set of understandings, or we go out and talk. However, I see a lot of people who aren't experimenting at all. So, what to do with the experiment? What to do with this Experimental tradition? What would you have as the opposite?

HIXSON: I'm not sure that I'm thinking of an opposite, but simply the idea that only after long and intense struggle and perseverance, in spirit and in craft, is work and energy created at a new level that provides something of interest for an audience.

DI PIETRO: I agree with that completely. But one doesn't always attain such a goal.

HIXSON: There's another way of considering the final work as one that is open. It's constructed, and bears the mark of the composer, but offers so many possibilities for interaction with the listener's perception that there can be infinite ways of experiencing that work as one goes back to it, time and again.

DI PIETRO: Like Earle Brown, or like Boulez in their different ways. I hope for that, but it's really not easy to attain, since I'm sorting through so many different aspects.

HIXSON: How about free improvisation? I sometimes have the sense of some free improvisation as musical voyeurism: it's for people who like to watch but not listen. The musicians seem to have this mystical communion with each other, and perhaps even with sound, but little of that projects beyond the players. How is it that you hope to interest an audience with your own improvisations?

DI PIETRO: After playing in an improvising ensemble for four years I have experienced this, yet I don't care about the audience. I've never cared about the audience. Every person in the audience has my own face on them. I don't compose or play for an audience at all.

HIXSON: But you need them.

DI PIETRO: I may need them, but it's on a different level altogether. I work for myself and I enjoy it. But it's a hard question, because there is some level of communication despite what I just said. It's difficult, because I have the need to experiment in front of the audience even if I don't care about them. At the same time, it's my only venue for a sounding art. So I guess what I care about would be the ideal audience. I can quote somebody who said it very well once... "Your audience is less than one person, but you don't know it." I always keep that in mind while talking about audience. What I try to do in the improvisation is try to get the work to another level. I wouldn't say another level of "values" or "tools" like Boulez, but I want to make the piece my own to such an extent that it is on a line with my life. For improvisation, it's like a workshop, sometimes I can write it, and sometimes leave it. Anyway, I guess I am close to the idea of experimenting!

HIXSON: It's curious to me that someone who expends so much of his own personal time and energy in social work would openly declare that he doesn't care about the audience.

DI PIETRO: It's a paradox.... I accept that! When I look at the audience, I'm cynical. I'm quite aware that most of these people don't care about these things with which I'm concerned. It's difficult to get people involved. Sometimes the paradox is the point. Many people, with *Lost*, do care on a social level, but not on a sound level. I don't live in a culture anymore, but a civilization, and a civilization at a certain moment. I'm trapped by having existential concerns that were once real. At some point you could say, "If you have an existential problem, you have an authentic life..." Things are not so simple anymore. That's the condition I find myself in, because there are existential problems and I'm searching for something authentic. I'm surrounded by simulation and hyper-reality. Things are not simple anymore. Simulation has taken over, the media has taken over, and these concerns of hyper-reality are very real. The struggle is to keep reality alive. That's where the paradox stings: I don't care about the audience but I'm a social composer... The situation in which I'm living is completely schizophrenic. It would be so wonderful to have a situation where you simply have an existential problem. I would love that; how nice life would be!

HIXSON: The other great paradox that came from our last conversation is about values. You said, for example, that values are what is wrong with the world although you're not angry at Boulez for having an extreme point of view now that you've lost your own. It sounds like you have an extremely strong point of view...

DI PIETRO: That's quite possible, this could be looked at as having an extreme point of view, I'm sure. It's almost impossible to not react against things...

HIXSON: Essentially, we can't enter into a discussion about values vs. no values. It can only be a matter of what the values are.

DI PIETRO: It's a question of what the values are in so far as there are many values and many points of view. As time goes by, the values and point of view become very personal. I don't go out and crusade with it though, I don't think that's a good thing at all. For better or for worse, the relativity in which I'm engulfed is unanswerable. Yet, without relativity, all the students in my classes from all different nationalities would just kill each other. Boulez, with an extreme point of view, is kind of quaint. Boulez and Stockhausen and Cage are all very quaint, almost lovable. I'm opposed to "I want my value over your value." I know what my value is and what your value is, but just look at recent history...

HIXSON: Going back to Boulez, you are responsible for bringing out a side of him that creates a unique portrait, one that practically challenges all his polemical writings of the 50's to the 80's.

DI PIETRO: Here's what he wrote as a dedication in a copy of the book to my son, Bruno. "I hope you will find these conversations of interest for a new generation." He's obviously been a very important composer but life is so relative. At one time, he was very important for a lot of people, but such concerns are just so ephemeral, and in the end probably meaningless, I don't know. Over the long term, things change. Of course at the time of *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, those things were just paving out new territory. But of course now, he himself has changed so much, and these later works are so different. The most important thing he did perhaps was *Le Visage Nuptial*, because in that piece he talked about himself. In any case, through the poetry of Rene Char. Once I explained that, for example, in my class, and I lined that up with Bataille, death, and sensuality. You see that suicidal pact there, and it's all very vague. I guess we only know about this through his sister, but I feel it was so important for him to do, the *Visage*. Because that's something that will speak to the generations, no matter what. When you start to talk about these themes in humanity that are persistent, irrefusable, such as sexuality, you know...

HIXSON: How does Bataille figure as a major liberating influence?

DI PIETRO: The thing with Bataille is the thing I've been discussing all along: paradox. That's what speaks very strongly. And with the paradoxical comes the idea of parody. His work is a crossroads of fiction and biography, doses of philosophy, anthropology and psychology. For a long time it was really unclassifiable work, and it probably still is. It is a great inspiration. That Art has always been linked to horror is another way of speaking of social connections.

HIXSON: It has little to do with the eroticism of his works then.

DI PIETRO: I would not say that. Eroticism is one of the big themes, of course. It's this idea of paradox, interdisciplinary work, and of themes: the cry, tears, anguish, laughter, sacrifice, loss, chance, expenditure and eroticism. These themes are linked to a certain baseness, even obscenity. They became a major concern for him, and that is what is important to me because it shows how highly intellectual projects often cancel out by concealing these kinds of base elements. They often can't be assimilated. And this led to a study of these kinds of things, how did other cultures marry this kind of problem. Bataille was very important to me and I just transferred that into sound. There's a certain kind of blindness, for Bataille, which is an essential element of knowledge. It allows us to acknowledge certain things with certainty. For Bataille, the height of say, being enlightened, can't be looked at without the depths of "non-knowledge." That's not a position that a lot of people like. They want their knowledge in a nice package...and the key words are with clarity and reason. Bataille was very influential; on Foucault, etc. The end of enlightenment, the end of history, all that just spoke to me. And it only spoke to me after I lost my whole agenda. And I just came to feel that failure is the only success. And Baudrillard, with simulation and hyper-reality and fatal extremes followed. In other words, most people have not caught up to the world we are living in. Most people are in a dream world of pre- 1968-70. After that, everything changed with the media and technology which impacted on perceived reality. People are often in denial, so what can you do with a sleeping audience? The quaint clubs of experiment vs. notation of the 50's have nothing to do with today. In fact, those polarities have been appropriated into post-modernism.

HIXSON: You hope to radiate an essential, fragile human element...

DI PIETRO: Yes, and that's something that is often misunderstood in the book, about the 'failed composer.' What does that mean? It's not just life, I mean I'm just close to that whole kind of idea. For example Giacometti, Beckett... I'm close to that. And yet, it would be just lovely to be in Giacometti's shoes, or in Beckett's shoes. Because now we're just surrounded, again, by simulation and hyper-reality, we just can't even get to the authentic-ness of it all. When I say that failure is the only success, it just means that I'm trying to keep what's real alive, for me. That ties up all these themes. You know, experimentation: experimentation vs. a finished product... That's what was still possible maybe in the 60's and 70's. Now it's so much more complicated. None of these things exist in the kind of vacuums where you could have clubs like you did before. Everything now is just a parody of things. It's the end of things. You can no longer have the idea of social vs. anti-social, and this goes back to the idea of experimentation we were talking about before, vs. whatever is not an experiment. Those were trajectories which were once left alone, and they could fight it out. But now, I see a much more complex problem. The social is not opposed by the anti-social but escalated by the hyper-conformity of masses. When everyone was talking about something terrible going to happen at the change of the millennium, it was like "Well, it already happened, but you missed it."

Concert Reviews

Kazan III

ANTON ROVNER

Europe-Asia Contemporary Music Festival. April 14, 2000, Kazan, Russia. A report on the April 16 evening concert.

A second program on April 16, 2000, in the Grand Concert Hall, began with Meredith Monk's *Double-holiday*, performed by pianist Tomoko Mukaiyama. This was a minimalist piece of a very absurdist and dadaist character. The pianist started singing a minor pentatonic tune, then bringing in the piano accompaniment of a simple character, starting with a one-voice and gradually expanding to thicker piano textures. Throughout the piece, essentially one harmonic diatonic pattern was repeated, though the textures were continuously varied and expanded. The pianist sang throughout the piece in a very casual manner. Her voice fluctuated from a humming to an almost laughing quality, and from a children's song to the grotesque quality of a crazy lady. At times the pianist shook and rolled her head around.

Grigori Voronov's *Elegiac Stanzas*, performed by saxophonist Alexei Volkov and pianist Natalia Zaparozhchenko, was a moderately atonal piece, with an expressive quality. This was followed by Rashid Kalimoullin's *Duet for Saxophones*, from Alexei Volkov and Pierre-Stephane Meuge -- a lively, linear, and polyphonically elaborate piece, which successfully combined a pronounced modal language with traditional new-music techniques, and contained a dramatic lyricism. At times the music seemed to parody a Bach two-part invention, but with vibrant trills, tremolos, and snippets of stylized Tatar folk music.

Guitar Quintet, by Vitaly Kharisov, was tonal and lyrical, featuring gentle repetitions of tonal, rhythmically-pronounced passages. It was generally static harmonically, mostly staying on one chord.

Arne Mellnaes's *Omneus tempo habeat*, was a setting from Ecclesiastes, sung by soprano Anne Pajunen Lindmann. It was a lyrical atonal work, with some remote allusions to church music traditions -- a very effective, colorful and theatrical piece that contained remote resemblance to Berio's solo-voice *Sequenza* in its abundance of extended techniques, though more lyrical, expressive, and "humane." *Lupu yu*, by Violetta Dinescu, performed by violinist Elena Ergiev and bayan-player Ivan Ergiev, was a lyrical avant-garde work with sparse, fragmented segments, which nevertheless combined to produce a unified musical entity.

Elena and Ivan Ergiev dispelled the serious mood by performing Astor Piazzolla's *Adios Nonino*. Two dynamic and rhythmic movements from *Sonata for Timpani*, by John Beck, were performed with great vigor and virtuosity by Adel Sabiryanov.

Joshua Pierce performed John Cage's *Daughters of the Lonesome Isle* (1945), on prepared piano. The piece featured a busy, steady rhythmic textural pattern, resembling gamelan music and was at the same time very lyrical and emotional in mood.

Johnny Reinhard and Joshua Pierce played *Meditation on Two Themes from the Day of Existence*, by Ivan Wyschnegradsky. A tonal, romantic piece, which alternated a spirited, exalted with a more lyrical and almost tragic mood, the piece employed quarter-tones and sixth-tones in the solo part.

Vladimir Beleaev's *Composition*, performed by the violinist Rustem Abiazov, was a quiet and subdued, moderately tonal piece,, generally elegiac in mood. As a final number, all of the performers jointly improvised on a theme by Tatar composer Rustem Yakhin.

North/South New Year

MICHAEL DELLAIRA

North/South Consonance presents New Year Celebration: Music by Composers from Mexico and the US. *Darkness Visible* (1998) by Ana Lara; *Fictions* (1998) by Randall Snyder; *Unlikely Neighbors* (1993) by William Mayer; and *Symphony No. 1 in C Major, Op. 21* (2000) by Mark Alburger; Max Lifchitz, conductor January 7, 2001, Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

Commissioned by Mexico's Onyx New Music Ensemble, and based on William Styron's book by the same name, Ana Lara's *Darkness Visible* -- the first work on the North/South Consonance concert on January 7, 2001, in New York -- was a big, brooding work for flute, clarinet, piano, percussion, violin, viola, cello and double bass. Lara, by her own admission, does not think in terms of instrumental line, but likes thinking about her compositions as three-dimensional solids. An instrument's register, dynamic, and timbre (she makes liberal use of harmonics, for example) become single elements in a sonic construction that accumulates mass, density, and volume over time.

This kind of sound sculpture is not easy to pull off in performance; instrumental balance is critical to the shape of the piece, so dynamics must be precisely executed, as one can do in a recording studio with knobs and faders. Max Lifchitz did an admirable job of leading the North/South Consonance ensemble, but I suspect that there wasn't anywhere near ample rehearsal time to show the piece off.

Performance problems aside, one would have expected more interesting sonorities, given Lara's penchant for playing with the overtone series; harmonics often sounded like wrong notes, a strange phenomenon in a piece purportedly emphasizing mass over line. Moreover her use of percussion seemed an afterthought; loud thwaps functioned almost as cue cards, telling us something dramatic is happening, and her use of cymbal crashes and timpani rolls seemed more like place holders than sonic events. They all seemed rather unnecessary, either as dramatic or formal devices.

Part II had some intricately lovely string textures, and the perfectly-timed and placed entrance of the piano into the score showed that Lara's ear can be perfect.

Randall Snyder's *Fictions*, for the full North/South Chamber Orchestra, is a knotty and very deft piece based on Jorge Luis Borges' *Ficciones*, and created the kinds of ephemeral sonorities Ana Lara was probably hoping for. The playing was far superior than in Lara's piece, and one suspects because Snyder knows his way around instrumental writing so much better.

It's rather a shame Snyder's harmonic language is a dense, persistent kind of atonality which -- his remarkable coloration of pitches notwithstanding -- becomes gray and undifferentiated. One wishes for more harmonic movement -- the kinds of surprises one gets when new pitches are introduced into a collection.

Snyder supplied a curious little guide with the program notes, for "those interested in following the circuitous unfolding of the music." Separated into 23 parts, with names like "Insouciant: clarinet-bassoon duet" or "Broad: wind trills followed by bassoon solo," the guide was, one must assume, as much a formal structure of the piece as it was a novelty. At the very least, the guide, which was easy to follow, offered nice points of reference for even the least sophisticated listener.

Next was William Mayer's *Unlikely Neighbors*, a diversionary (especially in light of the preceding two pieces), short, clever piece which skillfully combines -- and contrasts -- the folk song "Turtle Dove" with "California Here I Come." Written as a wedding present for the composer's daughter who was about to move to California with her new husband, Mayer's style has been aptly characterized as a "lyrical music, favored with an unusual flow of fancy and wit, and marked by a free use of disparate material with the aim of synthesizing so-called opposites into a coherent whole." That sums it up. Scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, trombone and piano, Mayer presents blocks and snippets, progressions and riffs in, around, and against each other, all the while never blurring the very clear boundaries between his two subjects, yet at times making it appear as if they were both not just in the same piece, but the same piece. The performance was spirited and charming; trombonist Steve Shulman especially shined; his "California Here I Come" entrances in the middle of "Turtle Dove" made him an unlikely, but very welcome, neighbor.

Mark Alburger's *Symphony No. 1 in C Major*, Op. 21 concluded the program. If the title sounds familiar, it's because it should be: Alburger's is more than a nod to Beethoven, it's a borrowing of a most unusual kind. Alburger has taken Beethoven's score and virtually stripped its measures of their content, leaving ... well, empty measures, but an exact number of them, to be sure. And, since we are invited to take the tempo indications seriously ("Adagio Molto", "Allegro con brio", etc.) one assumes the composer will make use of them as some kind of sectional dividers. But that being done, the composer's now on his own to fill those measures with un-Beethovenian, all-Alburgerian music.

This may seem like a whacky idea, but to readers of this journal -- of which Alburger is the founder, editor, and author of such columns as *By The Numbers* -- his grid method will appear as another example of his wry, and somewhat wicked sense of humor. The truth is, the piece works *because* of the grid is not hard to answer: of course not. Alburger's grid is a means to an end, a source of inspiration to him as much as, say, Cage's watermarks or Xenakis's mathematical equations were to them. The casual listener shouldn't know, or much care, how the piece was actually constructed. Or, put in another way, one's source of inspiration is irrelevant if the piece which results isn't worth listening to. And if it is, knowing the inspirational source, or working method in this case, is simply an anecdotal condiment to a tasty musical main course.

So now for the filling. The first movement begins with a repetitive figure (B-C-E-B-C-G) which dissolves in very un-Beethoven fashion; lots of themes and fragments follow, including some ragtime. In the slow movement, he interweaves two related themes; Alburger has a fondness for modulation but a seemingly conscious avoidance of development, replacing classicism with minimalism -- that is, motivic repetitions at different pitch levels. The Presto gives the biggest nod to Ludwig and, not coincidentally, Philip Glass: melodic figures are echoed by orchestral subsections, the presto theme unravels (the nod to Beethoven) in a harmonically static section (and another to Glass.) If contrast is your thing, this movement will prove the most rewarding and effective.

Diablo Detailed

JEFF DUNN

The Contra Costa Wind Symphony presents the world premiere of Steven Reineke's *Mt. Diablo -- A Symphonic Portrait*, along with earlier Reineke pieces and works by Frigyes Hidas, Carl Wittrock and Jan Van der Roost. Duane Carroll and Steven Reineke, conductors; Eva Langfeldt, oboe soloist. April 27, Hofmann Theatre, Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts, Walnut Creek, CA.

Israelis and Palestinians tooth and claw in one sphere, Modernists and Neotonalists duking it out in another. Yet in Walnut Creek, oblivious to it all, a capacity crowd gives a standing ovation to a concert composed entirely of new music. Whoa! Is this a time warp back to the mid-19th century? No, it's just music catered to the audience rather than to certain elites -- to the pleasures of the present rather than a shot at a slot in future Music History books. A pleasant time was had by all.

A well varied program constructed by conductor Carroll included an oboe concerto, an homage to the Northern Italian village of Tignale, four gypsy dances, an overture, a "Casey-at-the-Bat" melodrama and a tone-poem symphony. Steven Reineke, the composer of the last three numbers, made a strong impression also as conductor of the second half of the program, with verve and grace marking him as a strong up-and-comer in the John Williams/Boston Pops niche.

The amateur orchestra, which proved itself well and capable in the rousing Dvorak-like gypsy songs of Jan Van der Roost, reached "peak" performance in the world premiere of Reineke's *Mt. Diablo -- A Symphonic Portrait*. Starting off like a Michener novel, the work begins with the geology of the mountain's rise and moves to the spirituality of the resident Native Americans. But where a pedestrian historical approach would have some kind of raucous ode to the forty-niners, Reineke surprises by implementing a suggestion from Carroll to insert a scherzo devoted to the mating dance of the tarantula -- a tarantella morphing into a waltz. Finally, instead of concluding with freeway sounds and jackhammers celebrating the marvels of Capitalism, Reineke's finale pictures a tribal creation myth of the sun.

Reineke's music was melodic and well orchestrated. His expressed interest in writing for films certainly makes sense considering his compositional talents. Let us hope he will continue to seek conducting opportunities even if he develops a lucrative film-composing career. Could a *Mt. Hollywood* symphony be very far away?

Spider Woman in San Francisco

MARK ALBURGER

Sarah Michael's *Arachne*. May 4, Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 19. Reviewed May 5.

Spider Man opened at theaters everywhere this weekend, but Spider Woman came to Goat Hall Productions, San Francisco's Cabaret Opera Company. This was no cartoon character -- try tapestry figure from Greek myth. *Arachne*, by Sarah Michael, tells the tale of a woman who challenges a Goddess and pays a price. The weaver Arachne is ultimately turned into a spider (whence "arachnid") for her insolence, but Michael weaves everything into musical gold in a web of counterpoint, snaring attractive melodies.

This handsome production, directed by Harriet March Page and designed by Dale MacDonald, beautifully complements the vocal and dramatic prowess of Narelle Yeo and Debra Niles, respectively as Athena and Arachne. To these are added a winsome and colorful trio of nymphs -- Yellow (Nova Dague), Cyan (Tisha C. Page), and Magenta (Alexandra Picard) decked out as teenage icons from three contemporary eras (Brittney Spears, Stevie Nicks, and Madonna). Leslie Carr-Avalos and Cynthia Weyuker, in vivid black-and-white polka dots and stripes, were vibrant as the crones Mona and Martha.

Michael, whose musical roots extend to early music, has produced a lovely score that highlights the abilities of her gifted singers. The work is as sinuous as a multi-voiced madrigal, and emphasizes the expert craft of Athena and Arachne, over the darker, creepier side of the tale. The music chases itself in part-song over resolutely consonant, detailed harmonies that favor line over movement. Like Athena's brother, this is an Apollonian work of grace and light. Page and MacDonald assist in this effort, by their canny use of movement and projections, with an unforgettable metamorphosis at the conclusion. Kathleen McGuire capably conducts a chamber orchestra of clarinet, harp, string quartet, and double bass.

Sweet and Deadly

THOMAS GOSS

Sarah Michael's *Arachne*. May 4, Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 19. Reviewed May 11.

Cabaret Opera - now there's a concept. Instead of sitting in a posh seat at the grand opera, you could be lounging in front of a candle-lit table with an intimate crowd, with a nibble and a glass of chablis for comfort. The atmosphere dictates the presentation, suggesting smaller scale assays of the human condition. In the case of Sarah Michael's *Arachne*, presented at Goat Hall on May 19, the production struck a balance with the score and its message, fitting well into the weather-beaten but wholesome little venue and the artistic vision of its artistic director, Harriet March Page.

The opera itself is a marvel of miniature. Cast for seven women's voices, its one act and three scenes comfortably inhabit an hour and twenty minutes with a complete and elegant statement about not just the hubris inherent in its epic subject, but also the relationship of creator to creativity and the question of authorship of inspiration. Sarah Michael wrote the libretto with a composer's sense of drama and a comparative mythologist's sense of psychology. Both the

inevitability of the story and the momentum of the music rolled along with surprise, humor, and perceptive emotional dialog. In the tradition of the Greek dramatists, Michael imagined gods and mortals of quite human and complex proportions, obeying the laws of myths in three dimensions. Bearing this out is her touching final scene wherein Arachne receives her dubious reward for besting the goddess Athena in a weaving contest. Athena sang of the gift of wisdom, which leads to sympathy, and then regret. The audience was made to feel the real burden of remorse falling on Athena for having to fulfill her duty in punishing Arachne's pride. There were other moments that were perhaps as revealing of the composer as of her subjects; when both goddess and weaver exchanged a moment of mutual respect and admiration as they viewed each other's handiwork; when Athena in old-woman disguise warned Arachne "Although you don't concern yourself with gods, they concern themselves with you." Assurance and cool nobility.

The casting of the leads was spot-on. Debra Niles was at ease in the title role. Her fiery, piercing manner and cutting yet clear vocal tone underlined her character's humanity, not just her pride. In Arachne's aria, "I spun the thread," listing in detail her self-creation as an artist, in presence and musicality, Niles commanded the stage with assurance. The match for this passion was eminent in the cool nobility of Australian soprano Narelle Yeo as Athena. Her bearing of authority and wisdom seemed effortless, as did her vocalism, a strong, warm instrument of honeyed coloration. Throaty, like an alto flute in the lower register, her voice seemed to be both open and dark as she gained in pitch and energy in the middle range, yet it revealed brilliance and lightness of tone at the top.

The supporting nymphs were part clown, part Greek chorus. Dressed in 70's thrift-shop chic, they came off as archetypal mythic maids, fun-loving, enthusiastic and easily bored, yet capable of depth and insight when the tone became more serious. Michael used the three voices freely, in beautifully written duos, trios, and recitatives that seemed almost like arias, and in some cases, were. The team of Tisha Page, Alexandra Picard, and Nova Dague (who looked for anything like Suzanne Sommers in *Three's Company*) had chemistry, bouncing off each other at times, or uniting as a collective soul.

Not so successful were Cynthia Weyuker and Leslie Carr-Avalos as the two crones, dressed like a pair of Park Avenue yentas. They seemed a bit uncomfortable with their material, and revealed some unevenness in the third scene as the lyricism became mildly tortured and atonal in places. Even so, their solos, ending the second scene and starting the third, had the effect of putting this contest of titanic egos into common perspective.

Musically, this was Michael at her best, markedly absent of self-deprecation or ambivalence. The score had an even, gracious flow that supported the story with logic and heart, with a style that united a folk-derived modal approach with the composer's own contemporary American lyricism.

The seven-piece orchestra sounded full and organic under the baton of Kathleen McGuire, with particularly effusive playing from harpist Suki Russak in a part that was nearly continuous over the course of the evening. When combined with the artful direction of Page and stage design of Dale MacDonald, the work proved a powerful follow-up to Alburger's *Henry Miller in Brooklyn*, performed here last year in the Goat Hall Productions series. Maybe there is something to the joining of these terms, cabaret and opera. Until the San Francisco Opera and their ilk start playing casuals, I'll be getting mine at Goat Hall.

Civilization and Its Disconnections

MARK ALBURGER

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in the premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Don't Grieve*, plus Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*. May 15, Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

"Garbage in, garbage out." No, it wasn't like that. How about revising the computer programmer's grammar to "Disconnection in, disconnection out"? That's the sensation felt after listening to Giya Kancheli's San Francisco Symphony commission *Don't Grieve* in its premiere at Davies Hall. And maybe that was the point.

Michael Tilson Thomas, with baritone Dmitri Hvorostovsky, led a committed reading of this strange new work on May 15. The anomie begins in the composer's text collage, assembled from bits of Boris Pasternak, George Gordon (a.k.a Lord) Byron, Osip Mandelstam, Dylan Thomas, Rainer Maria Rilke, William Shakespeare, Fedor Ivanovich Titchev, W.H. Auden, Joseph Brodsky, Galaktion Tabidze, and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, leavened by Kancheli's own lines. To these are added cast-off musical analogues: snippets of pop-song, shards of minimalist patterings, shreds of bombastic Shostakovichisms, shrapnel of recitative -- all punctuated by piercing silences. Kancheli has been numbered among the Eastern European "new mystic" composers, some of whom are minimalists, but here he is often existentially down-to-earth and syncretist. The orchestral palette resonates along the lines of another expatriate, Alfred Schnittke, in the use of accordion, electric bass, and generous percussion forces. The ensemble crashed around, but usually grew quiescent for Hvorostovsky's mournful intonings, often accompanied by only a scuttering of ascending minor Glass arpeggios from violin, or a muzak-like string-and-piano coloration for a chord progression reminiscent of "Please Mr. Postman" (I-bVI-IV-V-I).

Despite the final jokey half-step cadence, *Don't Grieve* does -- and it don't groove either, never allowing itself to settle into settled patterns for long. Again, part of the point.

Maurice Ravel, on the other hand, does groove in much of *Daphnis et Chloé*, particularly in those parts assembled for the second suite. We received the full-on ballet, however, which, plot-driven as it is, bears some disconnective resemblance (although not nearly as extreme, certainly) to the Kancheli. The San Francisco Symphony and Symphony Chorus gave a stunning performance which filled the hall with a Western European "old mysticism" (a Greek story through French ears).

The program opened with the last-minute addition of the prelude to Modest Mussorgky's *Khovanshchina*. Think of the amount of time and effort spent on the disconnected program inserts.

Don't Grieve, Work with Orchestra and Baritone

JANOS GEREBEN

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in the premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Don't Grieve*, plus Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*. May 15, Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

Giya Alexandrovich Kancheli's *Don't Grieve*, which had its world premiere on May 15 in San Francisco's Davies Symphony Hall, is a 36-minute work for "baritone and full symphony orchestra."

The baritone was Dmitri Hvorostovsky, in a sepulchral, but vocally excellent performance, one of the best of his nearly decade-long presence here. The San Francisco Symphony was conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, who commissioned the work from the 66-year-old Georgian composer, now a resident of Belgium, and in attendance at tonight's concert.

"Full orchestra" meant about 100 instruments, including extended string, woodwind and brass sections, cowbells, tambourine, bongos, and a Kancheli favorite, the accordion.

Of all the figures observed at the performance, the strangest -- and most significant -- are these: the work's 90-line text comes from 34 separate sources, in Russian, Georgian, English and German. Considering that the total number of lines includes several repetitions, the actual ratio is about two lines per source. Why is that important? Because the result is a "poetic hodge-podge," both driving the music and sharing its disconnected, nonsensical nature.

Although *Don't Grieve* was a good fit for the evening's romantic-mystical-spiritual lineup, beginning with the prelude to Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina* and concluding with Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, the text's mélange permeated and, to a large degree, defeated the work.

Kancheli, from the Pärt-Schnittke-Gubaidulina "school" of musical neo-mysticism (or substitute your own terminology), has written some very enjoyable works -- film scores, short concert pieces in which just the "atmosphere" is sufficient. Think of him, however faint that praise may be, as Debussy without melody or colors. Great for 10 minutes, not so much for a half hour. Even so, there are brief passages in the new work that are quite beautiful, although they remain fragments of something that eventually failed to emerge.

Kancheli is known for his effective use of silence and very quiet passages. *Don't Grieve* is one of the loudest works in contemporary literature, vying for honors with the deafening (but "logical") finale of Kernis's *Symphony No. 2*, right up there with Rouse's *Gorgon* and Leifs's *Hekla*.

Through it all, Hvorostovsky stood and delivered, maintaining legato even where the music didn't seem to give him the opportunity for it, amazingly involved in the text, although going counter to the title, interpreting the piece as if it commanded constant and extreme grieving.

Kancheli says he completed the work six days before September 11 last year, and he considered dedicating it to the victims of the terrorist attacks, but "I was aware that music written after the tragedy would have been different." Still, he decided to give it the current title, "addressed to everyone who endured. . . and still believed in the future."

I don't see how the music could have been different if it were written after 9/11 -- there are few, if any, additional degrees of "sorrowful music." Nor do I see how the text, the music or Hvorostovsky's interpretation could in any way counteract grieving.

Here's an example of how Kancheli's grand opus works (or, rather, doesn't) -- a huge orchestral noise subsides to a line about silence from Pasternak. The word "silence" is picked up in two lines from Kancheli himself ("Silent nights and silent days"), yielding to "A mind in peace with all below," from Byron.

Mandelstam's "blue horses on the red grass" follows, and then his "there's music above us," the one and only "positive" text, soon crushed under another orchestral super-tutti.

Immediately, variations on "Love is dying" presented, from Dylan Thomas, Rilke, Shakespeare, much about the world being vicious and cruel. Brodsky's "Turning the back to a disgraceful century" and Goethe's "Leid und Freude" from "An Lottchen," were the next sources. And from there Kancheli goes to Rilke for "Life and death – they are the essence," full stop. Hello?

It's hard to figure out these intellectual ex-pats from the former Soviet Union, which regarded such confusing works as cause for banishment to Siberia – perhaps too harsh a response.

Kancheli appears to have missed Ibsen from his impromptu digest of literature, but I thought of a good quote, from *Peer Gynt* – "Too little, too much, not enough."

Record Reviews

Children and Adults

MARK ALBURGER

Anne Deane. *Crossings [Positive Thinking. Slammin'. Crossing to Elysian Fields. Love Songs. Gacius]*. Innova.

Jon Deak. *The Passion of Scrooge, or a Christmas Carol*. 20th Century Consort, directed by Christopher Kendall, with baritone William Sharp. Innova.

Two recent Innova releases find composers referencing childhood. Anne Deane's *Crossings* comes complete with a "put it up on the refrigerator" style picture and references in the percussion duet *Slammin'* (expertly realized by Jonathan Nathan and Steven Schick) to the time that "my daughter . . . learned to speak." But this remains a grown-up album, in terms of required attention span and other aspects -- from the flute-and-tape *Positive Thinking*, with Fred Chance's

I was thinking about the cells which started out inside my body and ended up (one way or another inside) your body

to the two *Songs*, the first on the conclusion of James Joyce's Ulysses

and drew him down to me so he
could feel my breast all perfume
yes
and his heart was going like mad
and
yes
I said
yes
I will
Yes.

No references to the Firesign Theatre here, but a fine angular performance from soprano Kathleen Roland, cellist Nadine Hall, and pianist Louise Lufquist.

In the second album, *The Passion of Scrooge or a Christmas Carol*, Jon Deak takes the well-known Dickens story into a post-*Pierrot* world (with even some inklings of Davies's *Eight Songs for a Mad King*) of expressionist emotings. The vocal line, delivered heroically by William Sharp, is mostly recitative and arioso. The spirited 20th Century Consort, under the capable hands of Christopher Kendall, bears most of the appealingly eclectic burden. Despite the sleighbells, this is a *Scrooge for All Seasons*.

Good Night, Sweet Prince

MARK FRANCIS

Richard Danielpour. *Elegies*. Frederica von Stade, mezzo-soprano; Thomas Hampton, baritone; Ying Huang, soprano; London Philharmonic Orchestra; Perspectives Ensemble; Roger Nierenberg, conductor. Sony Classics.

Danielpour's *Elegies* (1997) is collection of five songs for mezzo-soprano, baritone and orchestra based on the World War II letters of Lieutenant Charles von Stade, Frederica's father. He was killed in Germany in April of 1945 just as the war in Europe was ending. Poet Kim Vaeth has rendered Lt. von Stade's prose into verses that would be more appropriate for musical setting.

The first movement, "Vigil," is a lyrical Straussian song for mezzo, with dissonant bells and a very dramatic text. The second movement, "Lacrimosa," is a Mahleresque march for baritone and mezzo. The middle section of this ternary form is slower and more lyrical and is followed by a Bernstein-like return of the A section, this time without the voices. The third, "Benediction," is for baritone accompanied by Shostakovich-like strings and obbligato flute and oboe melodies. The ensuing "Litany" is more dissonant and dramatic than its counterparts. The chromatic harmony adds to the drama and gives it a cinematic feeling. This movement contains a striking a capella duet. The final "In Paradisum" returns to some of the motives of the first movement, while hinting at the Brahms's "Lullaby," Wagner's "Liebestot," and the final aria from Catan's *Florenzia In The Amazon*.

The second work, *Sonnets to Orpheus*, is scored for soprano and chamber ensemble, with the Rilke settings in English. Like the first this is very dramatic. There are several striking moments in these six movements: the Latin of the second song, "Dance The Orange," with its *West Side Story* undercurrents; "Elegy" with its clashing, yet gentle harmonies; the "Tarantella" mixture of the experimental and the familiar.

The performances are quite fine. The straightforward orchestration and the lack of extended techniques don't take away from the contemporary quality.

Amen

MARK FRANCIS

James MacMillan. *Mass and Other Sacred Works*. Westminster Cathedral Choir, Martin Baker, Andrew Reid. Hyperion.

Mass and Other Sacred Works, a new Hyperion CD by James MacMillan, begins with the ethereal *New Song*. The work begins with the boys' choir before the entrance of the men's choir thickens the texture. The text is based on Psalm 96. The organ crescendos lead to its powerful ending.

Mass is a six-movement work sung in English and missing a Credo. The piece opens with a mysterious Kyrie that seems to set up the floating quality that is part of all of the movements. The Gloria is simple, tuneful and chant-like and makes use of fauxbourdon-like lines. The Sursum Corda begins hauntingly in the lower voices gradually adding the rest of the choir. The Sanctus and Benedictus are mainly a chant-like bass solo accompanied by black chords in the organ; an elegant mix of the diatonic and the chromatic. The Agnus Dei is primarily for choir with simple lines imitating each other. MacMillan makes striking use of dissonance and consonance in the context of an overall lyrical approach.

The CD contains five more compositions for choir and one for solo organ. The recording of *Christus vincit*, for treble solo and a capella choir, makes good use of the reverberation of the cathedral. *Gaudeamus in loci pace*, a picturesque work for solo organ, is quiet and in no hurry to get anywhere. The melody in the upper register contrasts with the moving chords in the bass. *Seinte Mari moder milde* is not as centered on a tonic as the other compositions. After a grand opening with full chorus juxtaposed against the organ, the piece works more with texture and different types of ensembles. *A Child's Prayer* is a sad song with two treble parts accompanied by a chaconne in the lower voices. *Changed* (Wallace Stevens) is like many of the movements and pieces: longer than you expect. Time seems suspended.

The Finale Frontier

MARK FRANCIS

Space: New Music For Woodwinds and Voice & An Interesting Breakfast Conversation. Mutable Music 17501-22000

Space was founded in 1979 by Roscoe Mitchell (woodwinds), Thomas Buckner (voice), and Gerald Oshita (woodwinds). The group was founded to explore new concepts in composition and improvisation. This 2-CD set is a re-release of two LPs from the 80's: *New Music For Woodwinds and Voice* (1981) and *An Interesting Breakfast Conversation* (1984). The earlier is made of 4 pieces that combine improvisation and composition. The first two pieces are by Oshita, the second two by Mitchell. Something that distinguishes Mitchell's work from Oshita's is the former's greater use of counterpoint. The voice never sings any text, only syllables and sounds. The second appears to all improvisation and all three musicians take credit for the works. A feature of this recording is the unusual nature of the improvisation; it seems as though each player is trying to play something that completely contrasts with what the others are doing. The one continuous element is the lack of continuity.

Authors

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

MICHAEL DELLAIRA is a composer and lives in New York City. *Five*, a CD of his recent music has just been released by Albany Records, and Act I of his opera *Chéri* was recently given readings with both music-theater and opera casts under the auspices of The Center for Contemporary Opera at Lincoln Center. He is an associate editor of *New Music Connoisseur* and, since 1993, the Vice President of the American Composers Alliance, the oldest composer's service organization in the U.S.

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

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

JANOS GEREBEN is the Arts Editor of the Post Newspaper Group.

THOMAS GOSS is Resident Composer for Moving Arts Dance Collective, a member of New Release Alliance Composers, and sits on the steering committee of the Bay Area Chapter of the American Composers Forum.

J.D. HIXSON is an New York writer on music.

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 has been the artistic director of the Bridge Contemporary Music Series.

Calendar

July 4

San Francisco Symphony in Williams's *E.T.* and *Harry Potter*.
Mountain View, CA.

July 7

91st birthday of Gian Carlo Menotti.

SF Symphony in Gershwin's *Cuban Overture* and Bernstein's
Symphonic Dances from "West Side Story." San Francisco, CA.

July 8

102nd anniversary of the birth of George Antheil.

July 9

87th birthday of David Diamond.

July 13

51st anniversary of the death of Arnold Schoenberg.

San Francisco Symphony in Tan Dun's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden
Dragon* and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. Sonoma, CA.

Steve Reich's *Clapping Music*. Presbyterian Church, Hortonville,
NY.

July 15

87th birthday of Jack Beeson.

July 18

Bernstein's *Candide* performed by the San Francisco Symphony and
Chorus. San Francisco, CA.

July 19

Fresh Voices III. Mark Alburger's *The Bald Soprano*, D.C. Meckler's
Apollo 14, Hugh Livingston's *Underground Garden*, Sondra Clark's
Dalmatia and Dalmatio. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through
July 21.

July 26

Fresh Voices III. Mark Alburger's *The Wind God* (Libretto by
Harriet March Page), Nancy Bloomer Deussen's *Two American
Songs*, Warner Jepson's *San Francisco's Burning*, Lori Griswold's
Time, JJ Hollingsworth's *In the Morning of our Lives*, Douglas
Mandell's *The Voice of My Love*, and Lisa Scola Prosek's *Satyricon*.
Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through July 28.

July 31

Lyric Opera Cleveland presents the second American production of
John Adams's *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*
(libretto by June Jordan). Drury Theatre, Cleveland, OH.

Chronicle

May 1

California E.A.R. Unit in *Brownout*. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

San Francisco Symphony in Weill's *Threepenny Opera Suite* and Martin's *Petite symphonie concertante*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 4.

May 2

Munich Symphony in Chen Yi's *Duo Ye No. 2*. Munich, Germany. Repeated Avery Fisher Hall, New York (NY).

The Bang on a Can *People's Commissioning Fund Concert*. Miller Theatre, Columbia University, New York, NY.

May 3

Death of Yevgeny Svetlanov (b. 9/6/28), at 73. Moscow, Russia. "[He lead Russia's] State Symphony Orchestra for 35 years" [The New York Times, 5/6/02].

Pamela Z. CRCA, University of California, San Diego, CA. Through May 11, 21 Grand, Oakland.

Lawrence Dillon's *Amadeus ex machina*. Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, NC.

May 4

Skyline College Choir in *An Evening of Poetry and Song*, with music of D.C. Meckler. Skyline College, San Bruno, CA.

Sarah Michael's *Arachne*. Goat Hall, San Francisco, CA. Through May 19.

William Susman's *Asphyxiating Uma*. IMC6, Sunnyvale, CA.

Terry Riley and the All-Stars. Columbia University, New York, NY.

Dan Locklair's *Brief Mass*. Christ United Methodist Church, Greensboro, NC.

May 5

Fire in the House, with John Bischoff. Eighth Street Studio, Berkeley, CA.

May 6

Stefano Scodanibbio and Edoardo Sanguineti. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

May 7

Composers, Inc., presents Brouwer's *Crosswinds*, Chambers's *Firehose Reel*, Felice's *Piano Sonata*, Kuss's *Contraband*, La Rocca's *Veni Sancte Spiritus*, and Shearer's *At Water's Edge*. Green Room, Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

Silk Road Project. Chen Yi's *Ning*. Isaac Stern Auditorium, New York, NY. "Ning . . . was the high point of the night" [John Rockwell, The New York Times, 5/19/02].

Art as Spiritual Practice, with Richard Foreman and Meredith Monk. White Box, New York, NY.

May 9

Boulez's *Dialogue de l'ombre double*. CNMAT, Berkeley, CA.

City Opera presents David Meckler's *Apollo 14*. Church of St. Paul & St. Andrew, New York, NY.

May 10

Zaimont's *Symphony No. 2 ("Remember Me")*. Philharmonic Hall, Kharkov, Ukraine.

American Composers Forum *Composer in the Schools Concert*. Noe Valley Ministry, San Francisco, CA.

May 11

Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats* closes after 21 years and nearly 9,000 performances. West End, London, UK.

24th anniversary of the death of William Grant Still.

American Composers Forum *Composer in the Schools Concert*, with music of Clark Suprynawicz. Berkeley Arts Center, Berkeley, CA.

Lifting the Veil, a Meet the Composer Forum with Mary Lou Newmark, Belinda Reynolds, and Nancy Bloomer Deussen (*Woodwind Quintet No. 2, Tribute to the Ancients, Julia's Song*). California State University, Sacramento, CA.

Zwilich's *Millennium Fantasy*. Civic Auditorium, Idaho Falls, ID.

Luciano Pavarotti cancels what possibly would have been his last performance (in Puccini's *Tosca*) at the Metropolitan Opera, replaced at late notice by Salvatore Licitra, who receives favorable reviews. New York, NY.

May 12

Premiere of Steve Reich's *Three Tales* ("Hindenburg," "Bikini," "Dolly") (with Beryl Korot). Museumsquartier, Vienna, Austria. *Three Tales* mounts to a clamor of warning. The three tales are presented as one in the 65-minute performance, tightly and excitingly given by members of the Ensemble Modern and Synergy Vocals. . . .

The opening sequence [of "Hindenburg"] is a slow deceleration for the ensemble of vocal quintet, string quartet, piano due and four percussionists, so that the sung sounds lengthen to join with the appalled whine of the reporter who was there. . . [R]ecorded and live percussionists construct with the pervasive rhythm from the anvil-driven Nibelheim interlude in *Das Rheingold* and the pianos purloin two chords from Wagner's score" [The New York Times, 5/14/02].

Left Coast Improv Group. 21 Grand, Oakland, CA.

May 13

San Francisco Contemporary Players in Revueltas's *Homenaje a Garcia Lorca*, Trigos's *Ricercare II*, Maldonado's *Figuralmusik II*, and Zohn-Muldoon's *Danza Nocturna*. San Francisco, CA.

May 15

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the San Francisco Symphony in the premiere of Giya Kancheli's *Don't Grieve*, plus Maurice Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 16

Silk Road Project. Zhou Long's *Two Poems from Tang*. Benaroya Hall, Seattle, WA. "Impressive" [Seattle Times, 5/18/02].

May 17

Death of John De Lancie (b. 7/26/21, Berkeley, CA), of leukemia, at 80. Walnut Creek, CA. "[He was] the longtime principal oboist of the Philadelphia Orchestra and a former head of the Curtis Institute of Music . . . De Lancie, who was widely regarded as one of the great oboists of the latter half of the 20th century, joined the orchestra in 1946 and served as principal from 1954 to 1977. His playing, a combination of refinement and strongly pronounced colors, helped define the Philadelphia sound, and his students went on to hold principal positions in orchestras throughout the nation. As a 24-year-old soldier stationed in Germany during World War II, Mr. De Lancie approached the 81-year old Richard Strauss about writing an oboe concerto, and the resulting work has become a staple. He also commissioned and premiered works by Jean Francaix and Benjamin Lees. . . . [A]t 14 he began studying at the Curtis Institute of Music with Marcel Tabuteau, his predecessor in the Philadelphia Orchestra. He taught at Curtis from 1954, and in 1977 he was appointed director of the school. After leaving Curtis in 1985, Mr. De Lancie became founding music dean of Miami's New World School of the Arts, before returning to the Bay Area where he taught at the San Francisco Conservatory" [San Francisco Chronicle, 5/22/02].

Stefania de Kenessey's *Fulfillment*. Annabella Gonzalez Dance Theater, New York, NY.

May 18

Tom Heasley. Whitebox VIP Lounge, San Francisco, CA.

May 19

SFS Youth Orchestra in Ives's *Decoration Day* and Hindemith's *Symphonic Metamorphoses on Themes of Carl Maria von Weber*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 20

Markus Stockhausen and Barre Bouman. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

May 23

ASCAP Concert Music Awards, honoring Gerard Schwarz, Peter Schickele, Bright Sheng, Henry Brant, and Justin Davidson. Walter Reade Theatre, New York, NY.

Ernesto Diaz-Infante. The Luggage Store Gallery, San Francisco, CA. Also on May 30, with Aaron Bennett.

May 25

Chen Yi's *Chinese Myths Cantata*. Dresden, Germany.

Death of Genichi Kawakami, at 90. Hamamatsu, Japan. "[He] insouciantly combined the delicate notes of the piano and the earsplitting roar of the motorcycle to create the Yamaha empire In 1937 he joined the company, then called Nippon Gakki, which was started in the late 19th century by Torakasu Tamaha, an organ builder. Mr. Kawakami's father, Kaichi, had become its president in 1927. Genichi Kawakami succeeded him in 1950 and immediately turned his attention to expanding the company, which made its first upright piano in 1900, its first grand piano in 1902 and its first award-winning piano (honored at the St. Louis World's Fair) in 1904. . . . Not content to let demand build naturally, he helped start the Yamaha Music School in 1954. It offered piano lessons for a modest fee, and franchises spread to other cities. . . . In 1954, pianos were owned by barely 1 percent of Japanese households; 40 years later, there were pianos in close to 20 percent of households, and Yamaha was the world's largest piano manufacturer. . . . Motorcycles did not become part of Yamaha's repertoire until after World War II. . . . The division was spun off as the Yamaha Motor Company in 1955 In 1987, both branches became known as the Yamaha Corporation" [Constance L. Hays, The New York Times, 5/28/02].

May 26

New England Symphonic Ensemble in music of Stefania de Kenessey. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

May 28

Piccolo Spoleto presents Dan Locklair's *Poems 'N Pairs*. Charleston, SC.

May 29

Michael Tilson Thomas conducts the SF Symphony in Schuman and Schumann, featuring the former's *George Washington Bridge* and *Concerto on Old English Rounds*. Davies Hall, San Francisco, CA.

May 30

Composers Concordance presents Nowak's *Resound*, Dello Joio's *Two Concert Etudes*, Pehrson's *Violhexy*, Parwez's *Chitarang*, Schuller's *Episodes*, Yttrehus's *Explorations*, and Hardish's *Jazz Sonorities*. Frederick Loewe Theater, New York University, New York, NY.