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Primarily Primosch

TOM MOORE

James Primosch was born in 1956, and is a professor of music at the University of Pennsylvania. He has a long catalogue of works (many available from Presser), and a particular leaning towards works expressing a spiritual connection. A pianist, he also has a long-standing interest in the electronic medium. Primosch's music can be heard on a recent disc from New World, which includes the *Piano Quintet*, *String Quartet No. 2* ("After Zurbaran"), *Fantasy-Variations for Violin, Cello and Piano*, and *Icons for Clarinet, Piano, and Tape*. Additional recordings of his music can be heard on discs from CRI, Albany, Bard, and Centaur.

I met with James Primosch on July 3, 2002, at a coffee shop in Chestnut Hill, PA.

MOORE: Could you tell me about your beginnings in music? What was the musical environment in your family like? Where did you grow up?

PRIMOSCH: I was born in Cleveland, and at a few years of age we moved to a suburb of Cleveland, Highland Heights. We didn't have musicians in the family, other than the elementary lessons that my father had taken on piano and accordion. I started out with accordion lessons in grade school, inspired by my father's yearly retrieval of his accordion from the closet. I played in a band, which played weddings in Cleveland. We were given a spinet electric organ by an uncle of mine, and I taught myself to play, and got as far as struggling through some Bach inventions on that instrument. I didn't start piano until just before college. I wasn't writing music, except for pseudo-jazz tunes for my wedding band to play during the dinner music set. I went to Cleveland State University for my undergraduate degree, and took a degree in composition, studying piano as well. The teachers I had in Cleveland were two composers. One was Bain Murray. Bain was a product of Harvard, and had also studied, as so many Americans did, with Boulanger. The other was Rudolf Bubalo, who is still alive, and the person who introduced me to electronic music. Rudy studied at Roosevelt in Chicago. He was a very talented jazz pianist, and worked with Sarah Vaughan at one point. I studied piano with Andreas Kuprevicius. He was my principal piano teacher; I also worked with some other faculty members for piano, including Joan Terr Ronis and Nancy Voigt. I had some success as a pianist in undergraduate school, and went to the Gaudeamus competition in 1977. One of the faculty members had been a prizewinner there a number of years earlier, and she put the idea into my head, along with Bain, who liked the idea of my getting to Europe.

MOORE: Could you say a little about the competition, and about your focus as a pianist? Was it on contemporary music?

PRIMOSCH: I was studying a wide range of repertoire. The music department wasn't terribly large, and those of us who were adept at the piano ended up accompanying a lot of singers and instrumentalists, so I remember playing the Brahms E minor cello sonata with a cellist, doing a voice recital with a singer. There was chamber music, I played with the jazz ensemble, I would cover keyboard parts for the wind ensemble and the orchestra. I did standard solo repertoire, and also some contemporary music. Early on I learned the Copland *Piano Sonata*, and had the privilege of playing a portion of the piece for the composer when he visited Cleveland. It was a fantastic experience – he was very kind, very generous. I played a portion of the piece at convocation where he was the guest of honor.

At one point during the day, there were ten unscheduled minutes, and he asked to see a copy of the New York Times. For some reason no one else was available to be with him, and I was asked to sit with Copland, while he looked over the Times at the Cleveland State Library. He engaged about what I was doing as a composer – he was very kind, and very encouraging. I remember that moment and that afternoon. I was terribly worried about playing at the convocation, but my fears were dissipated after I saw him conduct the Cleveland Orchestra the night before, and felt that things would be OK. A wonderful performance of the *Third Symphony*, and I think that Leo Smit played the *Piano Concerto*. This would have been in 1974. The Gaudeamus is a competition for interpreters of contemporary music held in Rotterdam, not exclusively for pianists. The biggest piece in my repertoire at the time was the first book of Makrokosmos by George Crumb. The most challenging was the Berio *Sequenza IV*. I did a movement from the *Vingt Regards* of Messiaen, a piece by Kazimierz Serocki – Bain Murray was a big fan of contemporary Polish music, and had brought the Serocki to my attention -- and I did two Dutch pieces by Andriessen and Peter Schat. The Crumb was only six or seven years old, so it was still something of a novelty, in a way that it isn't now.

MOORE: What was the scene for new music in Cleveland at the time? What was the relation between new music performance and the educational institutions in Cleveland? Were there independent institutions supporting new music?

PRIMOSCH: There would be new music concerts presented by schools. Where I usually heard new music was at the programs at Cleveland State University. There was a regular series of concerts by the Cleveland Composers Guild, which would present three concerts a season with local performers, and works by composers from throughout the region of northeast Ohio. I didn't get to much new music other than what was happening at my school, though I did participate in performances at the Cleveland Institute of Music. I was asked to play music by Don Erb, who was there in Cleveland, and made a recording with him. People assume that if you are from Cleveland that you worked with Don. I actually never studied with him, but he was certainly a presence. At the time he was one of the most played American composers on the orchestral scene, and was the world-class composer in Cleveland, and so a de facto mentor.

MOORE: Becoming a musician always seems like an unlikely career choice. What were the factors that drew you towards music and particularly towards composition?

PRIMOSCH: It wasn't a hundred percent clear to me that I was supposed to have a life in music. I remember a conversation with my father where Plan B was being discussed, which was to go to Ohio State for journalism if the music major at Cleveland State didn't work out. A path didn't open before me until later in my career, when it became clear that further training and education would be the next step, with an eye towards an academic situation, that that would be a way to have a life in music. Most of my fellow students were in music education, and there were few people aspiring to be composers. There weren't, as there are today, people who worked as composers, or people who have day jobs but who are making a genuine contribution to the compositional realm. That didn't seem to be apparent to me at the time, and it seemed like an academic situation was the way it would happen.

One impetus towards composition was hearing a broadcast of the Berg clarinet and piano pieces from the Library of Congress. I remember hearing the Berg and thinking (foolishly) “I could do something like that!,” meaning two instruments, short pieces, and the drama and expressivity of the music was appealing to me as well. And so one of my first attempts was something for clarinet and piano. I was very interested in jazz at this time, playing in the jazz ensemble, writing arrangements for the Cleveland State jazz ensemble. I would ritualistically play Miles Davis's *Kind of Blue* before going to play a job.

MOORE: The 1970s was an interesting time for jazz – all kinds of possibilities, but at the same time a disappearing audience in some ways. Who were your idols at this point?

PRIMOSCH: I wish I could say that at 15 I had great taste, but the fact is that I had a lot of Dave Brubeck records. As a suburban white kid I was not that well-informed, although I had tried to do what I could by reading everything I could get my hands on at the public library. There was very little jazz on the radio, though there was one guy on AM named Dave Hawthorne who had a couple of hours of jazz on the air every night.

MOORE: What was the local scene in Cleveland?

PRIMOSCH: I wasn't into it, I didn't get to the clubs – I was a little too young for that scene. There were some fine players – I remember the name of Bill Dobbins. There was a saxophonist named Ernie Krivda who was a big presence. Bill Gidney, who was on the faculty at Cleveland State, was an important pianist. Again, I was a white suburban kid, so what did I do for jazz? I went to a performance by Maynard Ferguson at a local high school, or by Woody Herman. The fusion thing was happening, but it was combined with these big bands playing jazz-rock stuff, that got a lot of kids involved. Sometimes we would play the charts at Cleveland State that Maynard Ferguson or Woody Herman had played. I remember going to hear Stan Kenton. There was an African-American gentleman on the faculty at my high school that would give me lifts to concerts. I did get to see Duke Ellington, and went backstage and met him. At my one chance to see Davis, he came on stage, played for about 38 seconds, and then left.

MOORE: Where was that?

PRIMOSCH: A concert in Cleveland. I think it might have been Brubeck on the first half, and then Miles was the second part of the bill. He played for a few seconds, maybe the vibe wasn't right, and we didn't see him again.

MOORE: Did you go directly to the University of Pennsylvania from Cleveland State?

PRIMOSCH: Cleveland State granted me the degree in '78, and I went to Philadelphia to attend the University of Pennsylvania that fall. I was attracted by the idea of working with Crumb. At the time what people called the Penn Troika was there; they had three very distinguished composers on the faculty – George Crumb, George Rochberg, Richard Wernick. I wasn't familiar with Wernick's work, but I certainly knew Rochberg's name, and I had known Crumb's music very well already. I finished a master's degree there in two years. Penn was trying to buck the trend of the doctoral degree as the terminal degree for composers, and they had a terminal MA. After Penn I chose to remain in Philadelphia for a year, rather than go on for a doctorate immediately. I played in a piano bar, and gave piano lessons, and was able to live on that, thanks to a very inexpensive rental. After a year of that I went on to a doctoral program at Columbia.

I had had the chance to work with Mario Davidovsky when he was a guest professor during the second semester that I was at Penn. Mario came down from New York once a week and did a seminar on electronic music. I had started a piece for clarinet and tape, he encouraged me to finish the piece, and perhaps it could be arranged that I attend his composers' conference, which was then meeting at Johnson State College in northern Vermont. I went to the conference, which was a fantastic experience, a two-week event where student composers had pieces read by New York freelancers. My work with Mario at Penn and at the composers' conference led me to be interested in working with him at Columbia, and to have the chance to work at what was then called the Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Studio.

MOORE: Were you involved with electronic music at Penn?

PRIMOSCH: I had done electronic music in Cleveland, working with Rudy Bubalo, in the studio that they had at Cleveland State. Penn didn't really have an extensive studio, and I went back to Cleveland in summer 79 to finish my clarinet and tape piece. And so that's why Columbia, which was a renowned center, was of interest to me. And it was an opportunity to be in New York. Columbia had a DMA program. Mario was my principal instructor. I was working with him for composition lessons, and in the electronic music studio, where I was a graduate assistant. I also took lessons with Chou-Wen Chung, and had classes with George Edwards.

MOORE: Were you aware of an uptown/downtown divide in New York at the time?

PRIMOSCH: I wonder when I first started hearing the words “uptown, downtown”. I am not sure if heard them right off the bat at Columbia in the early eighties. There was a wide range of music being written at Columbia. People think of Columbia/Princeton as monolithic, but there were people writing in a relatively tonal idiom. You have to remember that Jack Beeson is also a Columbia mentor to composers, Otto Luening...

MOORE: Was he teaching?

PRIMOSCH: Otto was retired, but he was part of Columbia as well. I don't think there were any composer writing strict 12-tone music when I was a student, but rather a range of things in the middle. There wasn't a great deal of interest in what was happening downtown. Everybody thinks that they are part of the mainstream, and the fact is there are different art worlds, which overlap, but the values of some are different from those of others. So what was happening at Columbia was more connected to what I think of as the American-European tradition. The so-called “downtown” musics, which themselves are multiple, are perhaps connected more to the American experimentalist tradition. That's an oversimplification, but there are points of connection between the two groups as well. Both camps would claim Varèse. Mario was studio assistant to Varèse when he first came to this country. Another example is that both would claim George Crumb, somebody that knows the European tradition as well as anybody I know, but can be said to participate in the American experimentalist tradition. We didn't think of ourselves as uptown folks. I may have colleagues that were more interested in the downtown scene than I was. I went and heard Philip Glass and Steve Reich pieces at the *Next Wave*. There was so much happening in New York that just keeping up with your main interest was a lot to do.

MOORE: You mentioned “art worlds”. In the musical world we might think of “schools”. Did you see your choices as shaped by response to a school that you felt a part of?

PRIMOSCH: You can argue both ways. Look at Penn, for example. Wernick, Crumb and Rochberg were all leaders in uses of tonality in contemporary music, which was a relatively novel thing in the seventies. Think of the uses of tonality in Crumb's music, in Wernick's music, the Rochberg third Quartet. They were interested in their own way, by no means aping each other, though I think there are mutual influences that can be traced, in how older musics can be of use to a contemporary compositional voice. I can see a bond among those gentlemen -- I don't know that it's a school exactly in the sense that we might speak of a "School of Paris" in painting. I saw Columbia as eclectic. There were some shared interests and values. I worked with a lot of different people -- I never had lessons with Rochberg, but had some classes with him, I had lessons with Crumb and Wernick. While I was at Penn they brought in some very fine guest composers -- I had lessons with George Perle, and a composition seminar with Ralph Shapey. I should also mention that I worked with John Harbison at Tanglewood -- he has become an especially important mentor. I never studied with a genuine serialist composer.

MOORE: Who would have been a genuine serialist composer?

PRIMOSCH: Charles Wuorinen, Donald Martino, and Milton Babbitt would be three examples of what I mean by someone taking the Schoenberg/Serialist legacy and going with it. The term gets tossed around a lot, but there are relatively few real serialist composers, it's true. It's difficult to find a common thread among all the composers that I have worked with. The people who influenced me the most were Davidovsky and Crumb and Wernick. Crumb and Davidovsky both have an exquisite ear for color. They are able to shape expressive gestures to have the maximum communicative power -- it's a very gestural music in both cases. Their exquisite attention to color is something that I have striven for. Wernick and Crumb, and in his own way Davidovsky, are concerned with the intellectual depth that can spring from a deep craft, and again connected with that European American tradition.

MOORE: One of the things which I noted about your music on the CRI disc is your use of American vernacular materials in a modern context. Going along with that there seems to be a pull toward more spiritually oriented subject matter.

PRIMOSCH: The vernacular idioms in the last two movements of the piano quintet appear more explicitly than in any piece of mine up to that time. The third is a set of variations on the spiritual "Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child," and the last movement is a quasi-shuffling bluesy kind of piece. I shied away from using jazz idioms in my concert music in an explicit way, because I felt that it could be disrespectful of African-American idioms, in the sense of doing something in a superficial way, and so I consciously avoided it for a long time. Maybe I felt ready to be able to work with these idioms, and that my own language could absorb the idioms and work with them in a way that was respectful, not superficial, that I could do something that would be respectful, yet part of my own music. About the last movement of the quintet a student said "You deconstructed a jazz song!," and I was very pleased by that. The spiritual thing started to be explicit in a set I did in 1988, called *Three Sacred Songs*. A wonderful soprano named Christine Schadeberg, a good friend, had asked me to do a piece for a recital she was going to give at Town Hall. She wanted an opening number, and something that wouldn't clobber people over the head with a very aggressive idiom. She suggested folk song arrangements. She had done some aggressively modernist settings of mine, and although she liked them fine, and did them beautifully, she was wondering if I could consider something that could serve as an entryway to a program. I wasn't interested in doing folksongs, but I hit on the idea of doing arrangements of plainchant.

I had worked as a church musician since high school, playing at mass. While I was at Columbia I was on the staff of the Catholic campus ministry. While I was in New York, I had two church jobs. I am not trained as an organist, but I can accompany a congregation.

MOORE: Did you grow up in the Catholic Church?

PRIMOSCH: I was a cradle Catholic, and remain a practicing one. I used the old sacred melodies in these "Three Sacred Songs", and in a funny way it connects with the jazz thing as well, because they were arrangements, in the way that one would do an arrangement of a standard, using pre-existing material. Here it was taking a melody and working with a harmonic and rhythmic framework in a way not unlike what you might do in a jazz arrangement. That piece led to a series of pieces in which I used sacred melodies. The Second Quartet is a meditation on the hymn tune "Let all mortal flesh keep silence." It's a great tune..

MOORE: It's a very strong tune.

PRIMOSCH: There have been other pieces employing sacred melodies as well -- *Sacra Conversazione* for sextet and tape, *Dream Journal* for two pianos, percussion and tape. And there's a connection with the piano quintet as well, in the sense that "Motherless child" is a spiritual. This has been a path that I have continued to work with. With the use of these pre-existing material the harmonic style of my music has broadened out a bit. The second quartet is one of those pieces where there is an attempt at a fusion of a range of harmonic materials, all knit together motivically by the hymn tune. Sometimes I have juxtaposed stylistically -- in the *Sacra Conversazione* there are tonal movements that use old melodies, and there are 12-tone, atonal movements interspersed.

MOORE: In *Holy the Firm* it seemed that the materials were much more diatonic than in some of the chamber pieces.

PRIMOSCH: That's a relatively diatonic palette at times, although you can hear more dissonant aspects as well. Look, I like a lot of different kinds of music -- I like to write different kinds of music, I like to hear different kinds of music, and there are pieces like my piano and tape piece, *Secret Geometry*, which is in a thorough-going high-modernist idiom, and the cycle for Dawn Upshaw, *Holy the Firm*, is in a relatively tonal idiom. It may be more apparent in the piano version, but to a certain extent the jazz background is coming out in these more diatonic aspects of the music. I'm not ideological about it. What works for the text at hand is what works for me. I don't feel like there is one right way to write music.

MOORE: Are you concerned with creating a voice that is consistent between pieces? How does one do that while drawing on different palettes?

PRIMOSCH: My primary concern has been to serve the expressive purposes at hand, and I haven't worried that much about a consistent voice. That can be troubling to folks who value that highly. I have played a recording of *Sacra Conversazione* to different groups, and some feel that the tonal music sounds fine and the atonal music sounds anachronistic, and others feel the reverse -- "what's that tonal stuff doing in there? That's odd!" It's more of an Ives model, than a Webern model. You think of the *Fourth Symphony* or the *Concord Sonata*. I certainly have pieces that are more tightly focused in idiom. I am concerned with doing music that belongs together -- I don't want to distract the listener with abrupt juxtapositions, although there are pieces that can do that successfully. I don't worry about voice, because if I am serving the piece well my own voice will come through. And I mean this both playfully and seriously -- there is a limit to my powers of invention. I sometimes joke that in my music you will find an economy of means through a poverty of invention.

MOORE: In Ives it may not so much be the invention but the shaping of the borrowed material.

PRIMOSCH: You see it with young composers, I see it in my own student pieces, and in the pieces of my students – it's much easier to come up with an idea than it is to do something with the idea that you have. A talented young student may have a piece with a string of great ideas. She or he should save some for the next piece, and work with the three ideas that may be strongest. Doing something with the material may be more important than coming up with another striking thing.

MOORE: What about recent and forthcoming projects?

PRIMOSCH: I was lucky to have a couple of big premieres this past season. The Chicago Symphony commissioned and premiered a set of songs on texts of Rilke, an early collection called *Das Stundenbuch*. I set them in German, though my cycle has an English title – *From a Book of Hours*. It was premiered this past January. Lisa Saffer was the soprano; Antonio Pappano conducted. I haven't written a great deal of orchestral music, and I think I am beginning to get the knack with this piece.

MOORE: What was the genesis of the piece? Did you choose the Rilke?

PRIMOSCH: The genesis was a recommendation from Shulamit Ran, who at the time was composer-in-residence with the Chicago. She put my name forward as part of a program of commissions for emerging composers. The original request was for an orchestra piece. When the request came I had recently experienced hearing Dawn Upshaw sing my music for the first time, and so I made a suggestion that they consider a piece for Dawn. An orchestra can't say that a particular singer will be the soloist, because things can get messy if you have a contract that calls for singer A, and Singer A is unavailable. I had the impression that Dawn was a Rilke fan – colleagues had written Rilke settings for her, and I had thought about these poems for a long time, in some cases since the mid-80's, and had sketched some of the music in the mid-90's. As it turned out Dawn's schedule did not allow her to do the premiere. Lisa Saffer is a fantastic singer who is known for her work in baroque opera and also in contemporary music. This spring she did *Lulu* with the English National Opera to considerable acclaim. She did a wonderful performance of these songs.

MOORE: Do the poems fall in with the spiritual end of things for you?

PRIMOSCH: They are spiritual poems, but Rilke's spirituality is by no means orthodox. It's not conventional Christian theology, though one of the translator's notes that I read says that the poems "admit of readings by believers and non-believers". It's rather dark, talking about a God who is separate from us, aware of God's distance. There is a desperate, anguished quality to one of the poems, which is an expression of longing for the divine, and the last one ends in a forlorn manner, saying that we can only stammer fragments of God's name. It was interesting to hear the premier a few months after 9/11. Hearing the piece in that context there was a resonance that might not have been there otherwise. I had two other premieres, including a piece for pianist Lambert Orkis. I took some lessons with Lambert while I was a graduate student at Penn.

MOORE: Is he based in Philadelphia?

PRIMOSCH: He teaches at Temple University, and is currently based in Virginia where he serves as principal keyboard for the National Symphony. He's perhaps best known as the accompanist for Anne Sofie Mutter.

Lambert conceived the idea of a pair of millennium commissions. He commissioned the *Second Sonata* from Richard Wernick, which would serve as the first half of the recital he had in mind, and for the second half he asked me for a piece where he would play both piano and Kurzweil synthesizer, in the manner of Rick Wakeman, or Keith Emerson. We had to discuss where the keyboards would be, since it would be amusing if I wrote a 38-minute piece, and he thought the Kurz would be on the left, and I thought it would be on the right.

MOORE: Where did they go?

PRIMOSCH: The synthesizer goes on the left, at a right angle to the Steinway.

MOORE: How did you make that decision?

PRIMOSCH: It was Lambert's request. There are some peculiar looking passages in the score, because it can appear that he has a cross-hand passage with the left-hand at the very top of the keyboard. I had done a lot of pieces with tape, and had never used live synth. I was always interested in electronic music where I could craft the sound individually and laboriously. I could "play" the studio, and not in real time. I am the seventh player in the sextet. I would never share the stage with the virtuosos of the New York New Music Ensemble, but if I don't have to play in real time, I can join in with the tape. It meant that I couldn't use the myriad patch changes that I usually do, but had to rely on a smaller number of patches, and ones that could be interesting for a longer period of time. It's a big piece, a thirty-eight minute sonata. The synthesizer evokes ghosts of the piano's past, so there is a quasi-harpsichord portion, a fortepiano movement in the style of a Schubert impromptu, and a Chopin etude and nocturne. So there are these ghosts of the keyboard's past being brought into our present by the keyboard's future, i.e. the electronic keyboard. Lambert premiered this at the Curtis Institute this past spring, and will record the piece for Bridge Records. The third project is the clarinet concerto I did for *Speculum Musicae* this past spring. Alan Bluestein, who did my clarinet and tape piece back in 1979 at the Johnson conference, was the soloist. This is another piece where I used live synth, in combination with piano and percussion, and three string players.

MOORE: What is the future of these pieces? Or in other words, what synth will they be played with in 2050?

PRIMOSCH: By 2050 we'll all have USB ports in the back of our heads and we'll download the piece from a server somewhere!

MOORE: Will it be period instrument performance?

PRIMOSCH: That's an interesting question. I purchased a Kurzweil and arranged to outfit the machine with the same chips as the Kurzweil that Lambert had. I bought mine after he got his, so I wanted it to have the same resources. I had to go to a firm in Idaho that makes "heritage" chips, because Lambert's machine was already outdated after about a year. Continued viability is an important question. In 2050 I don't know what is going to happen. In 2005, or today, when you get the sonata from Presser, you can get the specifications for the Kurzweil patches. There will also be verbal descriptions, so that they can be recreated with whatever is available. It's more like writing a piece for organ.

MOORE: Since you never know exactly what a stop is going to sound like...

PRIMOSCH: So you write "add mixtures." It's very different from the tape music where the piece is inherent in the tape.

MOORE: How does your approach to tape music filter into your approach for carbon-based music, and vice versa?

PRIMOSCH: The electronic studio is an ear-training process in that it invites you to listen intently to the inner life of sounds, and unless you have had serious training as a performer, you may not have paid attention to details of attack and decay, and how timbres change over time. You can get interested in the micro-structure of how we experience sound, what makes a musical gesture, how can you get an accent? Is it just playing it louder? What happens when you play it shorter? This means you can become interested when working with, as you say "carbon-based lifeforms," in constructing new timbres, in seeking out how an attack can be constructed in a composite way, an attentiveness to details, an avoidance of rote solutions. Work with the electronic medium really encourages this attention to sound's inner life.

MOORE: I noted that the attacks in *Holy the Firm* seem to be dispersed over time and across the ensemble.

PRIMOSCH: Or another way of looking at that is that I am looking for an interesting way to project what George Rochberg called "the harmonic envelope." He startled us in seminar by saying that "composers don't know how to write accompaniments for melodies," which seemed preposterous in 1978, but there's a lot of truth to it, since what he is talking about is the ability to project harmony in a convincing way.

MOORE: I suppose you could blame Schoenberg and serialism for this, in that once everything is serially determined everything becomes foreground, and nothing remains as background.

PRIMOSCH: I don't know about that. You still hear the opening of Schoenberg's *Fourth Quartet* as a tune for the first violin, with chords accompanying. If you want to blame anybody you blame Anton Webern and Milton Babbitt, in the sense that everything is thematic – nothing is ornamental in those composer's musics, everything is structural. As fascinating and as lovely as those musics are, there are other possibilities as well.

MOORE: So this takes us back around to the use of pre-existing material, which we were discussing earlier.

PRIMOSCH: In *Holy the Firm*, although I try to have a real musical voice in the ensemble, the starting point was very much the vocal line, finding the right musical gesture for the text, and then finding a harmonic world that could serve that melodic gesture. In that sense, although the tunes are all my own in that piece, it is like the pieces that employ pre-existent melodic material.

Concert Review

Eighth Other Minds Festival

KEN BULLOCK

Other Minds 8. March 7, Palace of Fine Arts, San Francisco, CA. Through March 9.

For its eighth annual festival, *Other Minds* took the stage in its largest venue, San Francisco's Palace of Fine Arts. Concerts spanned March 7-9, with panels of composers and performers preceding shows.

The concerts began with ondes martinon, often in consort with piano. Impressive compositions written for this pioneering electronic instrument were heard from Messiaen, Jolivet, and Milhaud. Guitar works followed -- pieces by Lou Harrison for solo guitar -- one for steelbody with bottleneck -- played gorgeously by David Tanenbaum. The evening concluded with a brief -- all-too-brief -- improvisation by Pauline Oliveros's Circle Trio: Oliveros on a just-tuned accordion, violinist India Cooke, and vocalist Karolyn van Putten, voice.

The panel that opened the second evening March 8 included Lou Harrison; the program was billed as a celebration of his 85th birthday. Harrison is always a charming talker and can turn the most banal questions into amusing or penetrating answers.

The Lou Harrison pieces encompassed 45 years; Linda Burman-Hall admirably played the most recent piece, *Sonata for Harpsichord* dedicated to the player, dated 1999-2000. Burman-Hall switched to tack piano for the 1955-56 *Incidental Music to Corneille's "Cinna,"* with overtones of silent film and vaudeville: reel theater music. In fact, according to Harrison, while he was composing the piece, he had workmen dig a trench in his yard for rod puppeteers, anticipating a performance that never materialized. The workman, Harrison said, must have thought the hole would be a pool for baby alligators. The Harmida Piano Trio continued with Harrison's 1990 masterpiece in the genre with impressive virtuosity

Peppy Andrea Lockwood's collaboration with baritone Thomas Buckner, *Duende*, was at times vividly cinematic. Lockwood had enlisted Buckner after hearing some of his vocal experiments, some of which she said sounded "shamanistic."

Richard Teitelbaum's extraordinary *Blends*, originally composed while studying with shakuhachi master Katsuya Yokoyama, utilized not only classical (originally Chinese) Gagaku orchestral music, but also American experimental strains and European Expressionist dissonance, with Central Asian and North Indian forms. This was dense, satisfying, and impressive.

Pauline Oliveros's 2001 *Quintuplets Play Pen: Homage to Ruth Crawford* was performed by pianist Sarah Cahill, who also played Leo Ornstein's *Morning in the Woods* (1971). Curiously, both had something of Satie.

The final, and longest, program of the Festival, fittingly called *Triple Concert*, opened with Kronos Quartet accompanying Ellen Fullman (on her "90-foot guitar," the Long String Instrument she invented and plays, stroking the strings as she walks beside it, the longitudinal vibrations of the 100 strings attached to a soundboard in just tuning) and the pie piece, *Stratified Bands: Last Kind Words*, which is actually based in part on a Delta blues of the last three words in the title. The Quartet played long, sinuous harmonies, while the Long

String sounded often like the distant thrum of power lines, or the echo of a santur or qanun.

William Winant and Ches Smith, as an edition of the ever-changing Other Minds Ensemble, played Annea Lockwood's 1998 *Immersion* for quartz bowl, gong and tam-tam, almost another sculptural piece--certainly in the sound, and in the near-theatrics of the percussionists, trading off a microphone to catch the resonance as the other struck, stroked and shook the instruments. Then a tour-de-force: Tacuchian's four-handed piano piece, *Estrturas Gemeas (Twin Structures)*, played brilliantly by Joel Sachs and Cheryl Seltzer of Continuum, one pair of hands mirroring the other in an excursion of 20th-century pianistics, until the doubling, compounded by shifting accents and dynamics, fractures the reflection, splintering motif and theme into something new and different. In its intensiveness, this 1978 piece was a highlight of the Festival.

Then Continuum in fuller complement played two compositions by Cuban-born Tania Leon: *Arenas d'un tiempo (Sands of Time)*, inspired by the shifting, rippling sands of Ipanema as seen from a hotel window, and -- joined by Thomas Buckner, singing wonderfully -- *Canto* of 2000, featuring the poems of Cuban-born poets who now reside elsewhere-- especially Jose Kozer, brilliant in the printed poem and uncredited translation in the program-- which embodied different moods, including lullaby and saudade (soidade), in a spectrum of song and warm sounds.

Finally, the Festival reached its stunning conclusion with jazz pianist and composer Randy Weston and his group, African Rhythms, performing pieces of Weston's -- one, *Blues for Langston Hughes*, commissioned by the Festival, to the memory of the poet with whom Weston made his first trip to Africa, and whose funeral Weston played in '67 ("And later when they read the will, he'd left scale to the musicians . . .").

In the direct line of New York school of piano, from stride on, as a protege of Monk and Ellington - who once tried to found a record label in order to produce Weston and Dollar Brand -- Weston is also a longtime student of African music, having resided and played there; the results are apparent in the treatment and material, from Ellingtonian "confections" and two-handed piano counterpoint, to great Latin-flavored ensemble pieces like *African Sunrise*, dedicated to Dizzy Gillespie and Machito (who both played on it in recording). With the gigantic, powerful Weston literally rocking the Yamaha, his excellent sidemen swung along: T.K. Blue on alto and flute, Neil Carter on African percussion, extraordinary bassist Alex Blake-- who strummed and plucked his instrument like an enormous guitar, somewhat in the style of Jimmy Garrison, but original, and singing along like Slam Stewart-- and that elegant stylist, veteran trombonist Benny Powell, whose soloing exploited the full range and dynamics of this often-neglected, at least critically neglected, instrument.

All that said -- about "all that" performed, an overwhelming amount and range of music concentrated into about 9-10 hours over three days, it still remains to congratulate Amirkhanian and the Other Minds staff and support team for, again, truly making possible in an ongoing festival what was noted in the eulogy to John Cage in *The New Yorker* that gave the Fest its name: "His epitaph might be that he composed music in others' minds." No epitaph, Other Minds continues to set off overtones of the most diverse sounds in our heads, as we watch and ongoing in memory. And it's fitting too to mention dancer Pam Wunderlich, who, in her various guises, stopped a lot of chat outside the auditorium and turned us back into spectators again.

Record Reviews

Neuvo Nocturno

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Alejandro Escuer. *Jade Nocturno*. Onix Nuevo Ensemble de Mexico, conducted by Alejandro Escuer. Quindecim Recordings.

Onix Nuevo Ensemble de Mexico. *El Tiempo*. Onix Nuevo Ensemble de Mexico, conducted by Alejandro Escuer. Global Classics.

Mexico is a vast, fascinating place with a rich, diverse culture. And though its geography has been thoroughly visited, its cultural one -- meaning, in this case, new music -- still awaits discovery. Mexican flutist-composer-professor-new-music-advocate Alejandro Escuer (b. 1963) says he believes "in its quality and originality, even though government institutions prefer to support Visual Arts and Literature." This musician, who studied at New York University with Robert Dick and serves as artistic director of Onix Nuevo Ensemble De Mexico, also plays on both of CD's. The programs Escuer has assembled give a strong and varied picture of what's happening in sophisticated music circles south of the border in terms of composition and performance. Few of the Latin composers, with the possible exception of Mario Lavista (b. 1943) and Miguel Del Aquila (b. 1957) are much known in the U.S.A. Both modernist and folkloric styles are represented on these CD's; and each composer has a distinctive and quite personal voice.

Arturo Marquez (b. 1950) is represented on the *El Tiempo* CD by the 1996 *Octeto Malandro*, for flute, clarinet, soprano sax, bassoon, viola, percussion, piano and contrabass. While the work suggests a citified Revueltas in its utilization of "native" elements like danzon and Caribbean rhythms, its piquant instrumentation recalls Weill -- and sometimes Milhaud, and Chavez. The piece contrasts languid and perky rhythms to optimal effect, and it's more than a little charming, with an especially seductive clarinet solo a third of the way into the piece.

Sonata De Camara No. 1 (1993) by Armando Luna (b. 1964) is scored for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano. Cast in the classic three-movement layout common to this form, it cleverly references Stravinsky, Bartók, Honegger, and jazz. Though these "comments" are apparent upon close listening, the sonata's rhythmic drive and coloristic boldness grab one's attention, and hold it. This isn't schoolteacher music, but stark dramatic stuff, with powerful syncopations, and a sure sense of what Garcia Lorca called "duende" -- that Arabo-Hispanic word denoting demonic force or passion -- and Balthazar Chavarria's astounding clarinet work makes the going even hotter. Indeed, the playing throughout is extremely focussed and tight, and the sudden inexorable speed-up in the last movement burns the house down.

Federico Ibarra's *Decima Muerte (10th Death)* (1998) sets a poem of the same name by the melancholy modernist Xavier Villaurrutia, though its text is unfortunately not printed here. The piece is scored for mezzo-soprano (Adriana Diaz de Leon, the dedicatee), as well as two clarinets, viola, cello, and contrabass; and Ibarra's writing cannily exploits their dark, seductive charms.

And speaking of charming, the closer here, the string quartet *Clocks (Relojes)* by Miguel Del Aquila (b. 1957), has that in spades. It's also both technically accomplished and entertaining. The composer delights in Ravel-like clockwork patterns, and some of his writing for string harmonics evoke bits of the French musician's Mallarme songs. The third of five movements, "Sundial 2000 A.C. (Reloj de Sol 2000 A.C.)," is powered by a firmly accelerating ostinato, the succeeding "Romance of the Swiss Clock and the Old Clock (Romance del Reloj Suizo y el Vejo Reloj)" has magical writing for the quartet's intertwined voices. And I can't imagine the finale, "Keeping Time (Contando Tiempo)" not bringing down the house when performed live.

The ensemble's *Jade Nocturno* CD is more private -- chamber music, for smaller forces. Arturo Marquez's *De Pronto* (1987) is a much more spontaneous affair than his work on the first CD. *Pronto* is scored for alto flute, cello, and harp; and suggests but doesn't sound like Claude Debussy's 1915 trio for a similar combination -- flute, viola, harp. But its free-floating harmonies make the work seem like a contemporary extension of the earlier composer's groundbreaking *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*, though here the flute's arabesques are divided among the other instruments.

Escuer performs in his own two pieces -- the title track (1998) and *Templos* (1993). The first, which aims to describe the enigmatic qualities of jade, is a spontaneous, unwilled unfolding, an improvisation in the deepest sense -- sensuous, lyric, serious, playful. The second concentrates on generally thinner, more "transparent" sonorities, with a very fluid sense of pulse, and musical time. It also uses percussive effects which sound electronic, but are entirely acoustic, which goes to show how fecund Escuer's imagination is.

But Robert Rowe's 1996 *Color and Velocity*, for flute and electronics, suffers from a surfeit of imagination and a dearth of passion. The composer seems to merely continue the tired, interactive games of the academy -- acoustic sounds combined and/or contrasted with "processed" ones.

The much-vaunted Joseph Schwanter (b. 1943) is showcased by a "synopsis" of a much larger orchestral piece. *Soaring* (1986) is for flute and piano, played here by Mauricio Nader. And though it's not especially profound, it's entirely engaging and evocative. Even more so is the Graciela Agudelo's 1995 *Meditaciones sobre Abya-Yala*, for flute alone, which again brings Escuer's virtuosic art center stage, with Asiatic nuances redolent of Takemitsu, and thin, glassy sounds like some primeval panpipe.

Lavista's *Danza de las Bailarinas de Degas* (1992) is a more worldly, urban piece, with pronounced Indian rhythmic/melodic elements. It's a workout for flute and piano -- the redoubtable Nader again -- with a mostly driving pulse, and an imaginative use of space and dynamics. *Third Tribe* (1997), by Yuzuru Sadashige, is scored for flute, piano and the Afro-Cuban drums djembe (Juan Carlos Cirujeda), and it combines seemingly opposed sonorities and traditions with a thrilling sense of drama, enhanced, no doubt, by the CD's emphatically "live" sound -- the djembe is wonderfully up-close and personal. Both albums have taken pains in the sonic department, and new material, always benefits from that kind of loving care. Strong works, expertly performed, and the notes are informative, and the packaging attractive.

Philip on Film - II

MICHAEL MCDONAGH

Philip Glass. *Philip on Film*. [*Koyaanisqatsi*. *Powaqqatsi*. *Dracula*. *La Belle et La Bete* (excerpts). *Anima Mundi* (excerpts). *Kundun* (excerpts). *Mishima* (excerpts). *The Secret Agent* (excerpts). *The Thin Blue Line* (excerpt). *The Man In The Bath*. *Evidence* (*Facades*). *Diaspora*]. The Philip Glass Ensemble, with studio orchestras and/or guest musicians. English Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Harry Rabinowitz. Kronos Quartet. All ensembles under the direction of Michael Riesman. Nonesuch.

Philip Glass. *The Music of Candyman*. The Western Wind Vocal Ensemble, Michael Riesman, keyboards and conductor. Orange Mountain Music.

Philip Glass's most famous score for director Godfrey Reggio's *Qatsi* trilogy, *Koyaanisqatsi* (*Life Out of Balance*) (1982), is part of the *Philip on Film* set (Nonesuch), and the new recording -- its second, and the first complete one -- is played by the composer's ensemble and an orchestra, which, though smaller than on the original recording, is nevertheless still made up of winds, brass, strings (minus violins), as in the composer's 1984 opera *Akhnaton*. How does it sound? As fresh, dynamic, and tight as ever. Glass's unique use of musical space continues to impress, and so do his long, slow developments with their carefully planned modulations. The added bass drone beneath the almost Hebraic chant sound in "Organic" is but one of many striking examples. Glass always plays with how we perceive time, and the opening cue (with bass Albert de Ruiter and Michael Riesman on keyboard) and the closer, "Prophecies" (with the same forces as well as the Western Wind Vocal Ensemble), feel vast, yet intimate. "The Grid" has an entirely different effect, and affect. Its rhythms appear to advance and grow along with its ever-denser harmonies, in chromaticism that makes the images of rushing cars seem even more frantic. Reggio's indictments of American materialist society and our crazy way of living haven't aged, in fact, they're even more relevant now. All the forces, under Michael Riesman's direction, do superb work; the chorus is exceedingly moving in "Prophecies."

Powaqqatsi (*Life in Transformation*) (1987) has a decidedly contrasting character. Though perhaps more spacious in general outline, it's also far more complex contrapuntally and rhythmically. Glass uses many "indigenous" instruments (including the Andean quena panpipes, African kora harp, and Brazilian surdos drum), which are sometimes retuned and or electronically balanced in consort with a Western orchestra.

The opening "Serra Pelada," sets up a classic Glass paradox. The music, in 6/8, eighth note = 144, is both slow and fast, while the images -- exquisite, gray-saturated shots of workers in the eponymous Brazilian mine -- are always in slow motion, and the cycling brass chorale and the Coro Hispano Juvenil add layers of rhythmic and spatial enchantment.

Glass also uses world music forms -- a syncopated six-note Afro-Cuban dance montuno used in son -- in "Caught!," for example, becomes the base upon which an amazing number of harmonies and polyrhythms are built, and there's even a harpsichord, real or synthed, playing galloping broken chords. "New Cities In Ancient Lands" -- a three-part piece -- has equally intricate textures.

The film, which is about our cannibalization and/or erasure of indigenous societies worldwide, will be succeeded by the final installment in the trilogy, *Naqoyqatsi* (*War Life*), scheduled for release in late 2002. The film, which Reggio says will focus on "the globalization of the world itself -- the world being served to us in the image and likeness of technology." The director also claims that it will be "a much more extreme film, dramatically and emotively than the other two." And if current world conditions -- the "civilized violence" (Noam Chomsky's phrase) going on in Afghanistan and elsewhere in America's ongoing pursuit of world empire are any indication, it should also prove frighteningly apt for our Zeitgeist.

Glass's other completed Reggio projects are included here --three musical excerpts from the director's 30-minute film for the World Wildlife Fund, *Anima Mundi* (1991), which again mixes ethnic instruments with Western ones, to evocative effect, and his seven-minute short for Italian television, *Evidence* -- it's about that medium's effect on children -- which re-uses "Facades," originally written to accompany shots of Wall Street in *Koyaanisqatsi*. But this new version, for synthed strings and solo sax, lacks the resonant expressivity of the first, for an entirely acoustic combination of sax and strings. It's also shorter, and the melodies, rhythms and general pulse are metronomic and mechanical.

Scorsese's 1998 masterpiece, *Kundun*, which concerns the early life of the current Dalai Lama, the Chinese invasion of Tibet, and the genocide done to its people and its culture, is also here. Though the "ethnic cleansing" is depicted in one spectacular scene, Glass's score, which uses Tibetan horns pretty much throughout, focuses more on landscape and mood evocation. The uncut cues in the picture generally have more weight and scope than the sometimes-shortened versions here. Also -- the cuts in the visually and musically hypnotic Main Title, "Sand Mandala," for example, make it seem longer than it actually is, while the closing cue, "Escape To India" -- 10 minutes as opposed to the film's 20 minutes -- is a quite successful reduction, though the impact it gets in the theatre from the contrast between the varying lengths and coloristic densities of its sections is missing, and here the crucial element of speed -- once again the music plays against the images -- is lost. Still, these are well-chosen excerpts, which should give listeners new to this score a good sense of its variety and emotional depth.

The seven-minute *Diaspora* (2001), which along with most of the works here was included on the ensemble's extensive *Philip On Film* tour, was made by the celebrated Armenian-Canadian director Atom Egoyan, who says his picture "conveys the contrasting emotional threads of cohesion, dispersal and resettlement." Glass's music for it is full of disjunct blocks of color which shift dramatically, with unpredictable repeats, and there are polyrhythm-rich drumming figures played by Gordon Gottlieb, punchy sampled brass, and a very expressive flute solo by Andrew Serman, which dovetails subtly with Jon Gibson's soprano sax. Richard Peck is on alto and tenor, Michael Riesman conducts from the keyboards, and the able S-MZ-Br trio consists of Marie Mascari, Alexandra Montuno, and Peter Stewart.

Glass's score for Peter Greenaway's *The Man in the Bath -- The Archimedes Principle* (2001) is even wilder, with brash eccentric moments abutting lyric ones, especially those involving Riesman on keyboards -- the suddenly thinned texture @ c. 5'30" is exquisite. As of this writing there are no plans to release these films, either in the theatre or on video/DVD, which is something of a shame as it restricts the visual-music experiences to those who caught the tour.

Excerpts from scores to more or less strictly narrative films are also in this set -- Christopher Hampton's 1996 version of Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, and Paul Schrader's ambitious and highly stylized 1995 *Mishima: A Life in Four Chapters*. Unlike Glass's scores for Greenaway and Egoyan's shorts, his music for Hampton's picture is entirely acoustic, and one of his most touching, and melancholy. Its Main Title, which accompanies a sequence showing refugees in turn of the century London slums, sounds like a somber prelude in a Bach cello suite, and its cycling scale, is played here by cellist Fred Sherry, with affecting contributions from English hornist Henry Schuman, and the English Chamber Orchestra under Harry Rabinowitz (a New York one was recorded under Riesman). The scoring throughout is also striking and often very delicate. "The First Meridian" is exquisitely so. It's built from 8, 10, and 11-note phrases for orchestra and harpist -- the superb Susan Jolles -- and hauntingly depicts the film's climax -- the abortive terrorist bombing of the Greenwich Observatory, and the other two cues are just as touching. This is a nearly unknown score, and one that rewards attentive listening. Schrader's visually striking picture -- John Bailey shot it, and Eiko Ishioka designed the sets and costumes -- is a disturbing bio of the Japanese writer, with chilling fantasy sequences. It's almost a cult film, and the four excerpts here, for orchestra and Kronos Quartet, indicate its power and poetic range.

Glass' highly original music for the two *Candyman* films -- the 1992 one by Bernard Rose, and the 1995 sequel by Bill Condon -- is a recent release from Orange Mountain Music. His approach to the wordless and frequently a capella choral writing -- the Western Wind again -- is, as always, idiosyncratic, with passing resemblances to *Koyaanisqatsi*, and his Gandhi opera *Satyagraha* (1980), with subtle harmonic suspensions. There are also parts for acoustic piano and an electronically altered/extended organ "treated" and played in both cases by Riesman, who also conducts. These are atmospheric scores which alternate and combine strikingly dissonant sections with white note ones. Though not gothic, which would be the obvious approach to this subject matter (and one a normal composer would use), they nevertheless seem to invent a new and very ethereal versions of this style. Sound throughout is excellent, and engineer Don Christensen's notes are informative, though Royal S. Brown's, for the Nonesuch set, don't dig deep enough. We suspect it had something to do with his deadlines.

360 degrees

MARK FRANCIS

Phillip Schroeder. *Turning to the Center*. Capstone CPS-8699

Phillip Schroeder's *Turning to the Center* contains three song-cycles for baritone, clarinet, and keyboard. The five short songs of *An Offering*, (Walt Whitman, 1999-2000) set an example of simplicity, directness, and concern for the text that characterizes all the cycles. These first are pandiatonic and with occasional doublings of the melody in the piano and clarinet.

From Pudd'nhead Wilson's Calendar, is formally unique, divided into three sets with spoken interludes between. The performance very lucid and makes subtle use of extended techniques in the piano in the third.

Turning To the Center (Rumi) is the longest of the works as a prelude and 11 songs, and more elaborate formally and timbrally with its use of percussion, clarinet, bass clarinet, and synthesizer. The prelude bears marks of Richard Wagner's *Rheingold* opener as a single chord slowly building in volume and intensity. Indeed, all of the songs make use of pedal point and ostinato and a variety of simple sounds are used effectively.

Chronicle

August 14

Death of Larry Rivers (b. Yitzroch Lorna Grossberg, 8/17/23), of liver cancer, at 78. Southampton, NY. "[He was a] painter and sculptor, jazz saxophonist, writer, poet, teacher and sometime actor and filmmaker. "Rivers . . . was given to cowboy boots, tight pants, inside-out shirts, far-out ties (sometimes two at a time) and a black Cadillac and motorcycle. . . . His sets and costumes for a New York Philharmonic performance of Stravinsky's *Oedips Rex*, conducted by Lukas FOss, outraged . . . critics. Mr. Rivers appeared with Jack Kerouac and Allen Ginsberg in Robert Frank and Alfred Leslei's offbeat film *Pull my Daisy* and played President Lyndon B. Johnson onstage in Kenneth Koch's *Election*. . . . [H]e spent six months making a television travelogue about Africa before being arrested as a suspected mercenary in Lagos, Nigeria, and nearly being executed. . . . Rivers had come to art almost by accident. As a young saxophonist in a band playing the resort circuit in Maine in 1945, he was shown a book about modern art one day by the band's pianist, Jack Freilicher. . . . Jane Freilicher, a painter, was Freilicher's wife. She handed Mr. Rivers a brush. He turned out to have a natural gift. "After a week or two I began thinking that art was an activity on a 'higher level' than jazz," he said. . . . Clement Greenberg, the powerful critic, called him 'an amazing beginner' . . . Greenberg later changed his mind. Mr. Rivers 'stinks,' he decided. . . . He was born . . . to Jewish immigrants from the Ukraine. His father [was] a plumber. . . . A year before his bar mitzvah, he was playing the saxophone on the Borscht Belt in the Catskills. Later, when a comic introduced him and his band as Larry Rivers and the Mudcats, he changed his name. . . . He enrolled at the Juilliard School and studied composition in a class with Miles Davis. They would prepare for exams 'by going outside to smoke some marijuana,' he said. "We were convinced it would improve our hearing," he added. Through Davis, who was living with Charlie Parker, he met other jazz musicians. . . . [T]he home Mr. Rivers set up [was] a 'bohemian household' of 'staggering complexity.' It included . . . Rivers's mother-in-law [Berdie Burger], his favorite [nude . . . Rubensian] model until she died in 1957. . . . 'She was very easy to live with,' Mr. Rivers said. 'Nothing threw her. . . . there were gay guys in my life, and black people and dope addicts, and she would say, 'Oh, isn't he nice... he's nice... Tennessee Williams is nice.' 'She was slightly mad'" [Michael Kimmelman, *The New York Times*, 8/16/02].

August 18

Convergence: Some Parades for Charlie's Dad, by Ronanald Ebrecht and Neely Bruce. Lincoln Center, New York, NY.

August 31

Death of Lionel Hampton (b. 4/20/08, Louisville, KY), at 94. Mount Sinai Medical Center, New York, NY. "In 1942, Mr. Hampton recorded one of the more influential recordings in the history of American music, *Flying Home*, which . . . set the emotional atmosphere for rock. Mr. Hampton performed on piano and drums and was one of the first musicians to play the vibraphone in jazz, on groundbreaking recordings with Louis Armstrong, Benny Carter and Benny Goodman in the 1920's and 30's. . . . Hampton's frenetic stage persona -- mouth agape, mallets flying, sweat pouring from his brow -- earned him a following, and he was legendary for not wanting to leave the stage. He truly lived to play" [Peter Watrous, *The New York Times*, 9/1/02].

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*, 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.

KEN BULLOCK is a writer on music, and theatre critic for *Commuter Times*.

PATTI DEUTER is Associate Editor of 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC and a Bay Area pianist.

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 Conners Publications and Little Piper Publications. He is President of the Southeastern Composers League and the composition board member for the College Music Society-South Chapter.

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

TOM MOORE is Music/Media Librarian at The College of New Jersey. He plays contemporary music in the Ronai/Moore Duo with fellow flautist Laura Ronai of the University of Rio de Janeiro; they have premiered works by Korenchandler, Oliveira, Ripper, Hagerty, White, Rubin and others. He also performs with baroque ensemble *Le Triomphe de L'Amour*. He studied flute with Sandra Miller and Christopher Krueger.

Comment

By the Numbers

Number of articles on living classical composers in *The New Yorker*, February 4-25, 2002 (3 issues).

0

Number of articles on living classical composers in *San Francisco Chronicle Datebook*, February 3-24, 2002 (4 issues).

1

Number of photos of living classical composers in *The New York Times Arts and Leisure Guide*, February 3-24, 2002 (4 issues)

0

Number of articles on living classical composers in *San Francisco Chronicle Datebook*, February 3 - April 21, 2002 (12 issues).

2 (Michael Tilson Thomas, Aaron Jay Kernis)

Number of photos of living classical composers in *The New York Times Arts and Leisure Guide*, February 3- April 21, 2002 (12 issues)

2 (Jonathan Kramer;
Lisa Bielawa, Philip Glass, Eleanor Sandresky)

Number of articles on non-operatic contemporary classical music in *The New York Times Magazine's* special music issue, March 17, 2002

0

Items

[T]he San Francisco Symphony Orchestra has become increasingly exciting during Michael Tilson Thomas's seven-year tenure as music director. In a city that prizes mavericks, Mr. Thomas, at 57, has found a congenial home. . . . "the San Francisco Symphony is now doing everything I've wanted to do," said Charles Amirkhonian . . . "the landscape has changed. It has been a thrill to sit in the hall and hear the downbeat for Varèse's *Arcana*."

James R. Oestreich
The New York Times, 2/10/02

When [Morton] Feldman started making his music more repetitious again in the 1970's, he showed anxiety about possibly being seen as a Minimalist At one point he pulled his composition student Peter Gena into his office, showed him a new score and asked, "Tell me, do you think it sounds too much like Steve Reich?"

Kyle Gann
The New York Times, 2/17/02

[T]he noticeably youngish people in line had not been warned that they were supposed to find 12-tone music difficult. Once inside, the audience listened intently and responded enthusiastically to this bracing [*12 Tones and Beyond*] program, brilliantly performed by the Juilliard Orchestra.

Anthony Tommasini
The New York Times, 2/17/01