

21ST CENTURY MUSIC

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Fox Redux

Composer Jim Fox, founder of the recording label Cold Blue, was interviewed by a Spanish music website in 2003. 21ST-CENTURY MUSIC was invited by the composer to "use it or ignore it as you please." It is our pleasure to reprint an edited translation below.

Q: Cold Blue began in the 80's. How was the label in those days?

A: Yes, Cold Blue came into being in the early 80's. I don't know exactly why I started it. (That was a long time ago.) I suppose it just seemed like the right thing to do. I knew a number of interesting West Coast composers whose work was not being recorded as often as I thought it should be.

Q: I suppose that when this project was born, it was with a very tight budget. Do you believe that now, in the year 2003, it would be possible to begin another project like Cold Blue with that same money or not? Is it difficult to create a label such as Cold Blue in the USA now?

A: When I started Cold Blue, I was working in a bookstore for very low wages (but the job allowed me a great deal of flexibility in my hours). The label was started for next to nothing. I didn't print stationery or mailing labels -- no frills. I couldn't even afford to go to a real record-jacket manufacturer when the 10-inch series was produced, so I went to an envelope manufacturer and had them make up paper sleeves with just one-color printing.

I suppose one could start a record company for a similar amount of money (adjusted for inflation, of course) today. With recent breakthroughs in affordable audio software, so much can be done on one's own -- editing and mastering -- which would save money. (In the 80's, one just couldn't have a record-cutting lathe in the bedroom closet.)

Starting a label in the U.S. is very easy. With that ease, however, comes an absurdly humorous problem: Everyone has a label, and all the labels are competing for the same limited slots in the record stores. I suppose that direct Internet marketing and sales to specific listeners is the lifeblood for many small labels today and this aspect will most likely increase in importance in the future. I still hold to the old ways and have not done as much Internet marketing as I probably should. (Actually, I rather hate marketing in any form, but I must grit my teeth and do it or I let down the folk whose music is on the label.)

Q: I believe that Cold Blue was inactive for a long time. What happened?

A: Cold Blue went under (out of business) in the mid-80's, after about four years of business. Both of my primary U.S. distributors went under within a few months of one another, which was a devastating blow. Also, CD's were just starting to come onto the market -- and, at that time, they were relatively expensive to produce and replicate, so, I thought it a good time to leave the business. (I didn't even own a CD player at that time, nor did any of my close friends.)

I've been delighted to know how many people around the world acquired the old Cold Blue vinyl and remember it fondly today.

Q: When and why did you resuscitate Cold Blue?

A: I restarted the company in the winter of 2000/2001. Much like the original incarnation of Cold Blue in the 80's, I'm not fully sure why I started up the company once again. I had some stuff that I wanted to put out and I didn't like the deals that most "new music" companies offered me, so I called up some of the old Cold Blue gang and a few new ones and asked if they'd be interested in releasing some new material on a new Cold Blue. They all said, "You bet!"

Q: The hopes that you had when you decided to start again, do you believe that they have been fulfilled?

A: I'm simply putting out music that I like, and radio stations are playing it and critics are writing about it. Sales could always be better, but Cold Blue does not stand alone here -- just ask anyone who's putting out discs today.

Q: Many people say that Cold Blue is a label that only could be born in California. Can you explain why?

A: I find this comment tough to amplify, but I'll try. Well, since its inception, Cold Blue has certainly released composers who have strong ties to the West Coast (even if they don't all still live here). Also, the music that I generally like is not so much about competing for meager scraps of new-music bread. And that lack of interest in esthetic competition is perhaps a California-type thing -- but just in the so-called "new music world," obviously not in the great commercial art machinery that calls California home, too.

Most of the musicians on the label have some sort of a lone-wolf aspect about them. They're happy to be off doing their own thing by themselves. Sometimes the West Coast is a rather insular world.

However one wishes to think about this lone-wolf thing, it has usually led to a quite different social/musical experience -- and, often, a quite different music -- than one commonly associates with composers in East Coast cities or in Western Europe. That's about as far as I wish to carry that thought, because these distinctions are very, very blurry, and I don't know that they are of any particular value or interest.

Q: A very important thing for a label is its distribution. Have you solved this part of the business?

A: To some degree. In the States, I have a pretty good distributor to record stores -- Allegro -- and its sales manager has been very supportive. But that's not to say that Cold Blue discs are readily found in most record stores. That's just not the case. But they are in the stores that have an audience for this sort of music, whatever that is. (I'm not going to attempt to define it.) Also, retail outlets such as Forced Exposure, Amoeba Records, Downtown Music Gallery, and the late, great Anomalous Records have all been supportive. In Italy, Cold Blue is distributed by Silenzio, which is a wonderful company run by a wonderful fellow. I have other distributors in other parts of the world, but sales are rather slow everywhere.

Q: How does publicity work for a label like Cold Blue? Do you believe that there are good diffusion channels for your works in your country?

A: I take ads in a variety of magazines -- *The Wire*, *Signal to Noise*, and a number of other publications. And I suppose reviews and radio play help the public's awareness that something is available, so I send out a couple hundred promotional copies of each title for those purposes. And that pays off with press coverage and airplay, but those two things don't always translate to sales. I've sent fliers to appropriate mailing lists and I've advertised in the programs for new music festivals. I've tried a little of this and a little of that and, no doubt, will continue to do so in the future.

Q: What do you think of the phenomenon of musical piracy, homemade recordings, the Internet and all this? Does this affect a label like Cold Blue?

A: I suppose it does to some small degree. I view this phenomenon as a generation-related thing. Folks who grew up in the 60's and 70's didn't have a particularly pristine way of copying music. When I was in high school, I had a reel-to-reel tape deck that I used to play around with musique concrete-type constructions, but I never used it to copy records, because a reel of good tape cost as much as a record. A few years later, I had cassette recorders, but the quality was pretty bad, so, again, I was not tempted to copy anything but extremely rare and unavailable recordings or a radio broadcast of live music. Those who were growing up in the 90's had digital technology around them all the time. And the simplicity and relatively low cost with which one can copy and exchange high-quality digital files (music or anything else that can be rendered into a digital form) makes this technology a siren singing out "please copy, please copy."

When I'm around college-age kids, I often ask them about their CD copying/sharing habits. They all admit that pirating is screwing someone (big or small), but the quick and easy means are there at their fingertips, so, with heads hung low, they almost all admit to copying a great amount of material.

Well, so be it. No doubt music sales methods -- the delivery of purchased recordings will change in the not-too-distant future. I find this sad for one silly reason: I like the artifact of a record in its cardboard sleeve or a CD in its various types of packaging. When these things are well-thought-out and well-rendered, they're delightful.

Q: I suppose that you know that a great difference exists on the "experimental" concept in USA and in Europe or Japan. Do you believe that the USA public is prepared to receive certain more radical proposals that are made in Europe or Japan, or do you believe that, in this aspect, USA continues to be conservative?

A: I'm not exactly sure what you're referring to. I've always viewed experimental music as a primarily U.S. thing. I tend to view the often great amount of attention that I perceive many European artists pay to the historical lineage of experimental work to be a rather conservative concept (linear history). I'm not conversant enough with current trends in Japan to comment on work being done there (and perhaps I'm not conversant enough with certain trends in European work to know of perhaps some specific new thing -- new movement or new artist -- that your question might refer to).

I tend to see experimental music as rather rootless in the very best sense: Wonderful, interesting things popping up out of what might seem like nowhere. When one applies scientific and pseudo-scientific methods to writing music, I think one has moved out of the experimental world and into the world of the avant-garde or high modernists.

Q: How do you see the most creative scene in your country in the artistic aspect and in the business aspect? The political situation in USA, does it affect the musical creation in the country?

A: Gosh, I don't know what might be the most creative "scene" in the U.S. or elsewhere. I've pretty much stopped being judgmental of such things, except on a very personal level. If musician A wants to do whatever it is that he/she wants to do, fine, more power to him/her. And the same goes for musician B and musician C and so on. Their work is simply there -- and I may choose to listen or not. And they, of course can do the same with regard to my work. I'm not interested in grappling with them. I'm not interested in playing games with them. That all seems so petty. In the so-called new music world, it's a fight over crumbs. Who cares who gets them? I don't care. And the strictly commercial world operates on its own -- with its own set of rules -- and rarely intersects the less-commercially viable world.

Politics (here, there, and everywhere) absolutely are connected with art. But not often in a one-to-one relationship. And the most useful (perhaps only useful) way for art to interact with politics is in the realm of commercial art/music -- a world in which one is not simply "preaching to the choir," as one often is with relatively esoteric art, which tends to reach a narrow audience whose members often share very similar political and social views.

If I write or perform a piano piece that is dedicated to the overthrow of the corrupt and dishonest Bush administration, I'm probably playing it for an audience of a couple hundred like-minded souls. But, if I'm a top-selling commercial musician, I can reach millions who are not like-minded souls. In that world, one can make a difference with art. As a less-popular artist, one can only act as any other concerned citizen: attend rallies, sign petitions, cast votes, put up placards in one's front window.

Viewed on a broad level, current politics in the U.S. is so removed from the people that it runs on its own, off to the side, with the general population merely grumbling -- and usually grumbling all the time. And, historically, Americans have not been particularly political animals. Perhaps this has to do with the diversity of cultures here and a general distrust of all politicians -- a distrust that has run throughout U.S. history. Maybe it has to do with a culture built on wide-open spaces, to which one might flee from all sorts of problems. And, stepping back from politics, this culture of wide-open spaces may deeply inform U.S. music. In fact, it might be a step toward defining it.

Q: Do you believe that an excess of musical offerings exist at the moment, and this can cause what one publishes to be overwhelmed?

A: The amount of available music is staggering. Within minutes, I can have 100 years of recorded music from many places around the globe summoned up right at my fingertips -- at a computer or at a large record store.

And musicians continue to record and release great amounts of music -- almost unimaginably great amounts of music -- as if the world of recorded music would all end soon and they must get in their offerings before it does.

Q: What new works is Cold Blue preparing during the year 2003?

A: Last spring, Cold Blue released a new and wonderful recording of Chas Smith's uniquely ominous textures and an also wonderful new recording by Michael Byron -- a recording of many contrasts, much like the composer himself.

In a couple of months (November 2003), I will put out a three-CD boxed set that reissues the series of seven 10-inch vinyl lps that were originally released by Cold Blue in the early 80's: music by Peter Garland, Michael Jon Fink, Barney Childs, Read Miller, Chas Smith, Rick Cox, and Daniel Lentz. Lots of people liked these odd little discs and I've received many letters asking that I reissue them on CD. Voila!

A number of recordings are in the works for 2004: Among them are a CD of music by the young Oregon-based composer Kurt Doles, a CD of some of my own very short pianos pieces, and perhaps the launching of a new series of short-format (CD-single) releases from various composers. A few other projects are also currently in the works for 2004, but in forms too vague for me to mention at this moment.

Q: Have you thought of enlarging the sphere of Cold Blue into other areas like DVD, the Internet, or other fields of contemporary artistic creation? Do you think that this, over time, will be forced inside the structure of a record label?

A: At this point, I can just keep the little CD company going. DVDs are not for Cold Blue at the present. Internet delivery of music has not come of age yet. (When it does, I will probably participate.)

In the 80's, I was involved in a small way in local concert promotion, especially the promotion of those who recorded on Cold Blue. This can be a costly and time-consuming sort of venture, so I shy from it now. But, just because I'm something of a central source of information about Cold Blue artists, I do often find myself slightly involved in concert arrangements. (Currently, I'm helping to coordinate a two-day Cold Blue event at Podewil in Berlin, Germany.)

Q: For a creative artist such as yourself, it must be very complicated to be put in the position of a businessman. Up to what point is Jim Fox a businessman?

A: It's not so complicated, just time-consuming and occasionally morally draining. But I fancy myself a practical and self-sufficient person, so I simply lace up my shoes and go to work whenever I need to do so. Although it may at first seem an odd comment, I find the many composers I know who are forever scrambling to acquire grants (for both prestige and economic gain) are much more the businessmen than I am. I run my company when and how it pleases me to do so, and I am not at the mercy of any panel or committee. I can sneer at or laugh at or hang up on anyone I please -- so my business is just what I make it.

If I didn't have the business, I suppose I'd get more music written, but does the world really need more music?

Q: How did you start into the music world? Does it come from family tradition?

A: I've been involved with music in one way or another most of my life. I studied violin -- taught by incompetent nuns at my local primary school -- for a few years when I was very young. Then I did the same with piano for a few of years. But, when I reached my teens, I soon found myself playing organ and piano in blues and rock bands. At some point around this time, I also took up flute, which I continued to play through my undergraduate college years. I was never a dedicated performer on any of these instruments. I just didn't connect with or glow with that sort of single-minded focus. (On the other hand, I've often found myself happily juggling a half-dozen disparate ideas at once.)

In my teens, I also began to write chamber music and studied a bit with a local composer. Eventually, I went on to complete a couple of degrees in composition.

Music is not a family tradition, although my father played trumpet when he was young and my mother played the piano when she was young. When I grew up, we only had a few records in the house--until I started buying them--and we didn't have a record player that played 12-inch albums until I was about 10 or 11 years old.

Q: For a musician of contemporary music, such as you, which do you believe are the concepts that any contemporary composer must have at present?

A: I can't think of any absolutes -- any specific necessary concepts -- that a composer must hold to or believe in or practice. In fact, I encourage young composers not to hold to any absolutes.

Q: I believe that you taught electronic music during a brief period at the end of the 70's. How do you remember that period of time? Is teaching difficult, and would you consider returning to such a career in the future?

A: I taught a bit before founding Cold Blue, and as an occasional guest composer, have subsequently taught for a week or a few days at universities here and there in the States.

I believe that the only thing difficult about teaching music is not laughing at what I find myself saying. I just don't have anything to tell the kids other than to suggest that they simply be themselves and not trust much of anything they read or hear about music or any art.

Most of what passes as arts education is just plain bullshit packaged in a tweed suit. And people have come to want that bullshit -- volumes of it in textbooks and program notes and liner notes and newspaper columns.

What's tough about teaching is convincing kids that they don't need the bullshit. By the time most students are in their late teens, they've somehow been conditioned to crave nicely dressed bullshit passionately.

Another big problem: so many kids seem to want to be given a magic answer/formula/secret that will render them great artists. Well, as you no doubt know, that just isn't going to happen. They must find their own way or they will stumble along a path not worth traveling.

Q: What do you find more satisfactory: to compose or to interpret your own music?

A: Composing.

Q: Unfortunately, I have only been able to listen to *Last Things*. How much time did it take to create the two compositions on that album?

A: They were created at different times and for different purposes. The title track, *Last Things*, was written as a piece for bass clarinetist Marty Walker to perform, and he has performed it quite a number of times as a piece for tape and bass clarinet. I don't recall how long it took me to write it. That's always such a hard thing to pin down, because little ideas for future pieces are always hopping around in one's mind. I often have a sound in my head for a good bit of time before it spills out as a piece of music. (But the opposite is also true: I often quickly write short, aphoristic music, just out of the blue, an activity that is almost a form of improvising. This type of music will be found on my forthcoming recording of short piano pieces that I mentioned earlier.)

The other track on this CD, *The Copy of the Drawing*, was written to be an installation. It was "tape music" to be played in a garden area outside of a concert hall during a music festival, and that is how it was first and subsequently "performed." I suppose the idea of this piece was gestating since I first read a book of letters written to the astronomers at the Mt. Wilson Observatory in the 1930s. This book, *No One May Ever Have the Same Knowledge Again* (edited by my friend Sarah Simons), is a wonderful collection of wild letters from all sorts of people from all over the world who felt compelled to share their strange theories about the world, the cosmos and life itself with the learned astronomers assembled at Mt. Wilson at the time. The odd and beautiful juxtapositions of words in these letters just beckoned me. So I twisted them into constructs that often held double meaning for me.

I wanted this music to be something that the listener could walk in and out of at any time, without missing some important event. And I wanted it to be whispery, almost conspiratorial in tone, and vaguely sexual in tone. Sounds come and go, but not leading the listener on in a conventional sense -- they just come and go, like the breeze. And very lightly, under these breezes are a couple of slowly recurring elements that may be viewed as extremely slow clocks.

Q: In *Last Things*, you accompany yourself with other musicians. Do you like more to play accompanied by other people or do you like more to make it alone?

A: Although I've numerous times performed my own solo piano pieces and occasionally performed my music and the music of others for small gatherings of musicians -- duos, trios --I tend not to enjoy performing at all.

Q: I believe that you have also participated in other composers' records. How do you approach these recordings?

A: It depends on the composer I'm working with and what the music is. I have no standard way to approach a piece of music -- mine or anyone else's. I just try to do whatever seems best for the music within the strictures set by the composer or other participating musicians.

Q: In *Last Things*, the music has two faces. While *The Copy Of The Drawing* is very calm, the title track has darker atmospheres. Would you consider yourself an ambient composer? Are you interested in that style?

A: Considering timbre alone, *Last Things* is perhaps the "darkest" music I've written. At the time I wrote it, I don't believe there was a school of dark ambience, but I may be wrong about this. However, if it did exist, it certainly wasn't where I was coming from. Although I find it hard to remember exactly what I may have intended to do when I wrote that music almost 20 years ago, I know for sure that the bass clarinet part, with its shifting and exaggerated vibrato and its wild dynamic leaps was born of my long-time love of the ecstatic music of such musicians as Albert Ayler and Pharoah Sanders, whom I first started listening to when I was in high school. Actually (and perhaps oddly), I believe that it was out of this music that I found a passion for contemporary so-called "concert music". A lot of this sort of ecstatic music that I listened to when I was younger has found an extremely indirect voice in much of my music (a voice I don't expect anyone but me to hear). *Last Things* is one of my only overt references to this music that has meant so much to me through the years.

Q: One of more important things in *The Copy Of The Drawing* is the presence of Janyce Collins's voice. It is a warm voice and, at the same time, she is related very well with the spirit of the composition. What importance do you give, as much in your work as in the rest of contemporary music, to the human voice in front of the technology?

A: Most purely electronic stuff doesn't quite do it for me. I usually like to have electronic sounds brought to life with the little unpredictable nuances (perhaps even inadequacies) of a human voice or an acoustic instrument -- something to stir the air with delightful irregularities. I've no rules about how I employ electronics or how I might mix them with non-electronic sources. I don't have any theoretical or procedural axes to grind. I just do what I do with a certain disregard, but not contempt, for what others may be doing or trying to do with music. Of course, Janyce Collins has a wonderful quiet voice and the piece wouldn't exist without her voice.

Q: Do you believe that your music would be different if you lived in another place, for example in New York or Miami? Until what point is California important in your method of creating music?

A: Although I've lived in California for more than 25 years, I'm not originally from California (nor are most of the people I know who've lived here for many, many years). Whatever it is that's going on in my music just evolved without much, if any, predetermination. Although I've been oddly consistent: for many years (and to this day), I've had diatonic pieces sitting side by side with pieces of varying degrees of chromaticism and somewhat suspended and ambiguous harmonies. But, while I may be able to find some common threads through the years, my overall perspectives on music and perhaps most arts

-- their whys and wherefores -- has shifted often and widely, as it probably should throughout one's life. If I lived elsewhere, I suppose I might be writing something a bit similar to what I presently write. When I lived in Chicago, before moving west, I started to write music that shared some vague similarities to what I do now. I am definitely informed by the landscape around me, but not in any directly observable way -- that is, I'm not writing musical postcards or drawing musical "landscapes." But I suppose I feel the local geography in my bones a bit by this time. I've always enjoyed the time I've spent in the actual Southwestern deserts that surround Los Angeles. Being a good distance out in the desert can promote an almost-disorienting effect. It often seems to have an extreme intensity of suspension -- everything seems at rest yet poised to act. It's invigorating, and it invites acute, careful listening into its quiet. Although I've spent most of my life in cities, the time I've spent in desert areas has been etched distinctly into my mind and specifically reflected as an undercurrent in a few of my pieces.

Q: What current composers do you find interesting? Do you believe that the composer's persona is important, as it is in pop music?

A: I hate questions like this. I like much of the music of lots of composers, but I hate to try to list them. Very quickly, I've enjoyed and admired various bits of music by Gavin Bryars, Daniel Lentz, Harold Budd, Rick Cox, Ingram Marshall, Michael Jon Fink, Peter Garland, and many other contemporaries throughout the years.

Q: Maybe Cold Blue steals much of your time and maybe Jim Fox the composer doesn't have the time to be able to centers in on the creation of original work. Aren't you afraid that Cold Blue eats up your time?

A: Cold Blue eats up a lot of time. But I certainly wouldn't sit at the piano composing for 12 hours a day if Cold Blue didn't exist. The only thing that I do regret losing is some of the time I might spend reading or doing some other reflective activity. And it cuts into my drinking time.

Q: Do you have new works in progress?

A: I have three recordings in process at the moment. In late spring of 2004, Ants Records in Italy will release a piece of mine for piano and prerecorded sounds -- *in the same river*. I have part of it recorded now. Around this same time, Cold Blue will issue a recording of some of my short piano pieces (I've written hundreds of them). I plan to record this selection in December 2003 with pianist Bryan Pezzone. (I believe the disc will be titled *blue photographs: piano music*.) I've also started to record an older piece for trombone quartet, string quartet, and piano called *The City the Wind Swept Away*. This piece may become part of a series of CD singles that Cold Blue may start issuing sometime in 2004.

Concert Reviews

Just Intonations

DAVID CLEARY

Just in Time: Foreign Influences Brought Home. April 11, 2003, Follen Church, Lexington, MA.

The latest *Just In Time* concert was subtitled *Foreign Influences Brought Home*. Despite this, only a few of the nine works heard truly fit the description.

John Sarkissian's *Grand Waltz* from his opera *Nicholas and Alexandra* filters 19th century Viennese gestures through an intensely dissonant prism without overtly suggesting Schoenberg. Scored for piano four hands, it's an entity both curious and intriguing. *Two Pieces for Guitar* by Jeffrey H. Steele looks south of the border for inspiration; the title of its first movement, "Samba de Dos Ninos," illustrates this clearly. They're short, slight, and charming — two exotic sorbets. Techniques from the musical storehouse of India manifest themselves in a very personal way in the flute/cello duet *Fantasy in Adi Talam* by Marc W. Rossi. Western pop idioms cross-pollinate Saraswati ragas and cadential figures called *tehai* in this sunny, able listen. Stephen James's solo piano *Nocturne* more obliquely touches base with overseas approaches, containing mild Chopin hues in its lush Romantic substance. It's a capable elaboration on an opening cascading chord progression.

By contrast, James's other entry, a violin/piano duo titled *Dedication*, is as American as Leonard Bernstein and Aaron Copland—and makes no secret of that sound world throughout its duration. And Hayg Boyadjian's excellent *Homage a Charles Ives*, a trio for flute, violin, and viola, bases a decent bit of its material on snatches from that master's portfolio. But Boyadjian is no style study composer -- in fact, this rondo-like piece sounds thoroughly like no one but Boyadjian, nicely pacing moments of supple repose and edgy intensity. *Backyard Scenes* by Jorge V. Grossmann also makes a lasting impression, a collection of brief character pieces for violin and piano that in no way lack substance. They're well made, imaginative, and effective.

Of the two offerings by Pamela J. Marshall, the trio *Through the Mist* for flute, violin, and guitar proved more tonally consonant in sound. It's a laid-back, graceful, expressive selection that possesses more depth than its gentle surface might suggest. The *Suite* for piano solo notably shows its origins as a harpsichord work, often dry and thin textured, though not without its merits.

Performances were good, with the strongest coming from the Rossi pairing (flutist Michael Finegold and cellist Emmanuel Feldman), the Boyadjian trio (flutist Claude Cobert, violinist Piotr Buczek, and violist Don Krishnaswami), guitarist Steele, and pianist James.

NEC Percussion

DAVID CLEARY

NEC Percussion Ensemble: Premieres for Percussion. April 13, 2003, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston,

Of the seven works heard on this "Premieres for Percussion" concert, only two items actually merited the label—and they constituted the best and worst of what was heard.

The musical materials in *DNA* by Joan Tower are inspired by the dual nature of the double helix; one can in fact best characterize the selection as a sophisticated "game of pairs" involving its five percussionists. It makes inventive and subtle use of spatial writing, is stuffed full with driving energy, and has a good, non-prescriptive feel for form. In a word, wonderful. Stanley Leonard's *Sacred Stones* unfortunately is much less successful. Its ritualistic, atmospheric writing comes off as pretentious, and the piece proves structurally scattered and harmonically inconsistent.

There was disparity in listening pleasure to be had with the two marimba quartets encountered as well. *Omphalo Centric Lecture* by Nigel Westlake is a neo-process delight, perky in mood and mildly jazzy in sound, that nicely clumps its patterned material into convincing larger sections. And it sounds great for its wood-plank foursome. Daniel Levitan's *Marimba Quartet*, however, seems a bit stodgy and uninspired in gesture despite a fetching sonic world that's even more strongly indebted to jazz idioms than the Westlake. Its warm tremolo middle section is its best feature.

The lengthiest opus presented was Michael Colgrass's *Fantasy-Variations*. But despite clocking in at nearly 20 minutes, one never thought "enough already!" For roto-tom soloist and six percussionists, the work is loaded with variety of texture and mood. Dramatic and substantial, it proves most effective even though it expresses variations in a stop-and-start manner. *Mudra* by Bob Becker integrates its featured player more closely with the four battery mates that surround him. It adapts Indian musical techniques to Western ends, essentially deriving its fabric from an initial upward chord progression. It's nice enough to hear if not all that convincing in unfolding or architecture.

Edgar Varèse's *Ionisation* is of course the distinguished ancestor of all else heard this evening, and it remains a splendid, riveting listen after all these years. The New England Conservatory Percussion Ensemble, ably led by Frank Epstein, gave it a deliberate presentation that did not skimp on excitement. And they played everything else on the program exceedingly well. Soloists Jeff Means (in the Colgrass) and Matt Grubbs (in the Becker) were charismatic and highly capable.

Dinosaur Metaphysics and Magic

DAVID CLEARY

Dinosaur Annex: Metaphysics and Magic. May 4, 2003, First and Second Church, Boston, MA.

The Dinosaur Annex season finale devoted its program to six works by mid-career composers of varying notoriety. It was the two newest entries, both specially commissioned by the group, that pleased most.

Moments of Inertia (2003) by Tom Flaherty contains three movement's worth of neo-process patterned accompaniments out of which various fetching melodies emerge. As in Steve Reich's best music, these planes of textured backing interact well with each other, deftly delineating larger structural units. And the sound world is irresistible, making scintillating use of its flute-violoncello trio. In brief, it's an absolute must-hear. For Pierrot ensemble with added percussion, Kurt Stallman's *Metaphysical Miniatures* (2003) is also a winner. It cleverly combines East Coast idioms with subtle ostinati, imparting a nicely sculpted sense of line and textural contrast to its overall fabric. Like Webern, Stallman imbues his short movements with style and meaning.

There was also much to like in Stephen Hartke's piano quartet *Beyond Words* (2001), a sober reflection on the horrors of September 11. Much of the material heard here is based on snippets from Thomas Tallis's *Lamentations of Jeremiah*, which are then filtered through a highly chromatic, often polytonal harmonic prism. The work projects a strong sense of personality and unfolds cogently, though its often strict segregation of strings and piano took some getting used to. *Magic Carpet Music* (1999) showcases Laura Elise Schwendinger's sturdy command of craft and sensitive ear for scoring; its quartet of flute, violin, cello, and clarinet/bass clarinet is handled in novel, yet highly effective ways. Although the piece wanders a bit structurally, at times seeming too repetitive, it's clearly the product of a talented artist.

The oldest selection heard, Libby Larson's *Slang* (1994), starts off well enough, ably assigning spiffy motoric material to its clarinet, violin, and piano threesome that flits effortlessly between classical and jazz-oriented sonorities. But the back half of the work bogs down into articulating a quasi-rondo structure that seems unbalanced and arbitrary. Had it remained a perpetuum mobile throughout, it would have been much more effective. *Plie de Trois* (2000) by Peter Homans, scored for flute, viola, and harp, possesses a manner of speech too derivative of Debussy's model for comfort. Sadly, its problems do not end there, as it also lacks clear delineation of idea, compelling conception of form, and sense of energy at any level.

Performances were excellent. Violinist Cyrus Stevens, violist Anne Black, cellist Michael Curry, flutist Sue-Ellen Hershman-Tcherepnin, clarinetist Katherine V. Matasy, pianist Donald Berman, percussionist James Russell Smith, and harpist Judi Saiki Couture maintained the lofty level of professionalism one has come to routinely expect from this fine ensemble. Scott Wheeler conducted Stallman's piece with thoughtful accuracy.

Bravos to Dinosaur Annex for ensuring that this concert, subtitled "Metaphysics and Magic," had boatloads of the latter quality present. Much enjoyed.

Longitude in the Tooth

DAVID CLEARY

Longitude. May 6, 2003, Edward M. Pickman Concert Hall, Longy School of Music, Cambridge, MA.

Four composers elderly or deceased, each represented by an infrequently encountered item from their portfolio, were featured on the most recent *Longitude* presentation. The results, while mixed, proved of much interest.

Anton Webern's *Quartet Op. 22* (1930) possesses performance rarity status thanks to its surrealistic scoring of violin, clarinet, piano, and tenor saxophone. Nevertheless, it's a wonderful piece, like most all of this composer's output transcending critical boundaries to become a masterwork. The other selection by a composer no longer with us, Giacinto Scelsi's *String Trio* (1958), is not so fortunate. It's in fact one of those entities that makes a better conceptual idea than a vehicle for listening, each of its four movements based on oscillations around one or two static pitch classes. Unfortunately, there's minimal sense of direction or long-range structural thinking encountered, made even less tolerable thanks to a limited timbral palette.

Of the works by those still living, the better was the *Duo Concertante* (1984), for alto saxophone and piano, by Leslie Bassett. Despite the sonic universe that at times suggests Messiaen via employment of such elements as bell-like piano chords and octatonic scales, Bassett infuses a unique sense of personality within the music's tissues. Treading a fine line between character piece and larger architectural edifice, each of its five movements bursts with dramatic energy and unfolds cogently -- excellent stuff indeed. Scored for wind quintet and piano, *Recollections* (1982) is a surprising utterance to come from Karel Husa. There's copious utilization here of extended techniques such as pitch bends, color tremolos, string plucking, and prepared piano effects, something not ordinarily associated with this composer's oeuvre. One can positively cite this sextet for its motivic economy, though forms seem slack and arbitrary.

While the most dynamic presentation this evening came from saxophonist Philipp Staedlin and pianist Mika Tanaka in the Bassett, all performances were first-rate. Series director Paul Brust deftly conducted the Webern, Scelsi, and Husa, avoiding the many pitfalls that can cause ensemble train wrecks among the most seasoned pros, never mind eager yet green students. Kudos go to Brust and his charges for their fine execution.

The Next Big Thing at Other Minds

MARK ALBURGER

11th Other Minds Festival. Phill Niblock's *Sethwork*, Daniel Roumain's *String Quartet No. 4 ("Angelou")*, and Michael Nyman's *The Piano, Manhatta, String Quartet No. 3*, and *The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi*. February 24, 2004, Yerba Buena, San Francisco, CA.

There's always the next big thing. Doesn't matter how innovative you are, someone else will come along and provide some new astonishment. At least we hope so. That's why we keep going to concerts and getting up in the morning....

Three generations of composers opened the 11th Other Minds Festival on February 24 at Yerba Buena, fulfilling Sergei Diaghilev's old admonishment ("astonish me!") with various levels of amazement.

The old guard was represented by the once-avant-garde minimalist Phill Niblock, whose *Sethwork* (2003) was a revelation in sustained drones and difference tones (those wobbles you hear when two notes are closely "out of tune" with each other). Sitting with a laptop, Niblock's co-conspirators were guitarist Seth Josel, for whom the piece was written, and a diptych of the composer's own intriguing films focusing on repetitive manual laboring around the world. The sum was indeed greater than the parts. The visuals which also ran independently before and after the music, took on an increased level of attention as the lights dimmed and the sonics swept. Josel's live component was a comparatively small part of the overall mix -- most of which had been presampled, but modified by Niblock in real time. The volume, which had been billed as bordering on deafening, was not overloud (Steve Reich's glockenspiel music in *Drumming* and any take-your-pick metal band -- there were no fingers in the ear or escapes to the lobby here); duration was not overlong (true believers take in Niblock's 6-hour winter solstice show each year in New York); and the visuals were sufficiently magnificent, if perhaps socioeconomically / culturally questionable (Niblock was a professor of photography, film, and video for 17 years).

The slam-bang came in *String Quartet No. 4 ('Angelou')* from the young dreadlocked composer-violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain. Here the aiders-and-abettors were the manipulated voice (but not poetry of) Maya Angelou, and the consummate musicianship of the Del Sol String Quartet and DJ Scientific. Opening with rangy-tonal unison melody that could have come off an updated Kronos Quartet "Pieces of Africa" ("Pieces of New York?"), imitative contrapuntal adventures soon ensued. Maya was in the mix for the second movement, and big hip-hop computer samples joined in movements three and four, as did Roumain, respectively on amplified acoustic and electric violins, the latter sounding like a scratch Jimi Hendrix. This was a fun yet uncompromising music that did not pander, and seemed at every moment genuine. Applause erupted after each of the last two sections.

Applause was rampant as well for an evolving elder statesman of postminimalism, Michael Nyman, who began his set with three settings from his wonderful score to Jane Campion's 1993 film, *The Piano*, the most poignant of which being "The heart asks pleasure first," heard at several key moments in the work. This is a lilting folkish music, with lovely figurations and metrical shifts that seem at once postmodern and timeless. By contrast, his pounding live and pre-recorded accompaniments to an early silent reel (*Manhatta*, 1921, on portions of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*) sound like an update to the rollicking 1920's pianola music of George Antheil's *Ballet Mechanique* -- wholly appropriate, and another form of "postmodernism," one supposes. Or "post-postmodernism"?....

Nyman's music for the Del Sol and soprano Cheryl Keller was more challenging. The *String Quartet No. 3*, like the Roumain, calls for an amplified ensemble, but seems to cry out for larger forces, with a first violin part requiring numerous difficult double stops. "The Ballad of Kastriot Rexhepi" was marred by miking problems of balance between ensemble and soloist: Keller's fine tone was sometimes difficult to hear in the mix, and words were often unintelligible.

Chronicle

February 2

Fault Lines: Music from Northern California. Eric Moe's *Sonnets to Orpheus*, Richard Festinger's *Laws of Motion*, Laurie San Marin's *Linea Negra*, and Edmund Campion's *Mathematica*. Knuth Hall, State University, San Francisco, CA.

February 3

Cleveland Orchestra in Harrison Birtwistle's *Night's Black Bird* and Henri Dutilleux's *Symphony No. 2 ("Le Double")*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

Bang on a Can All-Stars. Carla Killhstedt's *Long and Short of It: A Brief History of Chatter*, J.G. Thirlwell's *Anabiosis*, Cynthia Hopkins's *Songs Before Love Songs (A Post-Apocalyptic Requiem for the Human Race)*, Dan Plonsey's *The Plonsey Episodes*, and Philip Glass's *Music in Similar Motion* (with the composer on keyboard). Merkin Hall, New York, NY.

Soweto Gospel Choir. Zankel Hall, New York, NY.

February 4

Cleveland Orchestra in Alban Berg's *Three Pieces for Orchestra*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "Berg's music was the perfect point of arrival" [Jeremy Eichler, *The New York Times*, 2/7/05].

February 5

Baltimore Symphony in Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*, Heitor Villa-Lobos's *Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5*, and Dmitri Shostakovich's *Festive Overture*, as part of the gala opening of the Music Center at Strathmere, MD. "*Arrachne* by Michael Hersch, commissioned for the occasion, was a nod to the orchestra's onetime tradition of playing new American music. Originally scheduled to open the program, it was deemed too serious, so Mr. Temirkanov bumped it in favor of the Polonaise from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*." [Daniel J. Wakin, *The New York Times*, 2/7/05].

Composers Concordance *Improvisionaries*. Cutting Room, New York, NY.

Stringsongs, Meredith Monk's first work for string quartet, makes its U.S. debut with the Kronos Quartet, Zankel Hall, New York, NY.

Igor Stravinsky's *Agon* and Sergei Prokofiev's *The Prodigal Son*. New York City Ballet, New York, NY.

February 6

Death of pianist Lazar [Naumovich] Berman (b. 2/26/30, St. Petersburg, Russia), of a heart attack, at 74. Florence, Italy. "His mother, Ana Makhover, began teaching him to play the piano when he was 2. After a year, he became a student at the Leningrad Conservatory, and when the family moved to Moscow in 1939, he enrolled at the Central Children's Music School., where he studied with Alexander Goldenweiser" [Allan Kozinn, *The New York Times*, 2/9/04].

Herb Bielawa 75th-Birthday Concert. Piano Concerto, Feedback for Two Organs, Cloning Around for French Horn and MIDI (with Jan Pusina), *Three Prayers for SATB Choir, Stone Settings*. Unitarian Universalist Church, Berkeley, CA.

Death of Karl Haas (b. 12/6/13, Speyer-am-Rhein, Germany), at 91. Royal Oak, MI. "[He was] the popular classical music commentator whose program 'Adventures in Good Music' was once the most listened to classical music radio show in the world . . . (It is still broadcast in reruns on about 100 stations.) . . . In 1936, denied a job because he was Jewish, he left Germany and emigrated to the United States" [Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, 2/8/05].

February 7

LSD (Luck Sven David). California EAR Unit in David Lang's *Child*, Erkki Sven Tuur's *Architectonics VII*, and Stephen Mosko's *J*. County Museum of Art, Los Angeles, CA.

February 8

Artist Brian Ermanski rescues artist Edward P. Victus's life's work from a trash bin, displaying it on a sidewalk for the taking. 416 Lafayette Street, New York, NY.

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra in Daniel Schnyder's *Concerto for Winds ('Some Other Blues')*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

February 9

The Paul Drescher Ensemble premieres the 20th anniversary remounting of Drescher's *Slow Fire*, Studio Theater, Mondavi Center, University of California, Davis, CA.

Death of Mary Kim Joh, at 101. New York, NY. "Joh is best known for *School Bells*, a 1945 anthem that must be learned by all students going into grammar school today in South Korea. She was asked by the South Korean government to compose children's songs after Japanese occupation ended and her nation was left with no Korean-language school materials.

. . . Distressed to find there were no books on Korean music in American libraries, Ms. Joh also wrote *Folk Songs of Korea*, published by Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, Iowa, in 1950" [Jennifer Dunning, *The New York Times*, 2/11/05].

February 10

Death of Spencer Dryden, of cancer, at 66. Petaluma, CA. "[He was] the drummer for the . . . Jefferson Airplane in its glory years. . . . Dryden was inducted in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1996 for his work with Jefferson Airplane, from its breakthrough 1967 album *Surrealistic Pillow* through its participation in historic rock festivals like Woodstock and Altamont. He was heard on hits like *Somebody to Love* and *White Rabbit* Dryden retired from performing 10 years ago, although he had not been working much before that. I'm gone, he told *The San Francisco Chronicle* last May. 'I'm out of it. I've left the building.' . . . He played in some early rock bands but soon drifted toward jazz and was working as a drummer at a Hollywood strip club, the Pink Pussycat, when a session drummer, Earl Palmer, recommended him to Jefferson Airplane's manager. He replaced Skip Spence, who went on to start another Fillmore-era San Francisco rock group, Moby Grape. During his stint with the Airplane, Mr. Dryden had an affair with Grace Slick, a vocalist in the group, and his marriage to the former Sally Mann was covered extensively in *Rolling Stone* magazine. He left the band in 1970. Mr. Dryden replaced Mickey Hart in the country-rock band New Riders of the Purple Sage in February 1971 and stayed with that group until 1978. In the 1980's, he joined a group of rock veterans called the Dinosaurs. The band, with former members of Big Brother and the Holding Company, Quicksilver Messenger Service and Country Joe and the Fish, played informally around the San Francisco Bay Area. When the other members of Jefferson Airplane reunited in 1989 for a reunion album and tour, Mr. Dryden was not invited. He last appeared in public in November, signing autographs and shaking hands at a release party for a DVD of Jefferson Airplane video clips" [*The New York Times*, 1/14/05].

Christo and Jeanne-Claude's *The Gates* opens. Central Park, New York, NY. "Christo and Jeanne-Claude said . . . that the meaning of *The Gates* would be found by those who walked through it" [Randy Kennedy, *The New York Times*, 10/12/04]. "Curtains of woven saffron-colored vinyl fabric flap from the gates' crossbars like laundry from a taut clothesline. . . . [T]he gate structures make ever-changing staccato visual rhythms throughout the landscape" [Kenneth Baker, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/13/05].

Hip Chips Laptop Music Festival. Morton Subotnick's *Until Spring*. Symphony Space, New York, NY.

February 11

Death of playwright Arthur Miller (b. 10/17/15, New York, NY), of congestive heart failure, at 89. Roxbury, CT. "'You're leaving out a line [in *Death of a Salesman*],' [Arthur Miller said] . . . 'And I said: 'I don't think so' What line?' And he said, 'You're leaving out an 'Oh' in the bar scene'" [Brian Dennehy, *The New York Times*, 10/12/05]. "His father was a coat manufacturer and so prosperous that he rode in a chauffeur-driven car from the family apartment overlooking the northern edge of Central Park to the Seventh Avenue garment district. . . . The Depression changed everything for the family, and it became a theme that etched its way through Arthur Miller plays. Arthur Asher Miller was the second son of an illiterate but very successful clothing manufacturer, Isidore Miller, an Eastern European Jewish immigrant, and his wife, Augusta (called Gussie), the New York-born daughter of German Jewish immigrants" [Robert Hurwitz, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 2/12/05].

International Contemporary Ensemble presents *Sound Fishes: Pauline Oliveros / Wayne Levin*. Rosenberg + Kaufman Fine Art, New York, NY.

February 12

NACUSA Composers and Friends. Mark Alburger's *Flying Out the Mouth*, Anne Baldwin's *Szechuan Suite*, Nurit Barlev's *Dorian Toccata*, Sondra Clark's *Island Delights*, Ilana Cotton's *Music for Midwinter*, Herb Gellis's *Scherzo Oblique*, Robert Hall's *Three Songs for Mezzo and Harpsichord*, and John Hersh's *Piano Sonata No. 2*. Arts Center, Palo Alto, CA.

New Ear presents Ingrid Stolzel's *Guilty Pleasures*. Regnier Auditorium, KU Edwards Campus, Overland Park, KS. Repeated February 13, Unity Temple, Kansas City.

February 13

Waging Peace! Music for Voices and Chamber Orchestra by American Composers. Premieres by William Mayer, Max Lifchitz, and Herbert Bielawa. The Davidson Chamber Singers and The North/South Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Max Lifchitz. Christ and St. Stephen's Church, New York, NY.

Dawn Upshaw and the Met Chamber Ensemble in Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and a chamber arrangement of *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, plus Elliott Carter's *Lumen* and Luigi Dallapiccola's *Piccola Musica Notturna*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "Stravinsky had a complex relationship with Schoenberg, and yet when it came to Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* his opinion was simple and clear. He called it 'the solar plexus as well as the mind of early 20th-century music. . . . Brecht once said [sprechstimme made singers 'whinny like dying warhorses,' but there was very little whinnying in Ms. Upshaw's performance" [Jeremy Eichler, *The New York Times*, 2/16/05].

Eight-week workshop to develop portions of a music-dance-theatre piece by Stan Hoffman. Walt Studio, Freehold Theatre, Seattle, WA..

February 14

Monty Python's *Spamalot*. Shubert Theatre, New York, NY.

February 15

Composers, Inc. presents Kevin Beaver's *Wandlebury Ring*, Jules Langert's *Sonata for Cello and Piano*, Roger Nixon's *Seven Preludes*, and Mischa Zupko's *The Seven Deadly Sins*. Veterans Building, San Francisco, CA.

February 18

Citywinds and Melody of China in new works by Dan Becker, Kui Dong, Duo Huang, Melissa Hui, and Belinda Reynolds. Old First Presbyterian Church, San Francisco, CA.

February 19

Welsh National Opera opens their new performance space with Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*. Wales Millennium Center, Cardiff, UK. "[A]ll the detail of Berg's score came across, all of it made beautiful and expressive in a highly charged and brilliantly played orchestral performance Wozzeck and his co-workers, dressed in pale beige overalls, look as characterless as the cans that appear everywhere: on conveyor belts, on shelves that almost fill the set or in a fluorescent-tangerine Dumpster. This last feature, strident in a bleached color scheme, gets bigger from scene to scene (the changes being done quickly within the brief interludes), until the last, when it shrinks to a tiny element at a children's party. Wozzeck's son, having tossed into it the wrapping paper from his gift, slips into his father's position from the beginning of the opera. It will all happen again: the inability to articulate, the abuse suffered and inflicted, the murder and the suicide. The production is full of immediate life in its gestures large and small, from Wozzeck's lunging at Marie's neck with the edge of an opened can to the Drum Major's hitching up his golf pants" [Paul Griffiths, *The New York Times*, 2/21/05].

Mark Applebaum's *Sum=Parts*. Campbell Recital Hall, Stanford University, CA.

February 20

Lisa Scola Prosek and Katie Wreede. Shrine of St. Francis, San Francisco, CA.

Death of gonzo journalist Hunter S[tockton]. Thompson (b. 7/18/37), at 67, by a self-inflicted gunshot. Woody Creek, CO.

Guernsey's Auction House auctions Charlie Parker's King alto saxophone and concert recordings, Benny Goodman's clarinet, John Coltrane's soprano and tenor saxophones and home movies of snow shoveling, Gerry Mulligan's baritone saxophone, Thelonious Monk's tailored jacket and high school book reports,, a ribald 27-page letter from Louis Armstrong to his manager, and Ornette Coleman's *Focus on Sanity*. Rose Hall, Lincoln Center, New York, NY.

Richard Goode plays Arnold Schoenberg's *Six Little Piano Pieces* and Claude Debussy's *Preludes, Book I*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY. "Schoenberg's very beautiful adventure into aphorism: the Six Little Pieces. Mr. Goode made them into fleeting, strikingly colored theatrical episodes and in a way was preparing for Debussy. . . . Posing as travelogues, weather reports, wistful daydreams or cheerful character sketches, these 12 pieces hide their awesomeness. Each in its own way is constructed in some undefinable, unparsable way that never tires the imagination. Any reasonable pianist who has played them will tell you so" [Bernard Holland, *The New York Times*, 2/22/05].

February 21

Renee Fleming, "a fully staffed Baroque ensemble called Rebel," and Helmut Holl, in a program featuring early songs of Berg. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

February 22

Laurie Anderson's *The End of the Moon*. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York, NY. "Anderson's string playing [a viola here] has improved over the years; it remains simple and direct, like her stories. Like them, too, it doesn't develop its ideas, so that the music remains a sequence of individual segments, and descends into the realm of sound effect. The organizational principle is that of stand-up comedy; the emphasis is on keeping up the flow of words and punch lines rather than worrying too much about the form. There is a certain appeal to this looseness, and there were some lovely segments" [Anne Midgette, *The New York Times*, 2/24/05].

Death of Robert Koff (b. 2/12/19, Los Angeles, CA), after a long illness, at 86. Lexington, MA. "[He] was a founding member of the Juilliard String Quartet . . . Koff, along with the violinist Robert Mann, the violist Raphael Hillyer and the cellist Arthur Winograd, formed the Juilliard String Quartet in 1946, at the request of the composer William Schuman, who was president of the Juilliard School. . . . Although none of the original players remain in the lineup (the last to leave was Mr. Mann, who retired in 1997), for nearly six decades the group has maintained its affiliation with the Juilliard School and its original commitment to new music. As the group's original second violinist, Mr. Koff helped shape its sound when the Juilliard Quartet was establishing itself as the preeminent American chamber ensemble, and he performed on many of the groups classic recordings, including its first traversal of the six Bartók quartets, which was recorded in 1950 and recently reissued by Pearl, an English historical label. Mr. Koff left the group in 1958 when he became director of performance activities at Brandeis University. . . . [He] graduated from the Oberlin Conservatory in 1941, he received a graduate diploma from Juilliard in 1946. During his years in the Juilliard Quartet (and on the Juilliard faculty, he also taught at the summer music schools at Aspen and Tanglewood. . . . Koff taught and directed chamber music programs at Tel Aviv University in the mid-1970's and early 80's, and at Harvard in 1977. In addition to his performing and teaching, he lectured on music in a 40-part series on WGBH television in Boston. Mr. Koff is survived by his wife, Rosalind Mann Koff, and his sons Stephen and Jeremy" [Allan Kozinn, The New York Times, 2/25/05].

Death of Harry M[oses]. Simeone (b. Newark, NJ), at 94. Beth Israel Medical Center, New York, NY. "[He was] a conductor and arranger whose choral singers helped popularize Christmas evergreens like *The Little Drummer Boy* . . . [which was] adapted from a Polish carol . . . [t]ranslated into English in 1941 . . . [and] first recorded in 1957 by the Jack Halloran Singers. . . . Simeone attended the Juilliard School of Music, planning to become a concert pianist, but left after three years to work at CBS" [Wolfgang Saxon, The New York Times, 2/25/05].

February 23

American Composers Orchestra in Ingram Marshall's *Dark Florescence: Variations for Two Guitars and Orchestra* (with Andy Summers and Benjamin Verdery), Manly Romero's *Blanco, Azul, Rojo*, and Danny Elfman's *Serenada Schizophrana*. Carnegie Hall, New York, NY.

February 25

Composer Portraits: Nicolai Roslavets. Miller Theater, Columbia University, New York, NY. Repeated February 26, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston (MA).

February 27

Ethel. Hertz Hall, Berkeley, CA.

Master of Persian Classical Music. Zellerbach Hall, Berkeley, CA.

Met Chamber Ensemble in Gyorgy Ligeti's *Chamber Concerto for 13 Instruments* and Alban Berg's *Chamber Concerto for Piano and Violin With 13 Winds*. "[The former is] an astounding 25-minute exploration of swirling colors and teeming rhythms, . . . [the latter] a daunting 40-minute Expressionistic wail of a piece" [Anthony Tommasini, The New York Times, 3/1/05].

Brentano String Quartet in Anton Webern's *Six Bagatelles for String Quartet*. Alice Tully Hall, New York, NY.

February 28

New York New Music Ensemble in Christopher Rouse's *Rotae Passionis*, Milton Babbitt's *Arie da Capo*, Morton Feldman's *Why Patterns*, and Dorrance Stalvey's *Exordium / Genesis / Dawn*. County Museum of the Arts, Los Angeles, CA.

The Center for Contemporary Music presents a concert by the Mills Performing Group. Fred Frith's *Stick Figures*, Chris Brown's *Shuffle*, Jose Maceda's *Music for Two Pianos and Four Percussion*, John Bischoff's *Rondo*, and Luciano Berio's *Naturale*. Mills College Concert Hall, Oakland, CA.

Writers

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