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The Alberta NEW MUSIC & ARTS REVIEW - Vol. III/IV, No. 4/5 Double issue: Fall 1999/Fall 2002

The Interdisciplinary Journal of the

EDMONTON COMPOSERS' CONCERT SOCIETY

The Alberta

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The Interdisciplinary Journal of the Edmonton Composers' Concert Society

Devoted to Music and the Other Arts

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P.O. Box 52204
Edmonton, Alberta
T6G 2T5
CANADA
E-mail: piotrgm@shaw.ca
http://www.eccsociety.com

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The Rift: The Composer and The Public, or, An Overview of 20th Century Music

We live in interesting times. According to the Chinese curse, this is not a good thing. We inhabit an age of extremes, as perhaps all ages are, but those extremes seem to be exacerbated in our time: some ages being more equal than others, you see. Always there have been wars, heroes, pretenders, geniuses, the unwashed masses, but today the wars are truly and globally life-threatening; the true heroes are known only to the few or else they are hyped until they are so much larger than life that they cannot be sustained (witness the recent Joe DiMaggio debunking); our pretenders join the glitterati and appear *ad nauseam* on the media, itself a sprawling pretender; our geniuses go unrecognised or else are proliferating staggering works never before dreamed – sometimes both; and our unwashed masses thoughtlessly gobble it all up, even the horrific wars, now nicely sanitised on the History channel, and in their greed for entertainment they create mountains of waste – a war on the planet itself, and that brings us full circle.

In music the same pattern can be perceived, though on a more 'teacup' scale. We have tempests and tantrums, not wars, among academicians who guard their little space and shoot cautious arrows now and then – though in Europe they do come to fisticuffs over whose style is the right one. Our musical heroes are smaller because they are not allowed to tower. Over and over I have heard the phrase, "Nice piece" said to a composer after a performance of a new work (I've said it myself), and only sometimes does it strike me as genuine (i.e. when I say it!). Of musical pretenders, oh, they abound, or as H. G. Wells describes his aunts crowding about him as a child, "They loomed, they bulged, they impended".[1] Why are they so numerous? Because the geniuses have given them the tools to create sounds at the click of a mouse, interesting dramatic sounds that are so convincing that any dilettante can fool himself and others into thinking that he is a composer. I had one of these 'sound poets' once confide in me that he was "… thinking about learning to read music". Then there are the masses, completely unaware that composers even exist in their midst, senselessly consuming whatever foolishness the media sends their way then turning to the next nutritionless bonbon. One expects to see a peacock feather lying beside them.[2] For proof, try watching the MuchMusic channel for a few minutes. You will be impressed by the way pop musicians have mastered the Theme and Variations form, creating songs that are so subtle as to be clones of one another, yet at the same time

[1] H.G. Wells, Tono-Bungay, http://emotionalliteracyeducation.com/classic_books_online/tonob10.htm

[2] Romans at an orgy would eat till they could hold no more, tickle their gorges with a peacock feather until they vomited, then return to the feast.

painfully unaware of any sort of rhythmic or harmonic variation. But I must stop lest I start to sound bitter.

The artist in these interesting times is, as always, a strange breed. Why would anyone be driven to put notes on paper, or paint on canvas, or to move one's body expressively? It seems that somewhere deep within, when the stomach has been filled and the rain kept out, there is a creativity, which we all possess. It is at war with a certain innate laziness, but sometimes it rouses us to bring something new into the world. The improvement in lifestyle thus engendered may be humble or grand, practical or decorative, trivial or profound but it is invariably something we then wish to share. The experience at this point can become painful however, if others, especially our heroes (upon whose ideas we may have drawn), do not like it or worse, if they ignore it. Yet the need to bring others to our own often ecstatic love for our creations very strong and we continue to try.

Wagner puts it well:

> Why do artists, in whom the divine fire burns, quit their private sanctuaries and run breathless through the city's filthy streets eagerly looking for bored dull-witted people upon whom to force the offering of an ineffable joy?
>
> It cannot be a sense of duty…which drives the genius to accept the terrible self-denial which presenting himself to the public involves. Some secret demonic force must be at work. This privileged being, blessed with unique powers, goes begging. Cap in hand, he seeks the favours of bored, satiated pleasure-lovers, empty-headed snobs, ignorant know-alls, malicious envious corrupt reviewers…
>
> This impulse is nourished by the genius's belief in himself, which is stronger than any other man's—and which is responsible for the pride that proves to be his undoing when he is dealing with the miserable realities of life. Feeling, as he does, free in himself, he desires to be free in life, to have nothing to do with its necessities…
>
> Were his genius recognised he would achieve this, so he works for recognition. Thereby he creates the impression of being ambitious, but this is not so: what he is striving for is not honour for its own sake, but for the freedom which is the fruit of honour. Unfortunately all the time he is mixing with people who are merely ambitious or who are content to enjoy freedom without honour.[3]

[3] Richard Wagner, "The Artist and the Public" in *Wagner Writes from Paris*, London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1973, pp. 103-106.

Wagner's use of the word 'genius' to mean 'artist' is grandiose to be sure, and his unkind reference to reviewers is self-serving, but he does bring me to my next point. In some of us the spark of creativity, of genius if you will, does become overwhelming: we *must* create, and the works of our heroes and predecessors move us to such "ineffable joy" that we cannot deny it and are impelled to share it as widely as possible. Hence it is so painful to witness the daily travesty that is popular culture, knowing that such power, such joy, exists. Claude Vivier was so desirous to be free of life's necessities that he declared that he *refused* to do anything but write music, all else being a waste of his precious gift. That's extreme, yet we all feel it – all who aspire to be composers, artists, dancers.

It has often been noted that the Twentieth century has witnessed a growing rift between the composer and the audience. I do not think this is quite true. The audience in Mozart's day consisted of bored and sated pleasure seekers in the form of aristocratic patrons, who may or may not have cared about what they were hearing. The rift was already there, Mozart effusing his joy and the largely uncomprehending patrons feeling proud and fashionable to have composers in their stables. Modern audiences are just as uncomprehending, and much less able to appreciate serious music since education in earlier times stressed the humanities far more than today – the aristocrats usually understood at least the forms of music - and this may be the source of the idea that the rift is increasing in our time. Modern recording genius has taken musical forms which were formerly reserved for those few and made them available to all. Much as the medieval churchmen opposed placing the Bible into the hands of the masses for fear of misinterpretation (and they were right, though I hate to place myself on their side in any matter), the modern public has misconstrued the intent of great music, relegating it to the level of an entertainment to be consumed or a way to show others that they are 'cultured'. Most, of course, ignore it, since it still somehow retains its snobbish and exclusive cachet of old, or they discover that it requires a certain degree of thought and concentration. John Polanyi, writing about Einstein in the November 7, 2000 issue of the Toronto Globe and Mail's "Books" section, says, "Since science is thought, it can expect to be unpopular". Change the word "science" to "music" or "literature" or "anything requiring analytical effort and hard-earned discipline", and you have the quandary of anyone who is seriously engaged in intellectual pursuits. Nothing has changed, the rift was always there and the only difference is that it's no longer fashionable to maintain a stable, and so composers have to scrabble even more desperately to make a living.

So the compositional war goes as follows: The composer feels an ineffable joy at the power of music and wishes to bring others to an appreciation of that joy (and in the process possibly earn a modest living?), while the public, unwilling to sustain much effort of thought, seeks only entertainment and is thereby starved and bored, and certainly not interested in supporting such a one since it is not fashionable. Interesting times indeed. I was once asked by a young man, a truck driver I believe, what I did. I told him I was a composer, hoping for at least curiosity in his response, so that I could begin to lead him toward my joy. His response? "Yes, but what do you *do*?" Complete dismissal, and I was struck silent at the profound depth of his incomprehension. As long as the populace at large defines us by how we earn our money, the rift will remain.

So we have an enemy in apathy. Do we also have heroes who are known outside of our own small circle? If one arises, he often becomes victim of professional jealousies and gets shut out of this or that inner sanctum. Conversely, many fine composers languish in faculties here and there, demoralised and producing their mandatory piece each year, which then receives its mandatory performance. Those who choose not to pursue a career in academe are often not recognised because they happen, as most artists are, to be lousy self-promoters.

Sometimes, though, a personality transcends, and through luck or good management or sheer ability, rises into the public spotlight, at least to a degree. All composers have heard of Stravinsky, but I would submit that there are many members of the public who associate him only with Disney's dinosaurs, that is if they know his name at all, and they probably fast-forward through that segment of *Fantasia*, or if that is not the case, they are likely held there by the striking imagery more than anything else, the glorious music being secondary and not consciously considered. Our heroes, whom we all revere, are not widely known, let's face it. What percentage of the public knows the name of Hindemith or could name even one of the Second Viennese School? Or in Canada, do the names of Violet Archer, Jean Coulthard and Barbara Pentland, or any of our other icons, departed or not, mean much to the man on the street? And yet wasn't it precisely the man on the street whom these driven composers wanted to reach? To teach? Is that not what we all earnestly desire to do?

Violet certainly opened my eyes to the power and many of the techniques of composition, and became a good friend. But hero though she be to many of us, she is still only a small ripple in the fabric of Canadian society. Sadly, our people of depth and quality remain largely unknown in the greater

scheme of things.

But this is an essay on composition generally in the last century, so let's look at some more big names. I have already alluded to Schoenberg. It has now been a century since his towering innovations first appeared. He was a true, driven composer. Seeking his own expression and finding himself unable to carry Romanticism any further, he sought something new. Having mastered the harmonic convolutions, which he had inherited, he perceived that 19th century harmony had reached the point of collapse, and so he proposed a new and shocking alternative. But not before a few attempts to work within the system, while stretching it, as all creative artists do. Recall the story of his *Verklärte Nacht* being refused performance because it contains a ninth chord with the ninth in the bass.[4] Recall also my earlier observation that the striking personality is frequently shut out by his colleagues.

He demanded rigour of himself and his students, that "every note be essential", thus placing himself in the line of utmost respect from his fellow artists, and making him something to be shunned by the greater audience. Did I say shunned? Read attacked. Other composers adopted and modified his dodecaphonic technique, and it seems even to be coming back into style among some who are discovering that 12-tone music can be made to sound tonal after all – I've done it myself. One wonders if the bulk of humanity, whom we all are striving to reach, will ever come to recognise its beauty. It's been a hundred years, after all.

Folklore and exoticism are other alternatives to moribund romanticism, and composers like Janaček and Debussy come to mind in this regard, as well as Bartók and Kodály collecting tens of thousands of melodies in the villages of eastern Europe and North Africa. What kind of love engenders that degree of effort? Not that use of folk melodies and foreign influences had not always been practised (witness the "Turkish" rage in the 1700s), but these guys did it best perhaps, or at least, in the case of the latter two, most systematically. If these composers entered the public consciousness at all, it is because their melodies and harmonies are relatively accessible (except for Bartók, of course; too spiky, too demanding). They are safe and don't demand too much, even though fellow composers can still appreciate the depth of their accomplishment. Indeed the New College Encyclopaedia of Music

[4] "It is self-evident; there is no such thing as the inversion of a ninth chord; therefore, there is no such thing as the performance of it; for one really cannot perform something that does not exist. So I had to wait for several years." René Leibowitz, *Schoenberg and His School*, New York: Da Capo Press, 1949, p. 48.

says of Debussy, "For all its power of suggestion, his music is not vague but shows every sign of precise and methodical workmanship." So it is possible to be rigorous and still have an audience. Let us all take note. Let us also keep in mind that Debussy's audience was still never as numerous as, say, Cole Porter's.

Messiaen is a good case in point as well, elevating his ineffable joy to the level of Revelation itself. His works, both in their titles and their construction, bring to mind cosmic forces and mystic machinations uniting God and Nature. His blue-orange chords, birdsongs and visions bespeak an artist consumed by otherworldly thoughts and thoroughly desirous to be free of everyday concerns. He used the church as his vehicle, possibly because direct contact with the public was too painful. I once entered Chartres cathedral as a tourist one Sunday morning just as Mass was ended. The congregation was noisily departing while the organist was playing something exquisite by Messiaen. I wanted to scream at the people, "Sit down and listen, you fools! This man is showing you his soul!" Yes, dealing with the masses is painful indeed.

In the US, everyone has heard of Bernstein and Copland, the latter especially being as much identified with the US nation as Verdi was with the Italian independence movement a century before. Or have they? I seriously wonder if everyman south of the border truly knows or cares about them, though to be sure they are more recognised names than most. Both were highly successful with a certain segment of the public and with fellow composers, but as always the public exacts a high price for popularity: the composer wishes to do something significant and of depth, and the public demands entertainment. Copland's reply to Agnes de Mille, when she suggested the story for the cowboy ballet, *Rodeo,* was "Oh I've already composed one of those. I don't want to do *another* cowboy ballet! Can't you write a script about Ellis Island?"[5] This captures the plight of the serious artist nicely, and of course he did succumb.

No discussion of US composers can be complete without a passing reference to jazz. Here is a music that is truly free, springing as it did from the libertarian aspirations of a nation within a nation. Only now have composers caught up with jazz musicians, and started producing works without scores! On the other hand, jazz musicians often use written charts as a starting point for their explorations, so the two have cross-pollinated well. Pure improvisation is pure freedom. The freedom that the artist craves is present in

[5] Aaron Copland and Vivian Perlis, *Copland 1900 Through 1942*. New York, St. Martin's/Marek, 1984, p. 356.

jazz, and that some composers have successfully fused it with standard compositional practice is a marvellous tribute to them. Gershwin is of course the most widely known exemplar of this hybrid style, but the composers who have toyed with it are legion: Stravinsky, Milhaud, Morton Feldman, the two above, me. I suspect all composers are secretly envious of the jazz musician who is not tied to a score. But they also can revel in the paradoxical fact that one can achieve the same exultation from the printed page, when all goes well.

Still in the US, William Schuman, a composer whom I admire, will not ever achieve a great following until he removes that extra note: you know the one I mean, the one that creates simultaneous major and minor chords – central to his style. C major the public wants, even C minor, but let's not put them together. That is simply too much thought and it's, gulp, dissonant! On the bright side, some acceptance of dissonance is growing. I was at a modern dance competition one time, watching young students work hard at a difficult craft, and for the most part dancing to dreadful pop concoctions. However, one danced to a most interesting (and quite dissonant) orchestral score. Upon inquiry, I learned that it was the soundtrack to a popular horror movie. I was surprised and heartened, then disappointed as I realised that only in conjunction with gruesome or otherwise striking imagery is the expressive music of our time generally accepted - see my earlier reference to Stravinsky...

We shall not dwell upon the vilification which has been heaped on Ives, one of the greatest musical minds of our time, more fecund in many ways even than Schoenberg, right up to the anticipation of the latter's techniques and their ramifications. Watch and see how many times any mistake or musical confusion is described as 'Ivesian', even by musicians! How insidious is the public perception. That he recognised that he could never survive by producing what he knew was work of lasting quality is indicative of the composer's problem in this benighted age. At least he had his insurance business for support, and did not allow his disappointment and non-acceptance to overwhelm him, a disappointment in the Capitalist world which is equal to anything experienced by artists under any other oppressive regime. The political system is irrelevant to the creative soul.

When the people have been sufficiently cowed, the State can step in and dictate how the public wants to be entertained, and the artist either flees or tries to adapt. Prokofiev fled (then unaccountably returned), Shostakovich adapted and outlived his tyrant (one might wonder how many American expatriate artists there are, too, driven away not by overt tyranny but by that of

bourgeois taste). Both paid a high price, and both produced work of quality – politics is indeed irrelevant. One senses in the former's violin sonatas, to which I have been listening lately, a composer living out his dream, for a small moment expressing his joy in the freedom we all crave. In the latter, I sense steely resolve to find that place between personal need and imposed taste. That he had the strength to survive and persevere is remarkable. I don't think I would.

Consider also Khatchaturian, another who stayed and adapted, even producing a *Song of Stalin* and a ballet about life on a collective farm to placate the regime. That his music nevertheless brings forth some of the best in folk influences and sheer vitality is proof to me of the triumph of the creative spirit over oppression. His music also contains elements of dissonance in the form of major seventh chords sprinkled liberally about and lesser-used modes like the Lydian and the Phrygian. Not too liberally though; there were still the censors to pass.

I find many affinities between Khatchaturian and Ravel. And this is striking because they worked under very different circumstances, supporting my contention that the creative spirit is indeed independent of political realities, or tries to be. Or perhaps it is just that, like mechanical invention, when the time has come - the style arises. Their brilliance of orchestration, the major seventh chords softened, on Ravel's part, by striking and exotic parallelisms, have kept both in the public eye probably because the major seventh is not too far removed from the dominant seventh. It was slightly daring, a little naughty, and so the public came to accept it. Les Six took advantage of that acceptance too, to produce their cleverly *piquant* works, and it fit in well with the cynicism of other inter-war composers like Kurt Weill.

And speaking of official madness dictating public taste, I once held a distasteful little book in my hands which was printed in Berlin in 1941. It purported to be a dictionary of music and musicians in Germany, but was in fact a list of who could and could not be played publicly. No Schoenberg, no Mendelssohn, naturally. May we not live in odious times.

So our heroes struggle, and not just in their political contexts. There are other broad historical influences at work. I wonder if history has had to move faster in the last century than previously to keep pace with scientific discoveries. We have gone from arguing a hundred years ago whether a man could survive a speed of twenty-five miles per hour, to putting up a space station today (the year 2000 is still technically in the Twentieth century).

Our mechanical inventions of course reflected the mechanical idea of creation, which prevailed at the beginning of the century. Sir Isaac Newton's

clockwork concept of the cosmos seemed to be the way to go, and the Industrial Revolution had radically altered the landscape. Many are the examples of musical locomotives (Honegger's *Pacific 231*), machines (Chavez's *HP*) and factories (Mossolov's *Iron Foundry*), and more recently, Diana McIntosh's *Bristol Freighter*. These are not intended to be pretty works, but are meant to capture both the fascination and romance of the machine and to warn against its power to enslave and regiment us all. Titles like *Ballet Méchanique* (Antheil), *Ionisation* (Varèse), *Pas d'Acier* (Prokofiev), reflect growing knowledge and command of our material surroundings and growing concern about its ultimate destination. The concern was, and is, well founded. If the artist is more attuned than others to the nuances of his time, and more prescient about its directions, then these works must be taken as warnings.

As our knowledge has grown, so has our destructive capability. It remains to be seen if our collective superego is up to the task of managing and controlling this capability. I doubt the average Love Canal survivor or citizen of Chernobyl would think so. But we don't have to look to such arcana as nuclear energy: consider the mountain of garbage generated each day by the average fast food restaurant (not to mention its fatal cuisine), and it is difficult to be impressed with humanity's wisdom.

Is it any wonder then that music and art generally began to become more shrill at the beginning of the century? Schoenberg (funny how I keep coming back to him) had painted expressionistic portraits as well as composing, and all the arts went through a most disturbing phase. The warnings were eloquent and ubiquitous, yet despite its artists the world entertained the savage waste of the First World War. The craggy dissonances that had been cropping up in music generally, and the ballet turning from tutus to prehistoric Russian sacrifices and wild Scythians, suddenly made sense, like interpreting a prophetic dream after the event has occurred. After the Great War, absurdity and fatalism were most appropriate responses, and they took hold strongly (echoing even into our day since the same basic problems still face us) in philosophy, in cubist art and the montages of Cocteau and Satie. The artist was issuing warnings to the rest of society, just as he does today. They had little effect though, and the unheeding world convulsed yet again in 1939.

The response of music to the most destructive man-made event of all human history (culminating in the ultimate weapon) was serialism. The message of serialism is simple: pure intellect leads to inhuman results. Composers were horrified by World War II, as was everyone else, and at the end of it they all stared into the nuclear maw, the product of minds creating something because they could. Robert Oppenheimer knew what he had done with the

Manhattan Project, and he knew also that the creation of the atomic bomb was inevitable. History shows that when the materials and the knowledge are present, someone puts it all together. There are many stories of some inventor beating the others to the patent office and becoming a household name. Ironic, isn't it, that in response to the mindless savagery of that war and the muddled philosophy that engendered it, came a product of the purest theoretical and analytical reasoning. Or conversely, that the pure and beautiful contemplation of the subatomic universe birthed the weapon that more than any other generates chaos. The right and the left brain were truly at war here, not armies at all.

Musicians had had enough of madness, of Rites of Spring, of absurdity, and they now grappled with pure reason, trying, ultimately without success, to create an emotional response to numbers, ratios, statistical constructs. The language of numbers, being the purest (or at least the easiest to work with) became the language of music, to many.

Now don't get me wrong, I admire Pierre Boulez greatly, and the stories I have heard about his amazing musical ear and ability to perceive and sing every line in the most complex music make me almost glad I have never met him. I have read his literature and come away perplexed at first, I have heard his music and come away impressed, but I fear I have never been deeply moved by it, though that is more likely a matter of personal taste than any criticism of his style. What does one make of the following tightly woven reasoning out of which springs his music?…

> The world of music today is a relative world, that is to say, one where structural relationships are not defined once and for all according to absolute criteria, but are organised instead according to varying schemata.
>
> This world has arisen from the expansion of the idea of the series; this is why I should first like to establish a definition of the series from the strictest point of view, and then to infer from it an ensemble, a network of probabilities. What is the series? The series is – in very general terms – the germ of a developing hierarchy based on certain psycho-physiological acoustical properties, and endowed with a greater or lesser selectivity, with a view to organising a FINITE ensemble of creative possibilities connected by predominant affinities, in relation to a given character: this ensemble of possibilities is deduced from an initial series by a FUNCTIONAL generative process (not simply the consecutive exposition of a certain number of objects, permu-

> tated according to restrictive numerical data). Consequently, all that is needed to set up this hierarchy is a necessary and sufficient premise which will ensure the total cohesion of the whole and the relationship between its successive parts.[6]

That's from the first page of the chapter called "Musical Technique", and for those who did not get to the end, it continues in similar tone for many pages, and yes, it does finally make sense, but only upon great perseverance. I like to think I got something from it in terms of an appreciation for a compositional technique that is rigorous to say the least. This stuff reads like an existential tome, and that is not at all surprising since humanity was directly facing the question of its very continuance. The crumbling of Romanticism and of empires at the beginning of the century just bubbled on to the crumbling of the fabric of society itself, and musicians' responses were concomitantly extreme: either the strict application of pure intellect to music as personified first by Schoenberg and von Webern then Boulez, Xenakis and others, or the retreat from such strictures and a seeking for a more spiritual or absurdist or nostalgic response represented by Debussy, Satie, by the many neo-classical works of various composers, (even neo-Renaissance: see the lovely compositional creations of Pablo Casals) and the artists of the New Age which we see today. We may add to the mix the resurgence of a certain neo-Romanticism, of which I myself have been accused. Most of my colleagues hold New Age music in contempt, and it is indeed little more than pretty nonsense, but they should try to keep in mind also that it represents a response, if a trivial one, to a serious, even mortal challenge. The war of the hemispheres within the human cranium is still raging.

At the same time that serialism was making its inroads, the right brain asserted itself in opera. It is no accident that Poulenc's fragmentary and deeply searching *La Voix Humaine* and Menotti's *The Consul* appeared at almost the same time, immediately following the first real taste of Armageddon -- and the horrifying tales of Kafka fit in nicely here, too, even if they do predate the two operas. Kafka certainly fits the idea of the artist as bellwether to society, and his prescience can only be regarded as remarkable. Both operas represent a deep existential cry against the destruction that had just taken place, the former calling stridently for the need for true communication, not just between lovers, but between nations, and warns ominously of the tragic results of failure; and the latter depicting in full frustrating fury the result of allowing oneself to hide one's humanity behind rules and orders, of creating a

[6] Pierre Boulez, *Boulez on Music Today*, London: Faber & Faber, 1971, pp. 35-36.

society based on unbending policies, and of building music and art out of inflexible constructs.

To serialism however, and to those composers who adhered doggedly to it, came an audience reaction that was nearly unanimous, and from which composers are still reeling. The people hated it, and with good reason: never had there been a musical style that demanded so much of its audience, that appeared so inhuman, that seemingly repulsed any traditional emotional response to itself. The public was baffled, and so were many composers. But, like new-age music, serialism represented nothing more than an honest left-brain response to social and historical reality. The odd thing is (and Boulez tersely acknowledges this with his phrase, "psycho-physiological acoustical properties", in the quote above), that when one becomes accustomed to this style to the point of being able to perceive the permutations of the series as they occur aurally, one's pleasure, if only in the accomplishment, is tremendous! How many of the general public will ever come to this realisation? How many composers have done it? I venture to say not many from either camp. The work and concentration and knowledge required are very specialised and intensive, yet the rewards are commensurate with the effort.

Should the general public be expected to achieve this level of musical sophistication? I say, why not? I am like Wagner's 'genius' running through the streets accosting people and trying to make them realise what glories are out there. That I have been rebuffed and ignored for the most part is immaterial. My joy is still there and I never cease wishing to share it, to bring all to the rich inner life that I feel I live inside this little skull. Our woefully inadequate education system is not presently up to the task of truly educating its charges to this degree however, and will not be able to do a competent job until educators stop trying to turn out drones for industry. More on this later.

My generation grew up in the shadow of nuclear war. We all read *Hiroshima* and were afraid to look into the sky for fear our eyes would melt. The emotional toll was significant, and it came out in our music, we either retreated from the chaos of war into our nostalgia, or we embraced pure analysis and tried to comprehend what the scientists were uncovering. Many, dabbled in both; we do have two brains, after all. And the discoveries just kept coming, and just kept making the universe seem more and more irrational. What does one make of the Uncertainty Principle? How does one grasp the idea that to observe a particle is to change it, and so you cannot really know what that particle 'looks' like? How do you absorb the notion that if you know a particle's speed you cannot know its direction, and vice versa? How

to embrace the paradoxes of the Theory of Relativity? Of matter and energy being one? Of bending space?

Stockhausen began talking of musical 'time-space', and others began giving their works titles like *Mutazioni* (Berio), *Das Spektrum* (Nilsson), *Continuum* (Ligeti), and the like, words used in scientific circles that describe the wondrous new universe we have uncovered. Music attempted things hardly before done, like permitting random elements to enter in, composing to the throw of dice or to the *I Ching* (an oxymoronic practice if ever there was one - creating highly structured music determined at its base by an ancient mystical book. What could more perfectly epitomise the quandary of the 20th century composer?), carrying atonality to new extremes with clusters and microtones, even dispensing with musical notation altogether and manifesting graphic or verbal scores. To express the impossible you must take extreme measures.

So is it any wonder that artists of all stripes are doing incomprehensible things? However much we may look askance at wrapping islands in plastic, at making a 24-hour movie of a single building, at composers like Turnage making music complex just for the sake of complexity, these are perfectly understandable responses to the milieu in which the artist finds himself. So is the contrary outflowing of pretty and soothing and pseudo-spiritual stuff that we see, and it explains the recent phenomenal success of Górecki's 3rd Symphony. Here was the public's discovery of a composer who did not confront them with their existential plight (at least not in a dissonant way), and seemed to say something substantial while not being excessively demanding. You grapple with your environment or you retreat from it. The public prefers to retreat and this work enables them to do so with the appearance of dignity.

It is impossible to say where all the multiple stylistic streams of today are headed, or which one the future will decide is defining of our time. I suspect historians will have difficult time labelling our conflicted era. I called it the New Rococo in an earlier review, and I still like that term. There were people who continued to write in a Classical style into the 19th century, and those who continued to write in a Renaissance style well into the Baroque, but I seriously wonder if today we don't have many more stylistic streams competing than ever before, perfectly mirroring the many streams of discovery and change that we see all about. I have just read that the Hubble Space Telescope is about to be eclipsed by earth-bound super telescopes that will render the Hubble little more than a finder scope. Look out: more upsetting discoveries are coming our way, and that is only in one field.

Even within a single composer one can find distinct shifts: Pen-

derecki has gone from his avant-garde "catalogue" style of the 60s to a rich neo-Romantic one. Catalogue? I once heard his early style dismissed with this word, implying a formless exploration of any strange sound the orchestra could possibly make, without regard to any musical structure. But what could be more perfect to express the times - undirected searching for its own sake? And besides, I like early Penderecki. Another is Frederic Rzewski, whose spectacular *People United Will Never Be Defeated* brilliantly combines staggering complexity with the most lyrical romanticism, a single piano dominating and encapsulating our time.

I mentioned Berio above. He is not my favourite composer for reasons similar to the 'catalogue' criticism of Penderecki. I find in his music the presentation of an interesting sound, then the presentation of another interesting sound, and so on and so on until the end. I miss any sense of development, but I also recognise that this a legitimate expression of the formlessness of the time, of our inability to hold up a stylistic thread and say, "This is the one for our era," of the endless questing of Science for a Grand Unification Theory -- and I accept it.

We have a great symbiosis taking place in our midst also. The technical genius of man is now able to match the public's greed for entertainment, and it is now very easy to create impressive sounds at the push of a button. Thus the pretenders spring up. It is so easy to create a succession of dramatic sounds, even a complete orchestra, that anyone can call himself a composer these days, can play about with random chords and create a work that sounds convincing to all but a composer. I really wish they would leave that term for those who know the craft of composition, though. Call yourself a 'sound poet' if you will, but don't use the exalted term 'composer' if you can't write an authentic cadence or name the ranges of the instruments.

On the other hand, never have real composers had such wonderful tools at their disposal. I can enter the notes of my latest masterpiece on the computer screen and immediately play them back to listen for any errors. I can then print out the score and the parts (transposed) with minimal editing, and have a completed work of professional quality ready to hand to the players. This is undreamed-of power. I can even produce a synthetic version of my score for any number of instruments to use as a sampler for performers. I can then make it available instantly to performers world-wide, such is the glory of our time. Our technical geniuses have done a spectacular job, but as usual the result of their labour is a two-edged sword.

Attempts also proliferate to create an amalgam of acoustic and electronic sounds. These tend to be less than satisfying since one is never certain

who is making the sounds, the live performer or the invisible technician. I have seen concerts in which the performer is serenely playing without much motion, but the sound is frantic - and vice versa, the performer is playing furiously yet the sound is stable and calm. It is most frustrating and contradictory to behold. I predict this sort of performance will continue but eventually fade.

There was a spate of pure electronic composition in the middle of the century, and to be sure, some interesting work was done. By 'electronic' I include *musique concrète* Works like *Gesang der Jünglinge* by Stockhausen, and Varèse's *Poème Electronique* are good examples, painstakingly put together by manipulating bits of tape, both audio and sticky, but it did not last. I have attended concerts in which a tape recorder sat on the stage generating odd sounds, but that mode of 'performance' is unsatisfactory and has largely disappeared. My prediction is that electronic sound generation will take its place as a fine complement to acoustic sounds, lending new and powerful emotional dimensions to music, but must forever remain on the periphery. The *ondes Martenot* and the modern synthesiser must share the back seat.

Speaking of peripheries, the phenomenon of Mr. (or Ms.) Carlos's *Switched on Bach* in the 70s was only to be expected. The technology and the knowledge were there, and someone named Moog made a synthesiser that was finally available to all. Of course the first thing that was done with it was to turn out a fascinating (at first) rendition of well-known music. It was trivial of course, but Mr. (or Ms.) Carlos got there first and became famous. I still have my vinyl copy.

It is sad when such wonderful technology is put to such small purposes, however, much like using an electron microscope as a doorstop. It is even more sad that the public lacks the discernment to perceive when it is being duped. The fact that the education system in this part of the world is turning out graduates who are not only unable to reason and appreciate true quality in the arts, but are frequently even illiterate, is appalling. More than that, it is dangerous. Mozart's patrons could follow the structural outline of a symphonic movement, but can today's general audiences consciously follow even the simplest ABA form? Not in my experience. They don't even want to. There are those who would say such discernment is not necessary or important, but I reply that lack of the most basic knowledge of the arts and of history is indicative of a society that has forgotten its heritage, and stands to lose it as a result.

Education today is geared toward producing those who can survive in a world of business, which is to say bottom-line oriented people who regard

the arts as secondary and unimportant. I had a parent say that to me directly one time when I was a music teacher in a public school system. I ceased wondering at that moment why his boy was a behaviour problem. Later I left the system and I refuse to return. I could have, if I had not been so shocked, quoted to him statistics that show the music (even the Classical music) industry is very large indeed, that more people attend operas and symphony performances in Canada than attend NHL games (though this statistic is rendered moot by television), but by then I had become more than a little demoralised. Try standing in front of 30 children who don't want to be there, trying to bring them to an appreciation of the thing you love most.

Why don't they want to be there? Because they are convinced by the pretenders that all problems can be resolved in 24 minutes, or at most, 48 minutes, that discipline is achieved miraculously and easily off screen, that a man can be knocked flying across a room and immediately get up and keep fighting, that rich synthesised two- or three-chord sounds, an incessant 4/4 rhythm, and guttural, unintelligible words, is 'music'. Against the glamour of Hollywood and the slick advertising of the very businesses for whom the schools are turning out graduates, is there any hope of the artist (the Wagnerian genius) being heard? A recent issue of Time magazine[7] contains a review of a new CD by the [pop group; Ed.] Backstreet Boys: it reads, in part, "...if you're willing to accept sentiment in place of emotion, corniness in place of craft and corporate marketing in place of your own free will, it can be intoxicating."

Remarkable that such a magazine, produced by the very business types who produce the rock groups should show such perspicacity. Is there hope for thought? Despite all, and despite the fact that this is my favourite hobby-horse, I believe there is hope; after all, the person who wrote the review also attended school. Oh, and by the way, is it a good review or a bad review? Your response to that question will likely be the inverse of your response to this article.

And speaking of lyrics, have you heard what the kids are listening to today? I won't repeat here the violent, misogynistic stuff that surrounds us daily, just turn to any popular radio station - it's in the ether, people. You have to concentrate to make out the words (or more likely read the jacket), but once you do I am sure you will be repelled by their vehemence and hatred (not the Backstreet Boys, of course, who are simply saccharine, and I do not know which is worse). But, as in the realm of real music, is not all of this simply a manifestation of the same dual-brain reaction to our times writ small?

Composers retreat into the pure analysis of serialism, or try to recap-

[7] November 27, 2000

ture some older or folk style, often doing so with great expressive power. The public on the other hand, not having paid attention in their English classes and being largely unaware of the true persuasive power of literature or music, resorts to sentimental songs or simple scatology. The existential reactions are the same; only the degree of articulation differs. We are all alike in that we all ask the big questions. We differ only in what we accept as an answer.

The media encourages thoughtlessness, thinking that it is profitable. It panders to what it thinks people want, but is occasionally turned on its ear. Who would have predicted the sudden popularity a few years ago of an ancient pentatonic hymn tune called *Amazing Grace*, which actually became a best seller? Or the success of Górecki, already mentioned? Yes, the public is starved and bored, and it desperately needs its 'geniuses' to issue warnings, to keep the flag of quality in the arts flying, to defy the bottom-dwellers, sorry, I mean bottom-liners, who seek to destroy all they touch in the name of profit. They have wrecked sport after sport, and stand on the verge of destroying music as well. More than ever is the classical composer needed.

Like the monks of old, laboriously recopying manuscripts century after century, we must forge our works in the face of cynicism and profiteering. The media is desperately out of balance because it believes that profit is the driving force in human relationships, not expressive contact between individuals. See the footnote below[8] for a heartfelt cry from a composer against a publication, which should be in the forefront of the compositional battle, but instead chooses to side with what is simply popular. Take heart, Monty, you are performing a valuable service to mankind. I find some small hope for the arts in this little corner of the world when I contemplate the CBC [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation; Ed.]. Their recent television series on the history of this nation is nothing short of spectacular, and a first class example of what this medium should be doing. On the radio also, I hear sprinkled among the Beethoven and the Trout Quintets an occasional bow to the music of our time. Recently Glenn Buhr's fine Violin Concerto was broadcast (on prime time yet - not just on Two New Hours' obscure time slot), a richly Romantic work which I was enjoying in my car and had to park and leave before the end, to my regret. I also see more and more substantial Canadian programming appearing in orchestra concerts, instead of the mandatory 5-minute piece played just to satisfy grant requirements - surely a slap in the face to composers.

[8] "For now, I will say that SOCAN's rag is a non *plus ultra* BAD example of lack of balance; e.g., one relatively recent issue had approximately a quarter of a page devoted to the distinguished Istvan Anhalt's completion of a 25-year project[!], and, as I recall, at least two pages of photos of RAPPERs, plus pages of articles about Rap, C&W, Pop, etc.", Monty Keene Pishny-Floyd, email message, November, 2000.

The task of the composer will never be easy, and the world will remain largely uncomprehending of this odd creature, but there will also be those in every society who tire of the blandness of fast food and fast culture, and respond to something of substance. If we are unlikely to reach the vast masses, we still must write for those few who take notice, knowing that slowly, ever so slowly, the audience will grow. It is inevitable. People can't wish to remain bored and starved forever, can they?

In conclusion, let me point out a recording I have admired for years; one which takes music full circle, from the inexpressible mystery of where creativity originates in the human personality to the quantum manifestation of pure sound on the subatomic level. It is a recording of music written by the Universe: a rendering into audible sound of the electromagnetic radiation emanating from the planets and moons of our solar system, as recorded by NASA spacecraft over the past few years. For those interested in sheer sonic splendour may I recommend SYMPHONIES OF THE PLANETS[9] , if you can find it. To quote myself in a review some years back:

> ...this is power that brings peace, peace that brings passionate agitation, agitation that soothes, all at the same time and within the confines of one little cranium. Sitting still, eyes closed, lotus position if you can, an Apollinian spirit descends and visions of Jupiter swim serenely in your internal view screen while you hurtle toward it at speeds 50 times that of the fastest bullet. World leaders should hear this stuff, and if they don't then go out and give universal cease-fire orders, they should be locked up in a home for the Bottomlessly Insensitive and publicly pitied.

Yes, my fellow composers, we have been striving to express the inexpressible, to render into sound the paradoxes of our progress, to bring to audible light the fact that modern physics is sounding more and more like Zen Buddhism. How dismaying it is to find that Nature did it first, and did it best.

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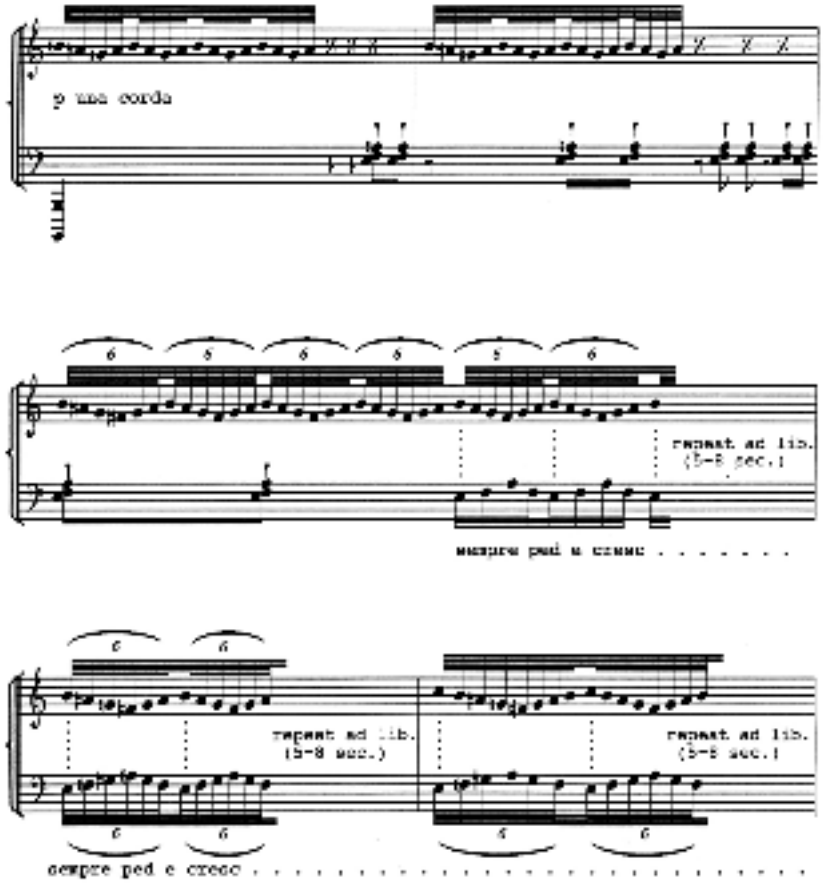

Ron Hannah, *Visions of Nothingness* (Piano Sonata in 2 Movements, 1976), p. 16. Reproduced by permission.

G. Gordon Nicholson, Edmonton, AB

The Ontological Basis of Artistic Compositional Experience

In a recent research study (Nicholson, 1997), I articulated the experience of musical composition for contemporary classical composers. I discussed this model in a previous article (*The Alberta New Music and Arts Review*, Vol. I No 1,1997) Eight classical composers were asked to describe their personal compositional experiences. Interview data were transcribed and analysed into eleven main themes, and a narrative model of the experiences of composing was constructed. It was found that the compositional process is contains a non-linear and pervasive interrelatedness of the identified themes. In their descriptions of the experience of composing, the composers often discussed several of the following themes, sometimes in the same breath, as integral "parts" of their overall experience of the compositional creative process. These themes included: (a) composers' thoughts during composition; (b) flow, involving intense concentration, altered awareness, loss of sense of self, and a rush of ideas; (c) motivation, including both external encouragement and internal urgency; (d) influences, including score analysis and listening to other musical works; (e) technique—the development of ideas, personal vocabulary, craft, and intuition; (f) conception—the envisioning of structures, and the incubation and clarification of musical forms; (g) generation—the creation of musical ideas by improvisation, intuition, exploration, and sketching; (h) choices, including consideration of various possibilities, aesthetics, and editing; (i) a personal voice—non-verbal vocabulary, style, and self-expression; (j) play—letting go, improvisation, and discovery; and (k) artistic development. Intuition emerged as a pervasive secondary theme. This model was then discussed noting the absence of Cartesian elements in the artistic experience relative to theoretical models of consciousness, and to the Zen notion of "interbeing."

In the following article, I discuss the search for truth in the artistic composers' experience in relation to Zen, Gadamer's discourse on Cartesianism, and Bohm's notion of implicate order; all useful in justifying the assertion of a profound interrelatedness of the derived themes in the compositional process. I attempt to transcend the traditional positivist and quantitative view and arrive at a new qualitative paradigm of how one seeks an understanding of inner artistic experience. Can an artistic process be validly described? How does inquiry into artistic experience cope with the apparent relativism of artistic interpretation? Can one overcome the difficulties of aesthetics inherent in

traditional ways of viewing art and its creation, in order to achieve a valid understanding of artistic compositional experience?

I believe that there is no final "truth" to be reached by the interpretation of the data of this research, but rather knowledge, meaning, and understanding to be gained. Complete truth can only be directly experienced; descriptions and their interpretations are at best approximations of truth. Many of the artists interviewed in this study entered a "flow" state of consciousness during intense periods of composition, which they described as "magical," "lucid," "mystical," "effortless," "flowing," "concentrated," "suprarational," when the music seems to be "dictated," and the process effortless and highly efficient.

The Zen view of truth relates to the understanding of the ideas found in this study, rooted in the concept of emptiness (Sanskrit: sunyata) based on an experience of transcending the subject–object split in order to arrive at an intuitive understanding of reality. I would suggest that an artist may approximate this transcendence during the experience of creating art, engaging with the materials of art. Heidegger (1943/1962) related such transcendence to a mode of experience he deemed "ready to hand... [which] is not grasped theoretically at all" (p. 99) but is rather a direct, practical engagement, a notion similar to Rollo May's (1975) idea of the "encounter" (pp. 87–110) between the artist and his or her art, in which the creator becomes fused with his or her own materials, losing a sense of self and gaining a sense of "flow" (Csikszentmihalyi & Csikszentmihalyi, 1988) when their abilities and the level of difficulties in the compositional tasks are balanced.

Applying the Zen notion of "interbeing" (Nhât Hanh, 1988) to artistic activity, we could claim that an artist has no substantial self distinct from his or her art. Yet the Cartesian sense of separation of subject and object arises from the belief in the substantialness of a self viewed as disconnected from the rest of reality. This conflicts with the Zen concept of emptiness which has been confused in much Western interpretations. Emptiness is often confused with a nihilistic view and requires a new Western interpretation. Reality, in normal moment-to-moment perception, seems to be dualistically split into subject and object, into "here" and "there," while emptiness (sometimes interpreted as chaotic nothingness), if taken too literally, may easily be interpreted as "the meaningless void," Yet, if the Zen notion of emptiness is interpreted (Blofield, 1958/1994) as "insubstantial [continually changing] existence" (pp. 15–24), then one may then experience phenomena from the musical experience from the perspective of its insubstantial yet dynamic nature. Reality is chaotic, energetic, evolving, unpredictable, interactive, and continually in a proc-

ess of change and evolution. Art is ontological, an expression of the being of the artist.

This dynamic insubstantiality of reality is impossible to grasp from a Cartesian viewpoint. One fears the giving up of "self"—a fear which R. J. Bernstein (1983) calls the "Cartesian anxiety" (pp. 16–20). One feels a lack in the anxiety of a Cartesian universe, which arose, in Bernstein's view, in part from the desire of Descartes to reach what he called an "Archimedean point upon which we can ground our knowledge" (p. 16). This "point" was his famous cogito, based on the foundation of reason. From a Zen point of view, the Cartesian anxiety would disappear if the illusion of "nihilistic emptiness" was removed; the universe is not meaningless bit rather empty yet dynamic. One need not fear giving up something that does not exist. Giving up the idea of the substantialness of artistic self is a path to liberation, not a one–way voyage to oblivion, a radical, non-Cartesian ontology.

I am suggesting that the Zen notions of "interbeing" and "dynamic emptiness" may be viewed as a means of transcendence of the barriers between subject and object, between artist and his or her own artistic experience. This is substantiated by George Gadamer, (in R. J. Bernstein, 1983), who criticises Cartesianism on ontological grounds, as a misunderstanding of "being in the world" (p. 118). Gadamer is attempting to transcend the entire Cartesian legacy, but not just on the grounds of understanding of what knowledge is; on ontological grounds. "Gadamer thinks that Cartesianism is based on misunderstanding of being, and in particular upon a misunderstanding of our being–in–the–world...[and] Gadamer's critique [of Cartesianism] is . . . devastating" (p. 118). Gadamer argues that a way of "being–in–the–world," rather than separating composer from score, must include a sharing of the knowledge inherent in art, even with the listener or critic's biases based in personal human experience and traditions. This sharing, in my view, approaches the Zen notion of the "interbeing" of all phenomena, of "knowing things as they are. Zen contemplation of emptiness helped me to see the ultimate fallacy of traditional Cartesian thinking, to transcend the Cartesian concept of the separateness of artist and art-work. Artistic compositional practice then becomes an encounter, a joining, a sharing, an "inter–being" of artist and work. Gadamer's continues this assault on Cartesianism, where he considers the subject of aesthetics.

Gadamer, considering Kant, is concerned about the latter's "subjectivisation of aesthetics" (R. J. Bernstein, 1983, p. 118). Why is there a denigration of the idea of truth in a work of art? He pinpoints Kant's *Critique*

of Judgement (1793/1951) as the source of the emergence of modern aesthetics, and of what Gadamer calls "aesthetic consciousness" or "aesthetic differentiation." Gadamer's, in my view successfully defeats Kant's attempt to establish a Cartesian basis for aesthetic judgements, considered as not a part of the phenomenal world, nor associated with pure practical reason, neither arbitrary nor idiosyncratic. Maintaining the basic Cartesian split of subject-object, Kant tried to explain the communal validity of aesthetic judgements, that is, how the "community" comes to some agreement on what is good and valid in art. But this is still radically subjective since agreement does not guarantee good judgement or universality of value.

The subjective interpretation of the aesthetic value of art is problematical, since it is difficult to understand the idea that there is no real truth in art; how then can we claim that great art is universal? Kant introduced the idea of the free play of the cognitive faculties, attempting to show that taste is "communal and not idiosyncratic/subjective" (R. J. Bernstein, 1983, p. 119). Gadamer disagrees with Kant's claim that truth is excluded from aesthetic judgements with the radical contention that Kant, by disallowing any kind of epistemology except that based on the natural sciences. Kant did acknowledge that people only could know a representation of reality, not reality itself. Thus artists, in Kant's view, are allowed to use artistic elements, for example, feeling and empathy, yet radical subjectivity remains, and so logically there is no "truth" to be found in the art. In true Cartesian style, Kant disallows consideration of any contextual factors such as historicity, influences on the artist, or secular-religious content, in the creation of the art work. Bernstein (1983) contends critically that this Kantian aesthetic may now be discarded because it belongs to what he calls the "museum conception of art" (p. 120) yielding only relativism as a result of Kant's radical subjectivism—if the listener must be totally subjective in judgement of a composer's work, then what can prevail in that judgement except personal preference?

We must thus reject Kant's radical subjectivism and relativism in the judgement of art. Aesthetic judgement is more than merely personal preference: aesthetic value from understanding the meaning of the artwork itself. If a listener gets a different meaning from a musical work upon different listenings or from different performances of the same work by different (or even by the same artist), this does not mean that we are invited to speak of relativism or to think that all readings of a text, or performances of a musical work, or viewings of a painting, are of equal merit. What is required rather, is understanding, and a new epistemology of art. There is knowledge to be found in art, a knowledge which can be experienced and described. Thus, there is

knowledge in artistic experience, which can also be described and interpreted. Aesthetics provides a basis for the knowledge embedded in the experience and understanding of art and artistic experience. What is needed is a way of thinking that will overcome Kant's radical subjectivisation. Gadamer's answer is play.

Gadamer moves beyond relativism to an alternative to the Cartesian model, to an understanding of participation in play, which fulfills its purpose only, if the player becomes lost in the play. There is a strict mode of being or essence in play independent of the consciousness of the players. Gadamer asserts that the "concept of play provides an understanding of the ontological status of works of art—how they are related to us and we are related to them" (R. J. Bernstein, 1983, p. 122). Art is not Cartesian; instead, there is interplay, a to–and–fro movement, an involvement, a participation, an encounter between composer and score. This interplay is dynamic interaction, an "interbeing" (in Zen terms), between a realised score, the listener, and the composer. Art and artistic experience requires interpretation, by a dynamic and active participants in the creative process and its realisation; interplay in the ontological sense of play as a sharing between artist and participant. Performer, listener, and composer as well come to understand the knowledge embedded within the work.

The aesthetic beauty of art, which is often as much of a surprise to the composer as it is a delight to the participant, is often achieved at the level of "intuition of sheer inspired guesses" (Hisamatsu, 1971). In Zen art, the artist is not involved in the traditional Western sense of aesthetic beauty, but rather operates at the level of "intuition of transpersonal reality" (Lipsey, p. 26). The artist lives, understands, and "becomes" emptiness in order to realise the insubstantialities and the momentariness within his or her own conscious mind. Realising that personality has no substantiality, the Zen artist will express or "represent" nothingness, true emptiness, and dynamic instability. Interbeing, beyond Cartesianism, is always there, reflected in the connections between artist, works of art, and participant. Bohm's holomovement theory relates to Zen to help provide the theoretical basis for such a model of artistic experience.

Physicist David Bohm (1980) suggests that all aspects of reality interpenetrate each other in intricate ways. In holography, for instance, any part of a three-dimensional laser-light image is capable of reproducing the whole image. One might expect that elements of human consciousness would act similarly, a conclusion also suggested by Bohm. It follows then that, in the

process of musical composition, one might expect that all aspects of this artistic process might interpenetrate each other in very intimate ways. Bohm's (1980) theories are thus a helpful way of explaining the interrelatedness of all the identified themes within compositional experience.

Bohm (1980) discusses artistic consciousness within his theory of wholeness and the implicate order in a very provocative manner. He begins at the point where relativity and quantum theories contradict each other. Relativity theory is based on a Cartesian and mechanistic view of reality requiring "continuity [of matter], strict causality (or determinism) and locality" (p. 176), while quantum theory requires the opposite—non continuity (energy waves or particles can leap from level to level), non causality, and non locality (events separated in space correlated through effects propagated at speeds not greater than the speed of light). What the two theories have in common is a concept of wholeness as an order of reality. Bohm's drops the Cartesian view of a mechanistic order of things, a view reinforced by the photographic lens, which perpetuates the illusion that elements of reality can be separated by point–to–point imaging. The human mind then adopts the concept that everything is localised or separated from everything else, and that nothing can be conceived otherwise (p. 177). This view countered by the hologram, a laser–light photograph which records interference patterns of light waves reflected from an object. Any minuscule part of the photograph can produce the entire photograph—there is no point–to–point correspondence of object and recorded image. The entire image is enfolded in each region of the hologram, which can become unfolded to reproduce the entire object.

Bohm postulates two basic orders to reality: the implicate order, in which everything is enfolded in everything else (undivided, non-linear and non localised), and the explicate order, the way one ordinarily perceives Cartesian reality), in which it seems that every object is unfolded in its own region of space and time. The hologram may also include sound waves, and human consciousness, all obeying abstract quantum mechanical laws (abstractions of more general laws, which are as yet unknown). Any element of reality, from an electron to a thought wave may be conceived as a set of enfolded ensembles not localised in space which can be, at any moment, unfolded and localised, then replaced immediately by another element. This very rapid recurrence gives the illusion of continuity, but each object, particle, or element of consciousness is actually only an abstraction to our senses. What is, is "always a totality of ensembles, all present together, in an orderly series of stages of enfoldment and unfoldment" (p. 184), intermingling and interpenetrating each other, rather than abstracted and separated as forms which manifest to our

senses and instruments. Bohm calls this vast, rich, unending flux of enfoldment and unfoldment the holomovement (pp. 150–157).

This implicate order theory may taken as fundamental, so that consciousness (thoughts, feelings, desires, and so on) can be understood within the implicate order theory. Thus an element of consciousness (such as an element of composer's experience, for instance) may be conceived as an unfolded element of a larger explicate order (of consciousness) as a "particular, distinguished case of the implicate order" (Bohm, p. 197). Bohm postulates that consciousness "is no longer to be fundamentally separated from matter" (p. 187), a notion reinforced by Pribram (1976), who argues that the brain resembles a hologram in its function or storing memories. Yet memories may merge together, Bohm thinks, connected by association and logical thought. Consciousness is more than memory involving awareness, attention, perception, acts of understanding, and so on, such as writing or listening to music. The listener or composer hears a certain note with a number of previous notes reverberating in his or her consciousness, giving a "direct and immediately felt sense of movement, flow and continuity...active transformations of what came earlier" (p. 199) which are diffused by emotional responses, bodily sensations, muscular movements, and interpretation of great subtlety of meaning. A sequence of notes (or chords, or rhythms) is thus "enfolded into many levels of consciousness which... interpenetrate and intermingle to give rise to an immediate and primary feeling of movement" (p. 199). Music

> is sensed immediately as the presence together of many different but interrelated degrees of transformations of tones and sounds …with a feeling of tension and harmony …in listening to music, one is therefore directly perceiving an implicate order… active in the sense that it continually flows into emotional, physical, and other responses, that are inseparable from the transformations out of which it is essentially constituted (pp. 199–200).

Movement in the implicate order is conceived of as a series of "interpenetrating and intermingling elements in different degrees of enfoldment all present together" (p. 203). The what is of reality, Bohm postulates, is movement itself, "a relationship of certain phases of what is to other phases of what is, that are in different stages of enfoldment" (p. 203). The essence of reality is the relationships between the various phases in different stages of enfoldment. One set of ideas in consciousness implies another set of ideas. Consciousness thus has an explicit content (as foreground, the composer's

immediate work, sketches, orchestration...) and implicit content (as background; the composer's motivation, background, ideals, style, voice etc.). The implicit content, in the composing experience is the totality of knowledge and skill, which the composer brings continuously to the act of composing. The explicit content is whatever is manifesting as thoughts at any given instant in the process, but what is manifesting can be a complex combination of different elements or themes, mentioned above in constant relationship, interpenetrating and intermingling.

Bohm implies that the movements of both mind and body are the outcome of "related projections of a common higher–dimensional ground" (p. 209) that he does not name. Human beings are not independent actualities interacting with other humans and nature, but rather all these are "projections of a single totality" (p. 110). Bohm's holographic concept has been discussed (Grof & Bennett, 1993; Keepin, 1993). Grof has spent more than 30 years researching and mapping various altered states of human consciousness. Much of the theoretical foundation of Grof's work is based on Bohm's holographic theory, on the notion that "matter and life are both abstractions that have been extracted from the holomovement, that is the undivided whole... similarly, matter and consciousness are both aspects of the undivided whole" (Grof & Bennett, 1993, p. 10). Grof's ideas are relevant here because he states that "all perceptions and knowledge—including scientific work—are not objective reconstructions of reality; instead, they are creative activities comparable to artistic expressions" (p. 10, italics added). Keepin (1993) reviews Bohm's life work, stating that there is a "fundamental interconnection of all things and the microcosm contains the macrocosm" (p. 44), a derivation of the Buddhist Avatamsaka Sutra that represents the universe as an infinite network of pearls, each reflecting all the others. Keepin holds that Bohm's ideas are "not experimental evidence… but [are] experiential evidence from the ages. If we broaden our epistemology beyond the bounds of science, we find ample precedent for a unitive holographic understanding of reality" (p. 44).

Accepting Bohm's implicate order interpretation of reality, as it appears that Capra, Grof, Keepin (and others) do, then the boundaries between the hierarchical structures of Wilber's (1981) cartography or spectrum of consciousness (essential body, mind, and spirit) disappear, and Bohm's notion that everything is enfolded in everything else becomes more credible. These discussions are useful in our discussion of the interrelatedness of the themes in the process of composition as interrelated elements of consciousness. This thus forms the basis of understanding of the model of artistic experience mentioned earlier in this article. Could it be, considering Bohm's arguments,

Gadamer's defeat of Cartesianism in the sense of artistic consciousness, and the Zen notion of interbeing, that the compositional process might be understood as a specific example of a specialised form of artistic consciousness, interrelated to all that is. The universality of real art becomes easier to comprehend if this is the case.

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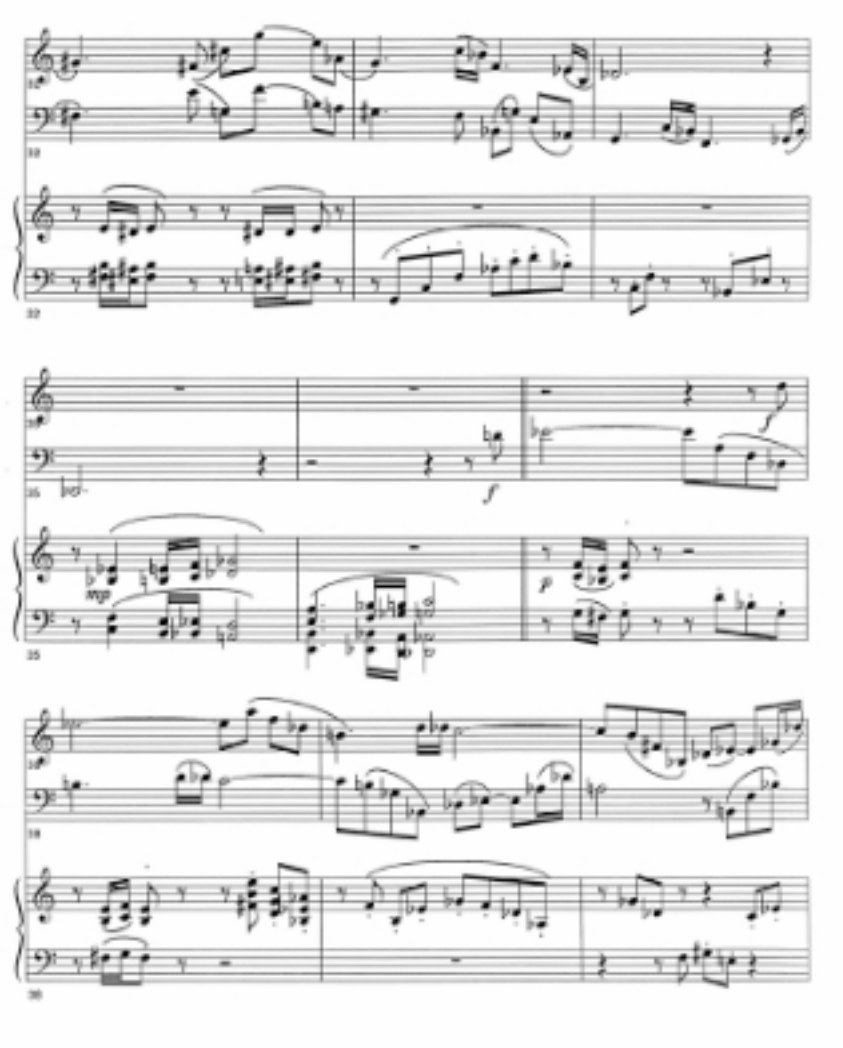

G. Gordon Nicholson, *Miramar* for Piano Trio (1985), p. 5. Reproduced by permission.

A Lonely Desert's Night

My fresh and foolish
fantasy has been dried by the
scorching rays of unrelenting reality
And, like a rose in the desert sun,
My lapse into the attachment of affection
has blossomed parched
Withering into the nightly tears
of an abandoned sky

Dalbir Sehmby

Cogito Ergo Sum

I think, therefore you are
You are my inside everything
An incognito vision
Reality realized
Mirage before my eyes
An amalgam of lies
The essence of truth
I think,
Therefore,
You are

Dalbir Sehmby

Manijeh Mannani, Edmonton, AB

Defamiliarisation and the Poetry of e. e. cummings

e. e. cummings is not the only poet who has practised the challenging, unconventional method of expressing strikingly new ideas in poetry. Poets from diverse cultural origins and literary heritage had already shown the tendency of blending form and content in unconventional ways in their works. The goal of any such avoidance of traditional forms of expression in the works of these poets is to "defamiliarise, make strange or challenge certain dominant conceptions … of the social world"[1] and therefore "to make man *look* with an exceptionally high level of awareness."[2] The terms often used in literary criticism to refer to this particular concept are numerous and diverse. However, "Viktor Shklovsky [is the critic] who introduced the phrase '*priem ostranenija'*… which has been rendered in English as 'estrangement,' 'alienation,' and 'defamiliarisation."[3] cummings's poetry by offering a different perspective to view life and by expanding the gap between the observer and the different observed phenomena in life, lends itself to be analysed within the context of Shklovsky's concept of "defamiliarisation." This study will aim to elucidate the nature of cummings's poetry from this perspective.

Although there is no dividing line between form and content in Formalist criticism, practically there exists "a profound ambiguity [about the term '*ostranenija*', in the sense that] it is never clear in Shklovsky's writings whether it is the content or the form itself which is defamiliarised."[4] In other words it is not only an ambiguous notion in Shklovsky's theoretical writings, but - in most cases- quite difficult to state exactly that the quality of estrangement in a verbal work of art necessarily arises from '*ostranenija*' in either form or content. Considering the form, "[a poet may not use] a radically unconventional language"[5] to try to sharpen the reader's awareness of a particular concept in a work of art, as it often occurs in the narration of events in a work of fiction, like Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Yet, other writers might de-

[1] Tony Bennet, *Formalism and Marxism*, (New York: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1979), p. 21.

[2] Lee T. Lemon and Marian J. Reis trans. *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p. 5.

[3] R. H. Stacy, *Defamiliarization in Language and Literature*, (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1977), pp. 2-3.

[4] Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p.75.

[5] Stacy, p. 11.

liberately deviate from orthodox use of language and employ a means of expression "that is itself strange, unconventional, highly allusive and metaphorical, even enigmatic"[6] and – this happens most in poetry - challenge even more conspicuously the seemingly random process of perception. cummings's poems, in this regard, are perfect illustrations of a pronounced deviation from the conventional use of language. The following poem clearly illustrates the radical step taken against such orthodoxy:

if i

or anybody don't
know where it her his

my next meal's coming from
i say to hell with that
that doesn't matter (and if

he she it or everybody gets a
bellyful without
lifting my finger; i say to hell
with that;

say that doesn't matter) but
if somebody
or you are beautiful or
deep or generous what
i say is

whistle that
sing that yell that spell
that out big (bigger than cosmic
rays war earthquakes famine or the ex

prince of whoses diving into
a whatses to rescue miss nobody's
probably handbag) because i say that's not

swell (get me) babe not (understand me) lousy
kid that's something else my sweet (i feel that's

true)

In this poem the rebellion against grammar and conventional standards of writing is pronounced and radical. Particularly in this poem cummings implies that what really matters is beauty, generosity, and spiritual depth; gram-

[6] Ibid.

mar no longer occupies a place in the life of his poetry, as in a similar manner he presents food as insignificant in daily life. It is, thus, through an explicit outcry against grammatical constructions in language that cummings succeeds in defamiliarising our perception of more serious concepts in life such as beauty and kindness. It is exactly at this level that form and content in his poetry unite and become inseparable. The notion cummings advocates in his poetry is quite compatible with the theoretical principles of the Formalist school in the sense that,

> …there exists an opposition between two systems of language - poetical and the everyday. To the ordinary everyday speech, which aims at the greatest possible economy, fluency, and accuracy, they oppose the deliberately obstructed, complicated, and twisted poetical speech, which aims at creating the greatest possible effect by overcoming the automatism perception.[7]

The undermining of "economy, fluency, and accuracy" - of everyday speech - in cummings's poetry manifests itself in the shape of obscurity achieved through the rejection of conventionality and the accepted norms. Yet in cummings's works, as well as in Tolstoy's stories - whom Shklovsky admired for his use of demailiarisation - "a deliberate avoidance of artificial construction"[8] can be clearly traced. In other words, departure from the everyday plain of language does not necessarily imply a flight towards artificiality of expression. In accordance with the Formalists' adherence to the non-customary usage of language, in cummings's poetry there exists, at the same time, an avoidance of artificiality and bookishness:

> The vocabulary of his poetry is surprisingly simple, or more accurately, not complex. That is, an individual word will rarely send one to the dictionary. Yet his vocabulary does require mastering, and can strike the uninitiated as quite perplexing. We expect poets to employ words in radically new senses, but we are seldom prepared to construct a system for interplaying his vocabulary. And that is what cummings requires of the reader.[9]

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[7] Gleb Struve, *Russian Literature Under Lenin and Stalin 1917- 1953*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 207.

[8] D. S. Mirsky, *A History of Russian Literature*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), p. 252.

[9] Irene R. Fairley, *e. e. cummings and Ungrammar*, (New York: Watermill Publishers, 1975), p. 5.

The simple and at the same time peculiar choice of words in the following poem, for example, sheds more light on this controversial aspect of cummings's diction:

love is more thicker than forget
more thinner than recall
more seldom than a wave is wet
more frequent than to fail

it is most mad and moonly
and less it shall unbe
than all the sea which only
is deeper than the sea

love is less always than to win
less never than alive
less bigger than the least begin
less littler than forgive

it is most sane and sunly
and more it cannot doe
than all the sky which only
is higher than the sky

As it is clear, there is hardly a word in the above poem that could cause semantic difficulty by itself. The problem of understanding the poem, however, arises from the way the words and ideas are blended to hint at an abstract and at the same time more general and complex idea i.e., the essential qualities of "love."

Quite frequently, moreover, the use of colloquial expressions in cummings's poetry augments the process of "*ostranenija*." In the following poem, for instance, as in many other of his poems, the conversational use of language and everyday expressions creates an unusual atmosphere which ultimately contributes to defamiliarisation:

goodby Betty, don't remember me
pencil your eyes and have a good time
with the tall tight boys at Tabari'
s, keep your teeth snowy, stick to beer and lime,
wear dark, and where your meeting breasts are round

have roses darling, it's all i ask of you-
but that when light fails and this sweet profound
Paris moves with lovers, two and two
bound for themselves, when passionately dusk
brings softly down the perfume of the world
(and just as smaller stars begin to husk
heaven) you, you exactly paled and curled

with mystic lips take twilight where i know:
proving to Death that Love is so and so.

The subject matter in this poem is not complicated, neither is its language. However, as Stacy has noticed in other works- what happens in this poem- "is described in a language that is… strongly coloured by the presence of many imitations of a substandard colloquial speech…"[10] In other words, in this poem the deviation from the formal use of language is achieved through the exploitation of conversational speech.

As it has already been mentioned a clear-cut division between form and content in cummings's poetry is almost impossible to establish and can only result in a superficial interpretation of his works. Nevertheless, by putting less emphasis on verbal and visual deviations, cummings often succeeds in defamiliarising the content of a work through focusing solely on the subject matter. In other words, by concentrating on a specific word or notion in a poem, the poet increases the distance between the reader and the text and contributes to his goal of defamiliarising that particular concept. This happens, for example, when "historical figures"[11] or even names and properties of nature are defamiliarised. In the opening lines of the following poem, "anyone" is given the attributes of a person with "identity," an "individual with spirit" who despite the implications of the word "anyone" happens to be the most important and *identified* person in the poem:

anyone lived in a pretty how town
(with up so floating many bells down)
spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did

The four seasons mentioned in this stanza hint at the variety in the life of "the

[10] Stacy, p. 16.
[11] Ibid., p. 119.

individual," the "anyone." Relevantly the dominant mood of the poem is one of joy and happiness; anyone "sang his didn't and danced his did." In the second stanza of the poem, however, "women" and "men," people who are expected to have "identities" - in contrast to "anyone" - are depicted as mere spectators of the life of "anyone"; they are simply conformists for whom "individuality" has become devoid of meaning:

> Women and men (both little and small)
> cared for anyone not at all
> they sowed their isn't they reaped their same
> sun moon stars rain

The world of "women" and "men" is one which can be summed up in their mutual "sun moon stars rain" i.e., ordinary natural phenomena present in the lives of all people. Contrary to the "mob," "anyone" sings and dances throughout the year: "spring summer autumn winter." As the poem continues, the individuality" of nonconformists is further deautomatised through the verbal reference to their opponents as "someones" and "everyones":

> someones married their everyones
> laughed their cryings and did their dance
> (sleep wake hope and then) they
> said their nevers they slept their dreams

The "mob," the "someones" - people without "identity"- sleep, but their sleep has no dream. As Fredric Jameson has stated, "it is… part of a general feeling in the modern world that life has become abstract, that reason and theoretical knowledge have come to separate us from a genuine existential contact with things and the world."[12] It is noteworthy, however, that the ideological consequences of defamiliarisation for Shklovsky and other early Formalist scholars were not of primary significance. For cummings, nevertheless, the conceptual implications of the mechanism seem to have been important.

Thus, it is by "tearing the object out of its habitual context"[13] that cummings's poetry, much in accordance with the theoretical goals of the Formalist school, achieves its highest effect:

> …by bringing together disparate notions, the poet gives a coup de grâce to the verbal cliché and to the stock responses attendant

12 Jameson, p. 55.
13 Victor Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, (The Hague: Mouton & CO., Publishers, 1955), p. 150.

> upon it and forces us into heightened awareness of things and their sensory texture. The act of creative deformation restores sharpness to our perception, giving "identity" to the world around us.[14]

As it has already been mentioned for Shklovsky art's ultimate function and value was purely intrinsic; cummings, however, rebels against "the stock responses attendant upon the verbal cliché" most often for conceptual and ideological considerations. In many of his poems the manipulation of both language and content become means of protesting certain social conventions and institutions. In other words, as it is the case with Tolstoy's works, "making it strange' becomes a vehicle of social criticism… [although] Shklovsky is not concerned with the ideological implications of the device."[15] In the following short poem, for instance, "reasoning" as an institution in the lives of human beings is criticised:

> when god decided to invent
> everything he took one
> breath bigger than a circustent
> and everything began
>
> when man determined to destroy
> himself he picked the was
> of shall and finding only why
> smashed it into because

In the above lines, the limitation of man's power of logic and intellect is set against "god's" ultimate creative power. Compared to Him and considering the history of mankind, whatever human beings try to reach results in "whys" which are in the end "smashed into because"; man is destructive, in the sense that he tries to impose his logic on the world; ironically however, destruction begins the moment mankind starts asking questions. This might appear as secondary to my discussion of the technique of defamiliarisation. But I wish to stress, through this textual analysis, the direct link between the defamiliarising effect of choice of words and the theme of the poem.

The adoption of the peculiar method of blending words and ideas in

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[14] Ibid.
[15] Ibid., p. 151.

cummings's poetry can further be seen as a "satire upon those people who do not respond to life and upon the conventions, institutions, and beliefs with which they surround themselves to avoid or disguise reality."[16] In the popular poem *The Grasshopper*, "through the spacings of word and letter and the use of capitals, the poet attempts to stimulate the responses, particularly the auditory and visual responses, to the leap of a grasshopper from one point to another,"[17] and thus succeeds in presenting a vivid and life-like image of a leaping insect. By depicting the range and types of movements and the final stillness of the grasshopper, cummings implies that those who are not sensitive to life and their surroundings fail to appreciate and grasp the life embodied in an apparently insignificant insect. His aim seems to have been to confront his audience with the immediacy of the grasshopper's existence:

r-p-o-p-h-e-s-s-a-g-r
who
a) s w (e l oo) k
upnowgath
PPEGORHRASS
eringint(o
aThe):1
e A
!p:
a
S
(r
rIvInG
. gRrEaPsPhOs)
to
rea(be)rran(com)gi(e)ngly
,grasshopper;

Considered from this perspective, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that cummings himself "found illimitable joy in everything truly alive,"[18] and through his work demonstrated his aversion to a dulling of human senses.

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[16] Robert E. Wegner, *The Poetry and Prose of e. e. cummings*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1965), p. 41.
[17] Ibid., pp. 41-42.
[18] Ibid., p. 41.

Yet, the greater body of cummings's work is simply meant to wash away the dust of custom from the eyes of the readers and to make them see the world without preconception and prejudice. According to Gary Lane,

> [cummings pursues the task of conveying] through verbal structure the emotional substance of experience… in a manner reminiscent of the metaphysical poets: he tries to surprise us into vision, all the while marshalling his surprises in a formal pattern that makes them seem, if not inevitable, then certainly just.[19]

The acquisition of any such vision itself culminates in a higher sensitivity to life and the different phenomena of the real world. In other words, through distorting the usual construction of words in a work of verbal art, poetry can be considered as " a lie that makes us see the truth."[20] Paradoxically, however, in cummings's poetry this old saw can be seen the other way round. As Lane has stated, "the art of e. e. cummings is both this and its opposite, a truth that makes us see the lie."[21] The ultimate consequence of any such confrontation between "truth" and "untruth" is a "rediscovering of 'the meaning of [our] stars' and of ourselves."[22]

Through various modes of defamiliarising concepts and ideas cummings succeeds in opening the gates of a new and, at the same time, familiar world for his audience. He achieves his goal mainly by drawing upon radically new forms of expression, and this is the same principle the Russian formalist Boris Tomashevsky has argued. He writes: "the value of a work of literature lay above all in its novelty and originality."[23] This was after all the very reason why "the Formalists were particularly interested in certain minor writers in whom … the new genre characteristics were more conspicuous."[24]

In this regard one of the many ways the new generation of poets adopted was to delay and even prevent the reader from reaching a clear denouement. According to this principle, defamiliarisation reaches its height through the

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[19] Gary Lane, *I Am: A Study of . e. cummings's Poems,* (Wichita: The University Press of Kansas, 1976), p. 9.
[20] Ibid., p. 112.
[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid., p. 114.
[23] Struve, p. 208.
[24] Ibid.

difficult, indirect, implied, and oblique ways of expression. For this very reason cummings's poems appear more as enigmas on the printed page:

un (bee) mo

vi
n (in) g
are (th
e) you (o
nly

asl (rose) eep

If the above lines are read in a linear and conventional manner, they could produce a potential answer to the puzzle presented in the poem: "unmoving are you asleep, bee in the only rose." This reading could connote the admiration of the speaker for his beloved, while asleep. The prevalent mood of the poem would, therefore, seem to be peace and tranquillity. But, the poem can be read differently, this time to create a slightly different image: "being the only rose, unmoving and asleep." This second reading removes the image of the bee nestled in the rose and, instead, places emphasis on the speaker's sense of being torn from the beloved. The stillness produced by this particular reading has none of the tranquillity perceived in the first interpretation. Thus, the interplay between words and images in this poem contributes to a vivid portrayal of at least two different visions with diverse implications. As the old saying goes "recognition always dulls the cutting edge."[25] Of course, in this poem in particular and in most of cummings's other works the mechanism through which perception is delayed and sometimes prevented is "to make it difficult."[26] It is what Herbert Spencer called "the law of the economising of mental energy."[27]

cummings's poetic style may be summed up in the attempt to familiarise through defamiliarisation on the one hand, and to defamiliarise through familiarisation on the other. In other words, in his poetry cummings constantly moves from one pole to the other in both directions. In this respect

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[25] Viktor Shklovsky, *Pushkin and Sterne:* Eugene Onegin *in Twentieth - Century Russian Literary Criticism,* edited by Victor Erlich, (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1975), p. 71.
[26] Stacy, p. 34.
[27] Ibid. This concept was expounded in his *The Philosophy of Style.*

what the poet basically does is "refamiliarising us"[28] as his readers with the world around us.

Poets and writers employ numerous devices to postpone immediate perception of a given concept in order to "make it look strange." Of the many ways of achieving this end - some of which can be clearly seen in cummings's poetry - the following are most conspicuous:

> retarding the plot (itself); defamiliarising titles; describing with excessive detail; defamiliarising names; pretending disability to describe; and describing through the viewpoint of a child, a mentally imbalanced person or an illiterate one.[29]

From the point of view of technique, I intend to examine the process of defamiliarisation in the four major areas of cummings's poetry.[30] Each one of the four areas individually contributes to the process of defamiliarisation. Essentially, the employment of figurative language enables the poet to express his ideas more attractively and effectively.[31] Moreover, this is the definition any relevant dictionary provides. According to any such definition the function of a figure of speech - such as a metaphor, for instance - would be to sharpen and deepen our perception of an object/ phenomenon by comparing and contrasting it to another object or phenomenon. As Stacy has noted "this is especially true where we have an effective defamiliarisation or where according to André Breton, we have a comparison between 'deux objets aussi éloignés que possible l'un de l'autre' and when these are juxtaposed 'd'une manière brusque et saisissante."[32] As Stacy further argues,

> before we encounter this figure, 'coffee is coffee,'…and 'reining a horse is reining a horse'; then, in juxtaposition, …[with conquistador/ Firmly as coffee grips the taste] they are suddenly both defamiliarised. Next, after we remember the peculiar effect of tasting a good cup of coffee, the picture is clarified: coffee is coffee once again and reining is reining, but in the process we have, in effect, been in a small way 'enlightened.'[33]

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[28] Ibid., p. 49.
[29] Ibid., pp. 50-71. In this quotation I have selected and summarised only a few of these devices.
[30] Norman Friedman, *e. e. cummings; the art of his poetry*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1960), p. 88. The four areas Friedman has discussed are cummings's use of figurative language; his metrical and stanzaic practices; his habits of word-coinage; and finally the use of typographical units for poetic purposes.
[31] J. A. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1976).
[32] Stacy, p. 37.
[33] Ibid.

In the following poem, similarly, the central idea of likening "silence" to "a looking bird" brings into focus the essential qualities of "silence" more effectively:

silence

. is
a
looking

bird: the

turn
ing; edge, of
life

(inquiry befor snow

The important point in this poem is the way the image is presented; through comparing "silence" with "a looking bird" the immediate associating qualities of "silence" become renewed and defamiliarised. Consequently, some readers, upon perceiving the comparison, might unconsciously experience a brief moment of "epiphany." Figurative devices, in this way, prolong the process of perception, but they also create a self- contained and internally coherent imaginative world within which meaning can be produced.

In cummings's poetry the combination of regular rhythmic units, on the one hand, and the irregular and therefore immeasurable ones, on the other,[34] provides the poet with a possibility to better explore and demonstrate the essential potentialities of words and expressions. As Friedman has stated, cummings has shown interest in both ways of metrical practice; he chooses either of the two according to the dominant mood of the poem as well as the requirements of the time he wrote a particular poem.[35] However, the compatibility of rhythm and rhyme with the peculiarity of subject in each poem better helps alienate the reader from the immediate literary product and results in a more efficient process of defamiliarisation. Shklovsky had his own radical views on the function of rhythm in poetry. To him the very existence of metrical and stanzaic practices is a step toward defamiliarisation:

[34] Friedman, p. 97.
[35] Friedman, pp. 97-105.

> Another crucial aspect of the 'deliberately impeded form' (*zatrudnënnaja forma*) is rhythm - a set of contrivances superimposed upon ordinary speech. Verse writing, is verbal tight- rope walking, 'a dance of the articulatory organs.' The poet's 'twisted,' oblique mode of discourse hinders communication and forces the reader to come to grips with the world in a more strenuous and, thus, more rewarding fashion.[36]

Close analysis of any of cummings's poems reveals the functional quality of rhythm in relation to the mechanism of defamiliarisation. Coining words and distorting grammatical constructions is one of the other ways cummings defamiliarises concepts in his poetry. However, the way he creates new words is itself worthy of exploration. As Friedman has found out most often,

> [cummings's] coinages - and a large portion of his vocabulary consists of words that he has invented - are derived by analogy from already existing words. Rarely, if ever, does he make up a word on the basis of root - creation, which produces coinages having no previous analogy in language. And of the words that he has thus adapted, by far the largest portion is formed by derivation in which parts of speech are changed, or new words are created by the addition of affixes to already existing words.[37]

The reason cummings avoids coining words based on root-creation is that he aims to challenge the concepts, which are associated with the already existing words. In this way, he disrupts any possible connection with certain basic notions taken for granted in the language, which is his apparent frame of reference. The very first line of the following poem, for instance, includes words, which are produced by adding the suffix "lings" to the already existing adverbs "where" and "when":

> wherelings whenlings
> (daughters of if but offspring of hopefear
> sons of unless and children of almost
> never shall guess the dimension of…

wherelings and whenlings in this poem refer to people who do not live in "the present"; they belong to that group of people who live either in "the past" or in "the future." The goal of intensifying the carpe diem theme in the poem is thus partly achieved through changing the appearance of the already existing

[36] Erlich, *Russian Formalism*, p. 152.
[37] Friedman, p. 105.

words “where” and “when”- by adding the suffix “lings” to them - to refer to a special category of people who are drastically distinguished from those who *seize the day.*

Coining negative counterparts for different parts of speech by adding negative prefixes to them is another basic technique cummings uses to capture the attention of his readers. Nearly in all languages there exist certain antonyms - pairs of words which have opposing meanings: good/bad; clever/stupid; pain/ pleasure. cummings generally avoids using the usual negative counterpart for a word; instead he often adds suffixes to coin the negative counterpart: clever/unclever. This defamiliarising technique reaches its peak when cummings coins negative verbs and nouns based on the same formula: sits/unsits; eyes/uneyes[38]:

> lovers go and lovers come
> awandering awondering
> but any two are perfectly
> alone there’s nobody else alive

The coinage of the words “awandering” and “awondering” in the above stanza create fresh conceptions of the two words by reminding the reader of the epistemological qualities of the states of “wandering” and “wondering.” Some of the other coinages in cummings's poetry which are formed in a similar manner are: lookingly, collapsingly, screamingly, too- nearishness, and allness.[39] All of which are effective means of defamiliarising their customary associations.

Likewise, grammatical distortions often increase the distance between the reader and the text often as a means of displaying the poet’s moral concepts. “It functions therefore, aesthetically and conceptually in signalising an individual set of values seen freshly through the distortions of the grammatical shift.”[40] In the following lines, for example, by exchanging the places of adverbs and adjectives, and nouns and verbs cummings opens a window for the reader through which he/she can see not only the new function of syntactical units, but also the poet’s own position vis-à-vis two different groups of people:

> anyone lived in a pretty how town
> (with up so floating many bells down)

[38] Ibid., p. 106.
[39] Ibid., p. 107.
[40] Ibid. p. 105.

spring summer autumn winter
he sang his didn't he danced his did

In these lines the use of the adverb "how" in place of an adjective produces an ambiguous effect revealing more efficiently the essential mysterious atmosphere of the superficially "pretty town." Similarly, in the last line, "anyone" sings "his didn't" which is a verb and not a noun. The effect of all the dislocations and distortions in the poetry of cummings is ultimately to make the reader "construct a sentence by analysing and synthesising its parts into their normal order, and in this process [the reader] is made to read and explore its possibilities in a more creative way than is usual when dealing with ordinary syntax."[41] In his article "parallels in Tolstoy" Shklovsky himself mentions the strategy of "splitting [an object] into two, or breaking [it] down into its various components."[42] He further argues that "in Alexander Blok the single word 'railroad' breaks into 'blues of the road, [blues] of the rail."[43] As he mentions in the opening paragraph of the above-cited article, "in order to make of, an object an artistic fact, one must pry it loose of the facts of life,"[44] and the distortion of language becomes the best possible means of achieving this end.

In cummings's poems, however, defamiliarisation becomes most rigorous in the spatial distortion of typographical units. The unorthodox way of dividing lines into irregular lengths, the whole strategy of enjambed stanzas, the splitting of words into their components, and finally connecting two or more neighbouring words are methods of changing perspectives from an ordinary viewpoint to a radically new one. Apart from the mental effects such changes produce in the reader, they also prolong the process of perception:

weazened Irrefutable unastonished
two, countenances seated in arranging; sunlight
with-ered unspea-king; tWeNtY, f i n g e r s,
four gnarled lips tottter

Therefore, approaching my twentysix selves
bulging in immortal Spring express a cry of
How do you find the sun,ladie

[41] Ibid., p. 109
[42] Erlich, *Twentieth- Century Russian Literary Criticism*. p. 81.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

(graduallyverygradually "there is not enough
of it" their, hands
minutely
answered

The way the words "withered" and "unspeaking" are spelled and typographically distorted in this poem echoes the image of the receding sun in the west; metaphorically moreover, the gradual setting of the sun is likened to the dethronement of the king of the sky in the way the word "king" remains all by itself in the middle of the line and is split from its beginning part. Similarly, the strange typography of the letters in "tWeNtY f i n g e r s" vividly portrays the image of twenty different fingers belonging to two different people. As Friedman believes "such devices call for serious attention."[45]

The underlying mechanism of typographical distortion evident in the following poem:

l (a

le
af
fa

ll

s)
one
l

iness

The peculiar depiction of the fall of a single leaf in this poem is intensified by the inclusion of as limited a number of letters as possible in each line to create a vivid image of the falling leaf. Moreover, the mere appearance of the letter "l" in a separate line in the poem echoes the feeling of loneliness associated with autumn, the falling of leaves, and solitude. Interestingly enough the words "leaf" and "loneliness" both begin with the letter "l." Similarly, the shape of the letter "l" in this context coincides with the shape of the cardinal numeral "1." In this way the dominant mood of the poem which is one of loneliness is augmented through the distortions of typographical units.

[45] Friedman, p. 112.

In the following poem, as in almost all of cummings's poems, the unconventional use of the small letter "i" instead of its capital counterpart is a means of dissociating the attributes of the first person singular pronoun:

> who are you, little i
> (five or six years old)
> peering from some high
>
> window; at the gold
>
> of november sunset
>
> (and feeling: that if day
> has to become night
>
> this is a beautiful way)

In these lines, cummings implicitly displays his admiration for the state of childhood and innocence. The ideological justification underlying this way of referring to oneself in lower case letters is explicitly stated by cummings himself:

> Concerning the 'small i': did it never strike you as significant that, of all God's children, only English & American apotheosize their egos by capitalizing a pronoun whose equivalent is in French "je" in German " ich", & in Italian "io"? [46]

cummings's unique way of capitalising words becomes a powerful device which shifts the reader's attention from the customary to the irregular and therefore, to a constructive one. Thus the deliberate deviation from the standardised way of capitalisation contributes to the general process of defamiliarisation. Similarly the unconventional way of punctuating words in poems deconstructs the accepted and automatised way of perception. The function of these radical deviations in cummings's poetry is to change the nature of a verbal work of art from a poem to a puzzle. By excluding punctuation marks and by using them in places where according to standard rules they should not be used, cummings rebels against the grammatical rules to reveal to his readers

[46] *Selected Letters*, p. 244, in Bethany K. Dumas, *e. e. cummings: A Remembrance of Miracles*, (Plymouth: Clarke, Doble & Brendon Ltd, 1974), p. 55.

new and at the same time familiar understanding of the phenomena around them.

The goal in cummings's poetry is to direct the reader's perception towards an understanding which is dissociated from habit and previously maintained beliefs. This goal is mainly achieved through the employment of a highly unconventional language. Moreover, cummings refers to common experiences, which through repeated usage, have become devoid of meaning. This unsettling of the customary and cummings's unique blending of form and content defamiliarises ordinary concepts of life in the most efficient manner possible.

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Music from a Waterfall

He was 35 years old and had only worked odd jobs.

Clearing his mind
he tried to reflect and see what was really going on up there
but the light kept creeping in and making him write music.

He never knew that is was something he had talent for
but the songs kept coming and so he decided it was better to go on singing
than to resist what came so naturally.

He wrote of all kinds of things.
Things he had never even seen before.
Turkish jewels
Ice flows
Outer space
Ruins of long lost civilizations
And what not.

Oddly,
he never wrote down a single note
because his memory was absolutely perfect – when it came to music.

He became an international star.

Suddenly he was surrounded by beautiful people who wanted him to know their names.
He began to buy many costly possessions
He had never even known that he needed a therapist for his goldfish but now it seemed of utmost importance.

His talent for writing music never wavered but in a few years he grew tired of the noise of this life.

One day he woke up and moved to Uruguay.

This was after the goldfish has died and been flushed down the toilet.

It would never have been able to make the trip with him.

He never learned Spanish because he never thought it necessary.

Music was written in one language.

Besides,

apart from the occasional trip see the waterfalls, he never left his garden much.

It was quiet there.

Quiet so he could write music.

He liked the falls because he had always enjoyed looking down from high up and he liked the rhythm of the water.

Many of his songs began to take on that rhythm but few would ever recognize it.

It was mostly foreign tourists who went there and the only sound they remembered was the clicking of cameras.

Just as well.

It allowed him to go unnoticed too.

Even on the day he threw himself over the falls

he went unnoticed.

But the rhythm of the falls changed.

Heather Nicholson

My Generation

If we were to fly, what would you think of us?

If you could look back at us.

Would you wonder why the distances seemed so much
between land and water
and places and souls?

Where were we, when you have come so far in so short a time
in your generation so far from mine?

And if we were to try and draw a flower
when you could procure beauty from thin air,
would you find us futile looking back from where you are?
As I find wastefulness in those before me,
so wrapped up in conquering and survival
that they could not know about exploration and understanding.

And yet I know my own shapes and boundaries
from which you have been liberated,
no longer belted by the strain of your own skull
holding in what all possess
and thus may share collectively.

No more barriers, grid patterned streets, walls, three dimensions.

All of this is left to mine, to ours, this last generation
before the flower and the wood became yours.

Heather Nicholson

J. Andrew Creaghan, Edmonton, AB

Music of the Spheres – A Historical Survey

> *The rhythm of the spirit has the property of grasping the essence of music: it gives presentiments and the inspiration of celestial science, and what the spirit receives from it through the senses is the embodiment of spiritual knowledge.* (Beethoven, 1810)

According to the recent "inflation theory," the Big Bang, with which the entire creation came from, was not chaos and noise but in fact a chord based on a series of harmonics. By studying the remains of the gamma rays from the original explosion, researchers have found that the first harmonic relates to the quantity of matter, and the second harmonic relates to the speed of sound in the primordial gas. Well, after Big Bang, they say you have to "move on."

It is not my intention here to deal with the first creative sound. However, in the Alice Bailey teachings it says: "The Sound which was the first indication of the activity of the planetary Logos is not a word, but a full reverberating sound, holding within itself all other sounds, all chords and certain musical tones (which have been given the name 'music of the spheres') and dissonances, unknown as yet to the modern ear"*(EH. pp.688-89).*

To the Greeks, the word *kosmos* meant not only the world, it also meant harmony. The Pythagorean concept of the cosmos consisting of spheres moving at different speeds and producing sounds became known as "music of the spheres." The "great theme" of cosmic harmony as it later become known, can be traced through the history of music. It persisted through the Middle Ages as *musica mundana-"* the music of the worlds produced by the concordance of sounds caused by the movement of the heavenly bodies" (Boethius).The great theme was furthered by the Renaissance humanists, like Marsilio Ficino, whose rediscovery and translation of Hermes Trismegistus's *Corpus Hermeticum* gave a philosophical basis for the idea of a celestial harmony.

In the Baroque Age, there was a flowering of works connected with the great theme. The works of Robert Fludd (1574-1637), Johannes Kepler (1571-1630), Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), Marin Mersenne (1588-1648) and several other contemporaries sought a universal harmony to explain the intellectual plan behind the universe (*HS*). A quite different view of celestial harmony was given by Johannes Kepler. Though crediting Pythagoras and

Plato as his mentors, he moved the idea of the music of the spheres from a schema consisting only of scales to something "polyphonic" (*MS*. p.142). By the study of interval ratios, Kepler proved that the planets paths around the sun were elliptical, not circular, as was thought. *In Harmonices Mundi, Bk.5*, he relates the arcs of the planets to one another and finds the same ratios as the basic musical intervals. He also explored the relationships between the orbits of the heavenly bodies, the consonant intervals, and the five Platonic solids.

In the Classical Age of Enlightenment, one of the main exponents of the great theme was none other than Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727). In his *Classical Scholia,* he shows himself to be a true Pythagorean. Here, he states that Pythagoras discovered the inverse-square relationship of vibrating strings by comparing the weights of the planets and their distances from the sun *(MS.p163).*Also from this epoch, one can site Jean-Philippe Rameau's (1683-1764) *Nouvelles reflexions sur sa demonstration du Principe de l'harmonie* and Giuseppe Tartini's (1692-1770) *Scienza Platonica* as examples of speculative music theory that seek by number to rediscover some ancient harmonic wisdom *(HS. pp. 309- 321).*

In the Romantic era, which followed the great theme, became something of an anomaly. In that century, the emphasis shifted "from the cosmic to the human"*(MS. p.192).* The search for the metaphysical was now a looking inward to the self and no longer to the Cosmos and a mathematical formula. Beethoven became an archetype for this period as an heroic genius struggling with fate. The artist now became the agent of transformation in society. In Arthur Schopenhauer's (1788-1860) *The World as Will an Idea,* the universe is seen as a cosmic illusion created by the process of Will. Music plays an important role in Schopenhauer's world as he considers it superior to the other arts. He sees the process of Cosmos as a kind of universal harmony - " a true and perfect picture of the nature of the world which rolls on in the boundless maze of innumerable forms, and through constant destruction supports itself "*(WWI).*Richard Wagner (1813-1883) took Schopenhauer's ideas on music and developed a world where the inner experience of tone reveals a direct link to nature and from there to the inner essence of things. Late in his life, Wagner is reported to have said: "I am convinced that there are universal currents of Divine Thought vibrating the ether everywhere and that anyone who can feel those vibrations is inspired, provided he is conscious of the process"*(RWWp.65*). Albert von Thimus (1806-1878) represents almost a solitary effort from this epoch in the area of musical theory. His work, *Die Harmonikale Symbolik des Alterthums* gives a series of harmonics and subhar-

monics based on the "Pythagorean Table" or Lambdona which attempts to give a harmonic foundation to the music of the spheres.

In the 20th century, it was the world of science that renewed the great theme and restored order to the cosmos. Physicists like Max Plank (1858-1957) and Albert Einstein (1879-1955), were able to give mathematical formulae to express the time space continuum and we entered a quantum world where the music of the spheres would have to include this quality. In the world of speculative theory, two Pythagoreans Hans Kayser (1891-1964) and Rudolf Haase (1920), continue to develop the Keplerian World Harmony. Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928) is a modern composer concerned with the great theme whose works carry influence around the world. He claims a "suprapersonal" source for his inspiration:

> I would like to be allowed to make music with more far-reaching sounds, so to speak, with planets, moons, and with racing clusters of planets, suns and moons; or in parts of the universe where music has at its disposal imaginings and vibrations far beyond the restricted range of acoustic oscillations on this earth... (*TCM*, p.120)

His current work, the cycle of operas *Licht*, is a dramatisation of the causal background to the effects of earthly events. In his fine book *The Magic of Tone and the Art of Music*, Dane Rudyar (1895-1985), composer, astrologer and philosopher, suggests that when Pythagoras spoke of the music of the spheres, he was referring to a "complex, creative and cosmogenic Sound" similar to the Sanskrit word *nada* found in Indian culture. Rudyar feels that Pythagoras used the monochord only as "an abstract, linear projection of the postulated radii of these spheres." One should also mention Paul Hindemith's (1895-1963) opera *Die Harmonie der Welt* based on the life of Kepler. The text contains eight characters, each representing a different planet in Kepler's universe. The final chorus sings: "Grant to our souls the grace to be merged into the exalted harmony of the world*"(MS.p.228).*

It is said in the Alice Bailey teachings that a "creative responsiveness to the music of the spheres will bring forth the new music" (*RI*, p.552*)*. Will this response be in the area of acoustics? I think not as acoustics is really the field of physics and not so much that of composition. Rudolph Steiner says that" a tone physiology that would have significance for music itself does not exist. If one wishes to enter the musical element, one must enter into the spiritual"*(INM. p.70).* In Sathya Sai Baba's teachings, He says that "there is a kind of sound that one hears in one's self that emanates from the primeval

Cosmic sound that fills the Universe. To hear that sound, one has too approach as near as possible, the core of one's being" (*SSS*, vol. 7, p 455).

Scattered throughout the volumes of *Agni Yoga*, written from 1924 to1938, are many references to the music of the spheres. There purpose is to help develop the intuitive faculty and shed light on this timely theme:

> The music of the spheres is that rhythm which strengthens the realisation of evolution. It is not the theme precisely, but the rhythm that forms the essence of the music of the spheres. It is indeed the degree of purity of the sounds which determines the interplanetary conduit. These sounds are heard on many far-off worlds, but on Earth they can only be heard only at high altitudes, and it is necessary to have a musical ear.
>
> The music of the spheres consists not of melodies but of rhythms. When the developed spirit knows the sounds of the spheres, he will understand the power of rhythm.
>
> You are familiar with the music of the spheres, the spatial bells, and reverberating strings. It will be asked why, then, do not a multitude of people know these manifestations. But, then, why is a multitude of people satisfied with false intonation.
>
> The Cosmos is in process of creation through pulsation, that is, by explosions. The rhythm of the explosions gives harmony to the creation. Indeed, knowledge of the spirit carries the thread of the Cosmos into manifested life… Like chased harp strings rush the luminous waves of matter, and on them the spirit creates mysterious-sounding symphonies. Between the worlds, thread-like, stretches *Materia Lucida*. Only enormous distance blends together the waves of threads into the vibration of the heavenly rainbow.
>
> If we begin to decompose matter, we see that the liberated atoms begin to arrange themselves according to the basic tone, and, escaping into the ether, they form a rainbow that resounds with the music of the spheres.
>
> The Wheel of Buddha is the substance of the teraph of the far-off worlds. Its essence is contained in the foundation of the world, which may be called a pistil. Upon its ends are the spheres of polarity corresponding to two basic laws. In the centre is the wheel of psychic energy. Now the circle of the whirling rainbow is the manifestation of all stages of Spatial Fire. The circle contains the swastika.
>
> Lend an open ear to the cosmic whirls and manifest understanding of the music of the spheres. Fathom the rhythm of cosmic energy and understand the rhythm of evolution. Beautiful is the Breath of Cosmos.

> A tonality of higher consonance is revealed by the receiving of a spatial current. The energy of consonance is disclosed as a creative tension. Consonance is in the tension of the two Origins.
>
> In boundless harmony is contained the whole cosmic creativeness. Only harmony can reveal to the planet the higher spheres. Only harmony can establish the chain of aspirations to the far-off worlds.
>
> When Cosmos shifts the forces, the balance of the spheres is disturbed. When the balance of these forces is upset, forces in the space are drawn into a tension. Thus, when Cosmos shifts, all spheres are shaken. Indeed, all forces expand in response to an attraction, and the cosmic harmony is intensified by the Cosmic Magnet.
>
> The music of the spheres resounds when the current of joy is in motion. The music of the spheres fills space when the heart is stirred to tremor by the cosmic force.
>
> Whoever can hear the music of the spheres can also hear the wailings of space… Thus, it is necessary to appreciate the wondrous music of the spheres, and to understand that on this step are also heard the lamentations of the world.
>
> The music of the spheres is sublime, but it does not harrow the nerve centres.
>
> Mahavan (*great rhythm,* AC*)* and Chotavan (*little rhythm,* AC*)* are the cosmic rhythms, rhythms of the fire of space. They can only be sensed for short periods; otherwise they would be too difficult to endure, as they follow each other with great speed and violence... Every cell of the organism is vibrated by this rhythm, while the heart continues its usual but slightly deepened pulse.

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Piotr Grella-Możejko, Edmonton, AB

George Crumb *MADRIGALS*: Composer in a Magic Theatre[1]

Music (…) a substance endowed with magical properties.
George Crumb

The four books of George Crumb's *Madrigals* should be considered one of the most important vocal cycles of the 60's, crucial in defining the avant-garde aesthetics of that period and, from that moment on, enjoying a far reaching impact on subsequent development of contemporary classical music. In it, the composer offers a unique - and at that point very refreshing - look at the relationships between the poetic word and music; between the artistic creative tradition and new methods of crossing creative boundaries; between the Western canon of artistic thought and non-traditional ways of creative approach; and between the ideology of art for art's sake and the opposite: the ideology of artist's involvement in and preoccupation with social issues. This paper deals with the *Madrigals* as an important artistic and philosophical phenomenon, exercising much influence on many other artists' attitudes toward their art – and their respective societies.

Madrigals are ("are" and not "is" as the whole work is a cycle of vocal-instrumental pieces, and divided – in the true Renaissance fassion – into books), no doubt, a very good example of the new "ideological," stylistic and technological approach to composition in the second half of the twentieth century.

They are, as well, symptomatic of a transition from musical thinking which was yet orthodox and relatively conservative to that which is original, individualistic and creative. The work as a whole indicates an evolution of every element of Crumb's musical language - from organisational methods strongly influenced by and reminiscent of von Webern's style, to the unique, personal "mixture" that Crumb himself refers to as "various, often multilayered musics," predating by at least a decade, let us add, the much later attempts at exploring and blending nor-Western musical cultures within the realm of the Western compositional framework (composers Colin McPhee (Canada) and Harry Partch (US) are, of course, notable exceptions here).

Crumb's stylistic evolution as manifested in *Madrigals* does not

[1] This article is an extended version of a paper delivered during the 2002 Congress of the Social Sciences and Humanities (May 25 - June 1, University of Toronto, Toronto, ON). I feel I ought to express special thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada for supporting my research project. Also, I would like to thank composer Keith Denning for his very careful reading of the manuscript.and his invaluable suggestions.

constitute an obvious linear development over time. Instead, the music of the *Madrigals* becomes more complex in a very "capricious" way. For instance, there are still many stylistic cross-references and similarities between both the first and the last parts of the cycle, and Crumb's other works of that period. We should realise that the most essential changes occurred in Crumb's music circa 1960. At that time, the composer literally "forced" himself to invent a new system of compositional patterns in order to stop, as he puts it, writing music that was already written. So, after the rather derivative *Variazioni* for orchestra (1958), the *Five Piano Pieces* (1962) reveals itself to represent the new approach.

The cycle of *Madrigals* is comprised of four Books, which were composed in sets of two. The first two Books were written in 1965 on a commission received from the Koussevitzky Foundation, and Books III and IV were completed in 1969. These sets of songbooks were premiered in March 11, 1966 and March 6, 1970, respectively. Books I and II, dedicated to Jan DeGaetani, were first performed by Jan DeGaetani herself and the Contemporary Chamber Ensemble under Arthur Weisberg. The performance took place in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Crumb wrote Books III and IV for Elizabeth Suderburg. She, accompanied by the University of Washington Contemporary Group, gave the premiere performance in Seattle. The scores were then published (as outstandingly beautiful facsimiles) by C.F. Peters Corporation and were made available on records and, later, on compact disks.

I. FORM

Madrigals are part of a large *Lorca Cycle* on which George Crumb worked from 1963 to 1970. The *Lorca Cycle* consists of five separate collections of poems (or fragments of these poems) written by Federico Garcia Lorca (1898 - 1936).

The successive parts of the cycle are: *Night Music I* for soprano, piano (celesta) and two percussion (1963), *Madrigals*, Books I and II (1965), *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death* for baritone, electric guitar, electric double-bass, electric piano (electric harpsichord) and two precessions (1968), *Madrigals*, Books III and IV (1969), *Night of the Four Moons* for alto, alto flute (piccolo), banjo, percussion and electric 'cello (1969), and *Ancient Voices of Children* for soprano, boy soprano, oboe, mandolin, harp, electric piano (and toy piano) and three percussion (1970).

On February 26, 1972, the complete *Lorca Cycle* was premiered at Oberlin Conservatory. The performance was done by Neva Pilgrim and Darleen Kliewer, sopranos; Carol Brunk, alto; Frederick Gersten, baritone and

New Directions Ensemble conducted by Kenneth Moore.

Most of the available analyses of Crumb's music disregard the issue of its formal structure. And, indeed, the basic morphological design of the *Madrigals* cannot be "deciphered" by simply applying traditional methods of analysis to the form. The *Madrigals* formal structure has nothing to do with the old Classical or Romantic forms. They would be inadequate to the æsthetic model preferred by the composer. Nor would they allow the author more artistic freedom.

Being a part of a large cycle, the *Madrigals* are a cycle themselves. As has already been pointed out, the cycle consists of four equal formal units called Books. Every unit contains three songs. As for duration, these units are very similar. The outer two last 9 minutes each and the two inner ones last 6.5 and 7.5 minutes, respectively. So, in general, the form is aphoristic (the performance of the *Madrigals* as a cycle is just one of several specified possibilities; the four Books may be performed separately as well!).

The cycle is titled after a genre of vocal music cultivated avidly by countless Renaissance composers. Although the madrigal originated in northern Italy much earlier – probably in the 1320's – and then flourished between the 1340's and 1360's, by the mid-15th century it was practically extinct, only to resurface in a different – and unrelated – incarnation in the 1530's. And in Crumb's *Madrigals* there are some references to that 16th century manifestation of the genre reborn.

Firstly, Renaissance madrigals usually dealt with secular, "popular" topics such as Nature, love, everyday life, death etc. (although religious, sacred texts were sometimes used, especially by the English). The music was intended to echo every single detail of the text. It was meant to enhance the subjectivity of the composers' feelings (it is a well-known fact that Palestrina who had two books of his four-part madrigals published, had to apologise to the Pope!).

Secondly, the use of unorthodox texts determined the choice of compositional techniques. Sixteenth century madrigals were often a field of experimentation. Chromaticisms, introduction of major-minor tonality (instead of modality), more flexible employment of rhythm, search for new, often mimetic, timbral effects - these are characteristics of the genre during its heyday.

Thirdly, madrigals were a kind of Renaissance chamber vocal music, sometimes with instrumental accompaniment.

Fourthly, they were normally conceived as cycles to be published in sets of books.

And fifthly, most importantly, madrigals were not subject to any

obligatory form – it is symptomatic that one of the most influential and accomplished Italian poets and theorist of the period, Pietro Bembo (1470-1547), claimed that the genre could not be cathegorised or bound by any rules "concerning number of lines or arrangement of lines." (Preminger 1990: 471)

All the features mentioned above characterise the *Madrigals* of Crumb, although the style of first songs might be considered fairly traditional in terms of music of the second half of the twentieth century.

The formal architecture of *Madrigals* was created in a very free, unorthodox manner. The score does not show any influence of well-defined, traditional formal thinking. If there are certain connections with older music, they are only few and far between. Worth mentioning here is the use of isorhythmic patterns in the first *Madrigal* of Book III, retrogrades in the first *Madrigal* of Book IV and allusions to the rondo form in the first *Madrigal* of Book I (here, the formal structure is more or less based on the A B A C... model). Otherwise the form is free and develops quite spontaneously.

In general, it seems that the form of the *Madrigals* should be related to the procedures known in avant-garde literature, fine arts and modern psychology. Here, the formal techniques invented by cubists and Dadaists (collage), surrealists (explorations of dreams; an obvious influence of Freud and Co.), James Joyce (*Ulysses* and *Finnegan's Wake*) or William Faulkner (*As I Lay Dying*) are the most likely sources of inspiration. The "stream of consciousness" technique, for instance, might be very easily applied to the formal structure of Crumb's work. In fact, the way the flow of music is shaped, the succession of separate, differentiated passages, the improvisatory pitch organisation (the composer works with pre-chosen intervals rather than pitch-classes), surrealistic setting of texts and, and last but not least, "poetic" notation (often alternating unmeasured and measured sections) are, all in all, descendant of certain twentieth century narrative techniques.

This syncretic attitude makes the *Madrigals* even more valuable and convincing as a work of art of great integrity.

II. INSTRUMENTATION

Each Book of the *Madrigals* is scored for a different set of instruments accompanying the soprano (mezzo-soprano) voice. In the first Book the selected instruments are vibraphone and contrabass. The instrumental parts of the second Book include alto flute (doubling flute in C and piccolo) and percussion consisting of antique cymbals (crotales), Glockenspiel, two timpani and marimba. In the third Book harp and percussion support the voice again. The percussionist plays on vibraphone, bongo drums, three timbales (high, me-

dium, low), and a very small, suspended triangle. The fourth Book fulfills an initial preconception of the cycle. The instrumentation involves all the instruments, which have appeared in the first three parts of the cycle - flute (doubling piccolo and alto flute), harp, contrabass and percussion. Here, the percussionist employs Glockenspiel, marimba, two suspended cymbals (one large, one small), glass chimes and tubular bells.

Subtlety and refinement of instrumental means are Crumb's trademark. Even though his euphonic orchestration is reminiscent of (if not sometimes identical with) that of, let's say, Roman Haubenstock-Ramati (*Standchen, Mobile for Shakespeare)* and Pierre Boulez (first two books of *Improvisations sur Mallarmé*), Crumb was capable of developing his own fashion of timbral operations. Instruments, as carriers of quasi-verbal sonic messages, have always been selected very carefully, with regard to their usefulness. The composer prefers delicacy to the "explosions" of the full orchestra. But the instrumentation of the *Madrigals* does have some orchestral flavour. For instance, the instrumental set of the last Book of the cycle (Finale!) sounds, in fact, like a "synthesised", reduced symphony orchestra. All sections of the orchestra are represented there, except for "vulgar" brass - woodwinds (flutes), percussion, plucked instruments (harp) and strings (contrabass). And this small ensemble is divided into yet smaller groups or even solos. In spite of this, Crumb's "orchestra" has a marvellously rich and easily recognisable, individual timbre.

Another aspect of Crumb's extremely thorough arrangement of sonic elements is the spatial (topophonical) disposition of players. The composer is concerned very much about the acoustic environment, which the audience deals with while listening to the piece. Every possible obstacle should be eliminated before it could endanger the quality of the performance. So, some musicians are directed from one place to another, some remain in the same place throughout the entire work. This opposition between the motionless performers (flutist, harpist) and the ones who move (soprano, double-bassist, and percussionist) carries some theatrical effect. In short, there are two basic dialectical opposites here - a firm stability on one hand and the lack of it on the other.

III. GESTURE, TEXTURE, TIMBRE

The texture in the *Madrigals* is derivative of the pointillistic one. It is first organised through a contrapuntal (in a modern sense of this word) juxtaposition and alternation of single notes, short gestures and gestural units based on selected pitches and/or intervals and chosen beat divisions. The only complex

linear constructs are vocal melismas exposed for the first time in Book II. It is interesting that in the first parts of the cycle those individual notes and gestures are distributed within the whole available range, with preference given to irregular, "nervous" rotations of leaps and step-wise motion. A kind of anonymous texture emerges as a result. Such a compositional technique has a lot to do with both serial and post-serial organisation.

In the *Madrigals* the methods of morphological organisation seem to be less radical (or orthodox) but they still recall the reigning style of the 50s'. The narration is rather static in character although the shortest rhythmical values (including grace notes and more interconnected ornaments; another post-serial archetype!) are dominant. But then, especially in the last two Books, the texture smoothly evolves towards greater transparency and independence from serial or post-serial *modus operandi*. This is achieved by the more advanced procedures of reduction, repetition and contrast (five classes: high - low, clear - dark, fast - slow, loud - soft, dense - transparent). Subjected to these procedures are mainly range, intervallic motion and dynamics. Integrity, complexity and, at the same time, maturity of style (which might be called the "style of sonic centres") are assured by a technique based on manipulations with similar timbral and gestural units (or rather, in this case, motives). The groups of repeated units establish a kind of audible architectural continuum and create a very specific climate influenced by pre-selected intervals and timbres. The music becomes more and more dialectical. The gestures of opposite provenance (or, rather, character) react against each other bringing some unforgettable passages to life. The very last madrigal of the cycle, where three different gestural models (revealed by harp, voice and flute) alternate against a double-bass drone is a good example of this new style.

As far as timbre is concerned, it would be quite difficult to say anything new. Crumb has always been identified as a composer whose timbral imagination, sensitivity and invention know virtually no boundaries. It would make no sense to "compose" yet another list of his original timbral effects. Just one thing comes to mind here - appropriateness in employing those effects within the traditional instrumental context. They are never used for their own sake. Moreover, they are customarily performable without too much effort. The composer is aware of possible difficulties created by the new playing techniques and successfully tries to find the best performing solutions (for example, even in very fast tempi the players are given enough time to either produce a desirable effect or switch from one fashion of playing to another). In Crumb's works the use of the new timbres should be analysed from a psychological rather than a technological point of view. "Technical" in nature, the

new timbres are to intensify the poetic metaphor or, in the case of purely instrumental fragments, to enhance the emotional content of the music (especially when the **instrumentalists** are required to **sing**).

Crumb's vocal writing offers a new look at the avant-garde stereotype. Although he utilises a wide spectrum of non-traditional vocal effects (whisper, hushed voice, humming, half-singing on approximate pitches, shout, frullati on and sustained consonants), he focuses on two very traditional syllabic and melismatic styles. Expression of the text and the proper accentuation of the Spanish original remain the most important factors here. The Spanish national vocal-instrumental Flamenco style is another source of inspiration. The opening of the first *Madrigal* of the Book II is an extraordinary example of the Flamenco-influenced, highly melismatic, dense and improvisatory vocalise.

IV. IDEA AND SEMANTIC STRUCTURE

The *Lorca Cycle* (including *Madrigals)* is the result of Crumb's fascination with the fundamental issues of humankind. It is absolutely clear that the composer's primary concern is the psychological and physical environment in which the human being acts.

In Lorca's poetry Crumb found an ideal source of intellectual and artistic inspiration. Federico Garcia Lorca, himself, symbolises the contradiction of a modern man and artist. An excellent, prophetic poet as well as a "martyr" (he sympathised with the Republicans during the Spanish civil war and was eventually killed by the right-wing Frankists) - he was aware of the necessity to combine artistic effort with social mission and, finally, became a victim of his own convictions.

His writings dwell upon traditional, "timeless" themes of love, death, or forces of nature, and were often placed in an "illogical", surrealistic dream-like context. This is a very refined poetry full of numerous and extremely serious meanings hidden under the "childish, "naïve" surface. Briefly, it is a typical symbolic poetry influenced by such characteristics of folk literature as magic, fairy tales, demonic evil, the search for supernatural beauty and pain of life, personification of many "inhumane", objective physiological processes and real phenomena (death, moon, water etc. play an important role here).

Quite obviously, Lorca's writing draws its roots from both the Spanish folk and "artistic" metaphysical traditions of poetry and drama. Zorilla, Gutierrez, Molina and Calderon, to mention just a few authors of different periods and attitudes, had a significant impact on the poet. As a matter of fact, Lorca's poetry is very "romantic" in character (although he could hardly be identified

with any Romantic or post-Romantic tendency). Its spirituality, a sense of the irrevocable passing of time, a certain, folk-inspired type of sensation of the metaphysical value of Nature and a preference for imaginary landscapes of thought have a lot in common with Romantics. Nevertheless, this poetry contains enough "modern" references (e.g. structure of language, type of expression) and experiences (e.g. post-war literary movements) to make it different from what was written in the past and, also, from how it has been understood since.

The complexity of Lorca's poetic texture, the multispectral flavour of his style must have appealed deeply to George Crumb. But it did not happen at once. The total appreciation of Lorca's poetry developed with the composer's artistic maturity.

Crumb heard a piece set to a Lorca text for the first time, while at the University of Michigan (1953 - 1958/9). It was a composition of a fellow graduate student, Edward Chudacoff, which was based on Lorca's *Casida of Boy Wounded by the Water*. Years later Crumb used the same text in his *Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death.*

Crumb's preoccupation with "psychoanalytical" subjects and, automatically, darker sides of human existence (at every stage of a lifetime and where birth and death meet on the psychological and biological circle) brought him to the "rediscovery" of Lorca in the 60's. Taking into consideration the way the composer works, usually very slowly, doing lots of sketching prior to writing down the final version of the score, it seems that he spent almost a decade over what was to become the famed *Lorca Cycle*. The cycle can only be compared to Pierre Boulez's masterpiece *Pli selon Pli,* a large work based on the poetry of Stéphane Mallarmé.

Finally, Crumb had abandoned (at least temporarily) Lorca's poetry by 1970, when he switched to the more universal, Biblical texts in Latin (*Lux æterna, Star-Child),* providing an extra-cultural message. Such foundational texts function, quite simply, within the mutual heritage of the world and, since they are widely known (due to their age and doubtless weight), their reception and possible acceptance are practically unlimited. It is not unlikely that Crumb, who meantime became a sort of new music Messiah (especially after the premiere of *Star-Child*), decided - perhaps unconsciously - to work with texts reflecting his own importance and influence. This is acceptable unless the artist starts cultivating his popularity for its own sake. Fortunately, Crumb does not seem to be anxious about his fame. He has remained as modest and quiet as he was at the start of his career, showing us how, as a true artist, he is not demoralised by widespread admiration.

Coming back to the *Madrigals*, they might be regarded as a bridge between the first part in the Lorca cycle (*Night Music I)* and the last one (*Ancient Voices of Children*). The latter is a perfect culmination of the most important of the composer's artistic life, the period of gaining experience and evolving into maturity.

As far as the text is concerned, the *Madrigals* are based on just a few short fragments (if not single lines!) of Lorca's poems. The selected excerpts demonstrate a remarkable consistency. They fall into three main classes or semantic categories.

The first category deals with the human feelings (love and its manifestation). Love is being allegorised in a very specific manner. The "sensual category" includes the following lines:

To see you naked is to remember the earth (Book I, *Madrigal* I);
Through my hands' violet shadow, your body was an archangel, cold (Book IV, *Madrigal* II);

Here, love - which very often is, of course, the beginning of a new life - is subjected to fairly physiological interpretation enhanced by association with the earth and the choice of purely physical vocabulary. The meaning is defined by nouns such as "body" (which usually symbolises erotic sensuality), "hands" (tenderness, caresses and pain), "earth" (maternity), "archangel" (the object of sympathy as an ideal but also a threat: Satan - a fallen archangel!); adjectives such as "naked" (innocence, sensuality again), "cold" (love being a painful experience sometimes).

Of the two above lines the latter leads, in my opinion, to the second category, which may be generally described as the "category of subconsciousness and Nature." The six single sentences and units that belong to this category are:

They do not think of the rain, and they've fallen asleep (Book I, *Madrigal* II);
Drink the tranquil water of the antique song (Book II, *Madrigal* I);
Night sings naked above the bridges of March (Book III, *Madrigal* I);
I want to sleep the sleep of apples, to learn a lament that will cleanse me of earth (Book III, *Madrigal* II);
Lullaby, child, lullaby of the proud horse who would not drink water, go to sleep, rose-bush, the horse begins to cry. Wounded legs, frozen manes, and within the eyes a silver dagger (Book III, *Madrigal* III);

Why was I born surrounded by mirrors? The day turns round me. And the night reproduces me in each of her stars (Book IV, *Madrigal* II);

It is noteworthy that this is the most capacious category of the three. It encloses a series of loosely connected, ambiguous statements and questions, which, altogether, serve as symbolic images. This somehow chaotic flow of unreal visions **mirrors** human subconsciousness or, as Jung prefers to call it, unconsciousness that most often assumes the form of dreams. Given that, we can quite easily realise why such terms as "night", "sleep", "lullaby" are dominant here, playing the role of the key to the morphology of meaning. The symbolic implications of these three words determine our perception of the semantic structure of the whole passage. Other similar implications come from the group of words of multidimensional connotations. These words have been traditionally associated with the symbols of fertility, maternity and womanhood. Although they have been used for centuries within the ancient and contemporary aboriginal cultures and civilisations of various origins, they should be dealt with as part of a common heritage of man's psychological behaviour, of both his consciousness and metaphysical revelation.

The terms such as "rain", "horse", "apple", "March" symbolise the fertility of Nature (in old Germanic mythology, for instance, the apple was a sacred fruit, a source of vital power). These terms symbolise the acts of fructification and impregnation. They also refer to the beginning of life and the vital growth of vegetation. This is why the second category is so closely tied to the first one.

On the other hand, the structure of meaning is being disturbed here by certain contradictory symbols, which have been commonly applied to the notions of time passing and the upcoming closure of the whole life cycle. The personified horse, a symbol of masculinity, is wounded, a silver dagger within his eyes. The night brings the sleep, which is a relief but also an announcement and a metaphor of death. And finally, the night reproduced a subject in each of her stars. Unconsciousness and real surrounding are closely related to one another. Unconsciousness is influenced by a multiplied presence of the real, "objective" phenomena, which are subliminally absorbed and transformed into psychic events and, in turn, affect our outlook. The dream arises when both processes clash.

Therefore, the excerpts that constitute the second semantic category are but a metaphor of being itself, in all its both physiological and psychological aspects.

It should be mentioned that for most cultures the phenomenon of be-

ing in general and of human existence in particular is symbolised by a woman. Quite obviously, the symbols, which act within the second category, are very much related to the element of womanhood. The contextual metaphor functions on "countless" levels of ambiguity but the message might perhaps *be that womanhood is in the centre of both reality and thought.

The last, third semantic category consists of four units:

The dead wear mossy wings (Book I, *Madrigal* III);
Death goes in and out of the tavern. Death goes in and out, out and in goes the death of the tavern (Book II, *Madrigal* II);
Little black horse. Where are you taking your dead rider? Little cold horse. What a scent of knife-blossom! (Book II, *Madrigal* III);
Death watches me from the towers of Cordoba (Book IV, *Madrigal* III);

A life cycle closes; destiny (and destination…) is fulfilled in a very logical way... It is amazing how masterfully Crumb explored the opportunities offered by Lorca's poetic vocabulary. In fact, the composer created his own poetry out of the verbal, ready-made. Not only did he use Lorca's texts, but he also added a few meaningless syllables, which were to stress his intentions and make them clearer. Probably, these syllables call forth the primordial elements of human expression, communication, expectations and concerns. They are the true point of departure. Then innocence is violated by the meaningful reality of the word. The beginning of life becomes the beginning of an end and vice versa. The wordless *Rain-death music I & II* of the second *Madrigal* of the first Book states a conflict and - through its intellectual depth - makes us eager to become a part of the composer's magic theatre of sensual beauty.

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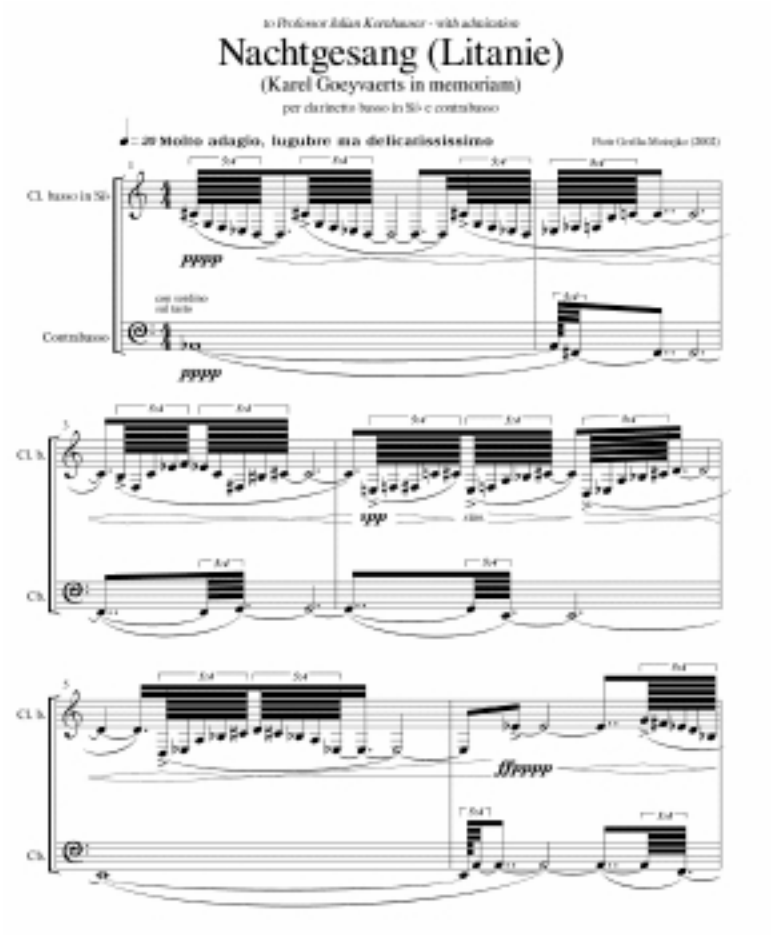


Piotr Grella-Możejko, *Nachtgesang* for Bass Clarinet and Contrabass (2003), p. 4. Reproduced by permission.

Already nothing

Already nothing.
Smokes, two wild ducks,
and ashes.

Already nothing.
Sleeping seaweed,
and a narrow path.

Nothing beyond the water
beyond the railway
nothing.

Already nothing
never nothing,
never
for the world
nothing.

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

The Carton

A dirty little beggar
is carrying a large carton.
What's inside?
Surely, you've got lots of money?

He slowly opens the box,
and puts its cover on the sidewalk.
On the bottom there is a little turtle,
stretching its neck toward the boy.

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

Pencil

lying in front of the house
in a heap of waste

it will write nothing
it will underline nothing and cross nothing out

there it lies unimportant
and forgotten

dreaming
of saying something
on its own

in days gone by it danced on white paper
built the letters as one builds castles in the sand
its eyes shining brightly

it was irreplaceable

what it can now
remember
is only what it sees around

a silver leaflet
played with by a swallow
and an orange peel
in a shallow puddle

one would like to take it
but it holds strongly
to the ground

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

Problems with Being

I must find the best solution
but again, ladies and gentlemen,
if I find it
it will no longer be the best solution

therefore, for the sake of democracy
the solution must find me
let it search

you know that I do not avoid responsibility
I am here
if I prove myself even by half
that's good
because the nation has chosen me
and, therefore,
the nation itself is chosen
to a larger degree than myself

but, as a living being, I know
that troubles will arise

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

The White Boat (1956)

these boats do not sail
these streetcars do not run

there will be no journey
the black barge stuck in shallow waters

a horse and a cow are grazing on the grass
beautiful little daughters gazing at the sun

the red boat and the ambulance
in friendly embrace of waiting

there will be no journey
the black river
runs away over the horizon
where a house and the sun
are drinking the wind

the sapphire chauffeur
is defencelessly tanning
he will be summoned

in the meantime a peasant
is dividing the whole landscape
into red and white halves

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

The Pebble

you remember
when we were young
the tempest licked our lips
with its wet tongue

barefoot
you run on the beach
in your laughing dress

the roads were opening
before us
like fat nuts

we were
two steps away
from paradise
I kicked a pebble

it flew long
and high
on a wide arc

and disappeared
we could only hear
the cry of a child

but perhaps
it was only
a song of reeds

now after all those years
it fell at our feet
large as a boulder
covered with moss

we can no longer lift
nor read it

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)

The Dark Girl Sleeps

The dark girl sleeps
her head on the sidewalk

her braids sleep as well
at the church's gate

in a tin can
the banknotes swim
like swallows in the sand

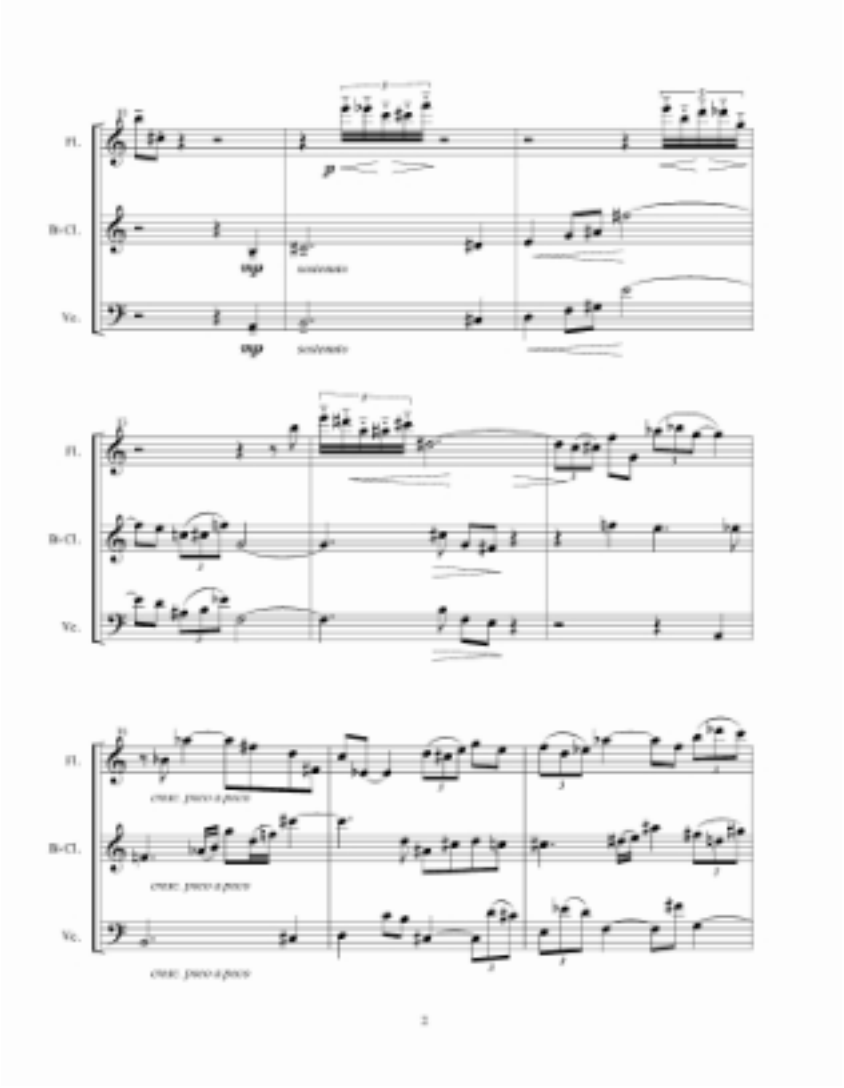
her little round feet
black as the sea
are silently talking
with the shoes on display

o how quiet
how quiet
is her
dead sleep

there is no sound of
broken pretzels
and
a walk of colourful shoelaces
lasts eternally
as in slow motion

the dark girl sleeps
like a killed kitten
she sleeps in our eyes
thoughtlessly she sleeps

Julian Kornhauser
(transl. P. Grella-Możejko)



Don Ross, *Brief Refuge* for Flute, Clarinet and ʻCello (1991), p. 2.
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Alfred Joel Fisher, Kingston, ON

Looking Back, Looking Forward: George Crumb, Truth, Beauty and Resistance

An invited speech given at Wilfred Laurier University on the occasion of the George Crumb Festival, 3 February, 2000

Ladies and gentlemen, members of faculty, Mr. Crumb, guests of the Festival, students and old friends. What I'd like to do over the next 50 minutes, is to ruminate around a field of personal experience and concerns that come to mind when one reflects on the passage of time, and which marks anniversaries of significance. This, for me, is such a moment. I want to talk to students about matters for which we seem to have little time in the normal course of university life to discuss - but, I also want to talk to George Crumb. There has been plenty of time for news to accumulate in the years since, when I was an undergraduate, we had contact. So, you may also consider this to be, at least partially, a personal letter to George Crumb – a letter that I waited 37 years to write. And, you are invited to listen in.

This is normally a risky game to play in the academic theatre because, by convention, if not out of survival instinct, academics don't often indulge in memory publicly, pass through ideas without argument, and so unguardedly cast about in the murky waters of personal experience, without at least attempting to recall where all those slippery boulders lie. But, on this occasion am going to guilelessly step forward, if only because there are too many years between opportunities such as this evening for me, and I think, for all of us. What used to be thought of as the "dignity of the university", has tended to restrain such directness, but I wouldn't want this opportunity to be compromised by proprieties, which have in any case, always seemed to me to be more decorous than vital.

And, without intending to flatter at all, I want to acknowledge the record of this university and its administrations as one of the few with sufficient foresight, imagination, and courage to take music seriously, and place it where it belongs - at the centre. People at Wilfrid Laurier actually know where the music building is. They know that composition is not a remedial English course, and that theory didn't begin with Saussure, but with Aristoxenus. I take that to mean that this is not only an institution that "cares about music", but also more importantly for my purposes tonight, that it is an environment with a high-level tolerance for musicians and their peculiarities of mind. I have the feeling that I am among friends.

I will now blithely proceed, offering as my prelude, a paraphrase of that celebrated *bon mot* of Brahms in pledging that, "should there be anyone that I fail to offend, I apologize." But, I also want to use this moment to invite all of you, and especially students, to cross the threshold with me - to use our short time together to reflect on what's really important in the world of music - with George Crumb and his compositions as a significant point of reference. It will come as no surprise to you to hear that this is quite a remarkable moment for me - 38 years after saying hello and 37 after saying "good bye," if I ever did say "good bye," that I should be sharing this moment with you, George.

My one year - the 62/63 academic year at the University of Colorado in Boulder, provided little time to develop depth of association, and certainly not in those days, with a professor. In fact, it may come as a surprise to many of you to know that it has not really been an association at all. Those 37 years have been the better part of a lifetime for me, and almost as much for you, George. And, while they were years encompassing youth, and naturally for both of us, crowded with the living of life, they were not years of unbroken contact between the two of us. Then, I was a beginner in a kind of triple A farm team of a university - rich, fun, somewhat decadent, very cool, pretty good but not great. And, as much as I can remember - George Crumb, his ascendancy not yet in full flight, was like that of a first-base coach in the hierarchical order, as understood by a naïve undergraduate like myself, who viewed all faculty, save for the obvious damn fools, as gods. I was a transfer student, newly arrived in Boulder after 2 years at Colby College, a New England liberal arts institution. Colby was a place for which a guy like myself: Jewish, from an inner city high school and, above all, with no wardrobe, was hardly prepared-but I adapted quickly. I realized two things: that the distance between an urban provincial and an urbane snob wasn't great and almost as important, for the first time in my life, my involvement's in literature and music were things that could actually be shared without immediate threat of violence.

Anyhow, my arrival at the University of Colorado and my association with you, George, and with my piano professor, David Burge, was a time of constant revelation and super heated astonishment. And, while these associations were brief, they triggered something important - something not easily defined, but nonetheless powerful, that continues to animate my life and my work. Now, so many years later, but not so many years, I hope that I have lapsed into the fatal condition of transmuting the unremarkable into the unforgettable. I wan to recall two or three of these impressions.

First, you'll have to understand that in those "ancient of days", of the 1962/63 academic year, I was not a composition student, and George Crumb's responsibilities were only partially in composition. If I recall accurately, he still taught a section of "class piano" then. I would imagine that many class piano instructors are moved by the experience to both love, and especially, to hate the instrument. It must be evidence of George's moral competence that he managed to avoid the hate, overcome the tedium, and to view the instrument as a still worthy medium of artistic expression. To me, it appears likely that there is a psychically complex relation between those early teaching assignments and his thorough conversion of the instrument into something previously unimagined - into an orchestra of exquisite beauty. Not surprisingly, the musical pathways and wisdom of the "class piano instructor" are not evident in *Makrokosmos or Gnomic Variations* - you'll not find so much as a shadow of the "5 finger exercise" or the "thumb under" in George Crumb's piano music.

I was then, a fairly ambitious, although not athletically-conditioned pianist, having not practiced, nor having had a lesson in the two years prior to my arrival. But, I was that rare and peculiar item - an undergraduate musicology major. While I eagerly absorbed my academic courses, practiced the piano like a madman, worked mightily on the tragic adjustment to 3.2% beer, and made my weekly pilgrimage up over the Flatirons to stare at Arapahoe Peak in the far distance, composition remained, as it had been since I was about twelve - a secret life. And, in due time, I discovered that George was composer too. This itself was a powerful discovery for me, and I remember thinking at the time that maybe we both had a secret life. Shortly after my arrival, and solely through the power of his unique voice, George Crumb stepped brilliantly out of his secret. I am a little younger than George, so I'm still emerging.

It did not take very long to pick up the sense that something extraordinary was brewing in Boulder. It was my privilege to be studying that year with another young professor and artist who, while his name may no longer be a household word, was one of the most admired teachers and courageous artists of his generation. I might also add that he was feared. We do not have much motivating, productive fear in the university anymore - pity. This professor was David Burge.

While the rest of the piano world hid timorously from contemporary piano music, Burge brought a depth of insight into piano performance and a way of forwarding essential musical value in scores that the rest of the world did not really want to know about at all. George knows this, but I parentheti-

cally have to tell you that Burge was also a very fine composer - and he still is today. His marvellous viola concerto, his works for the piano, and more recently, his many works for the dance deserve wider recognition and regular performance. Burge was demanding and he had style.

It was Burge whose operating method first suggested to me that one could get away with being an uncompromising artist and a happy controversialist too, without suffering much damage. His publicity brochure at the time was an amusing litany of abuse, showered on him by critics who found his programs to be such insufferable raw flesh. This is in a time when the critics' ears only had the capacity for the approved diet and, of course, *schlag* without end. Usually he programmed several newly commissioned American works: a work of his own, a "classic" of Schoenberg or Bartók, often Boulez or Stockhausen, plus the lovely concession of a Mozart sonata (all reprieves with improvised ornamentation, of course), or perhaps keyboard woks of William Byrd. At any rate, it quickly became clear that Crumb and Burge were a pair to be reckoned with. Imagine the culture shock - Burge utterly rejecting the prevailing norms for what a young pianist must know. The world, even then, and much more so now, did not need another recording of Chopin's Ballades or Beethoven's Sonatas, and Burge was surely not going to make it easy (with his formidable technique, unique musicality, overwhelming personal presence and rare courage) for the piano fraternity (it was a piano fraternity back then) to maintain the illusion that theirs was a party that would never end.

I started to feel strange about my steady diet of Beethoven and Chopin, only occasionally enlivened by that spicy number by Debussy or Prokofiev. And, I wrote music - rivers of Williamowing romantic gestures, and what seemed at the time in my own profoundly sophomoric way to be its obverse - sober counterpoint. I had not yet studied counterpoint, but I knew about it from my reading and had decided to that it would likely be a good "home remedy" for an entirely untutored composer like myself. I kept a manuscript under my pillow and wrote cannons by the yard before retiring. I think that I might have known intuitively what J.S. Bach knew explicitly - that the canon was the most effective soporific. For me, music and composition in particular, was my religion. If this seems like a far too disciplined lifestyle for an undergraduate, withhold your pity -I never wrote a canon before 2 in the morning.

There was an extraordinary energy in the world of music back then. There was a muscular avant-garde waking up America from its post-war fit of chauvinism, with John Cage as its chief pied piper. There were also the "steel

bending" architects - composers such as Boulez and Dallapiccola in Europe, and Babbitt and his acolytes in the United States. What composers over the complete spectrum wrote was important. What they thought and what they said was important. Some of us listened. In what was then the unlikely backwater of Boulder, Colorado, many listened, even the piano players and the singers.

Ideas about music were not relegated exclusively to music halls - ideas also belonged to us - the students. Perhaps George, you can remember an interesting fellow by the name of John Querard, who, unlikely as it may seem, given his regional persona as an "eccentric," sold insurance in Laramie Wyoming for two days a week while studying composition in Boulder in his spare time. I remember being hauled out of the practice room by John, who was madly excited by something that he had just discovered and that I apparently had to know immediately. We trotted down to "The Tule" (Tulagi's - a student watering hole), where he revealed all. On the back of a napkin (yes, just like Schubert), he opened up what was at the time the inner sanctum of the "new music" – the phenomenon of integral serialism. This is a style made up of twelve of this and twelve of that. When one puts them all together, one gets: Stockhausen's Zeitmasse, Babbitt's piece for viola and piano, and much more. I trotted - "flushed" of course - right back to my practice room, packed up my Schumann concerto, and without even consulting that highly influential two-issue phenomenon "*Die Reihe*," got immediately to work on my first integrally serialized piece. It was not hard to do - throw that matrix together and go from there. Now, it all seems so amusingly naïve and of course, it was. Who ever said that you could not be both serious and seriously naïve at the same time? It is a condition that maximizes the beauty of being a student - never be embarrassed by this.

John Querard's revelation was also the perfect medicine for a Byronic throwback like myself. I began to realize that every pitch and every pulsation presented an entangled network, requiring compositional decision-making. This time, I went a step further with my piece: I actually showed my leapfrogging little work to someone. Well, not just to someone, but to a master - to Ernst Krenek, who did a short residency at Colorado University that year. Ernest was a lovely man and I owe him a lot. I played through the piece for him and he seemed to take it very seriously. After a long silence he turned to me and said: "You know, Fisher, this really is not bad at all, but what you need to do is to take 16th century counterpoint." I was shocked ,but not long after, grateful as well. I started to realize that even my own personal "triple C" cult (compulsive canon creator) could never be enough. The journey from

the student beer hall to the studio of Ernest Krenek traces a remarkably compact routing of energies. This was a powerful cycle initiated on the back of a napkin - an idea leading to creation leading to evaluation leading to study leading to an idea leading to a new work.

My world changed quickly - all good, as definition and purpose flooded in. It was for this reason, after all, that I left the ivied walls for the West. My defining moment came quickly but mysteriously. He does not know it, but George Crumb played a significant role in this. It was in the winter of 62/63 when, sitting at the piano in Burge's studio, just as the lesson was about to begin, George Crumb showed up at the door and handed Burgess several manuscript pages. I sat there not quite able to focus on the Intermezzo that I was about to play, and listened to the short exchange between Crumb and Burge. It was about notation in the *Five Piano Pieces,* unbeknownst to me, that George was writing for him. *The Five Piano Pieces* became a staple of the Burge repertoire and was recorded by him. It attracted a great deal of attention and, so unusual for a new and quite unique work in those days, rapturous critical response. While a fairly modest work, it was quickly and justly awarded the mantle of "masterpiece." With this piece, it became clear that a new voice of strong character and unique vision had arrived - suddenly and without warning - like Minerva springing from the head of Zeus. Some of you may recall the Schoenberg essay in which he attempts to account for creativity by analogy to divine creation. "To understand the very nature of creation," Schoenberg tells us in his 1941 essay, *Composition with Twelve Tones*, one must acknowledge that there was no light before the Lord said: 'Let there be light….' A creator has a vision of something which has not existed before this vision". That's it - it is out of the darkness that the *Five Piano Pieces* Arose. The arrival of George Crumb on the American music scene with this work can, in my mind, be compared only with the arrival of Chopin, whose calling card was also a piano piece, and whose aesthetic was rooted essentially in a unique sense of colour, sonority and expressive range.

It was still possible then, for the university to offer students an environment, which yielded up unprecedented experience - an epiphany even. And, the premiere of Crumb's *Five Piano Pieces* was, and I think I can safely say this for all present on that occasion - such a moment. The work was premiered at a Wednesday noon-hour recital. This was one such recital for which attendance was required every week for the entire year, and I honestly can not remember any grumbling about it. These occasions were not simply try-outs for jury pieces - they were important occasions, fun, and we all looked for-

ward to them. Even faculty members occasionally performed on the required noon-hour recitals. So, and I will draw this to the attention of students in particular - this was an occasion on which one of America's great pianists premiered a work of his colleague - one of America's great composers, at a required student recital.

Like the rest of the musical world, we were entirely unprepared for this music, but from the first note, we listened transfixed. By the dusty violet conclusion, we students were not only transfixed, but I think also transfigured. Without a word passing between us, we (myself and 4 or 5 friends) lifted ourselves from our seats in a state of stunned intoxication. We then proceeded to silently pad through the hallways, out the rear entry, and onto the loading dock - into the shocking dazzle of an azure mountain sky above, and a deep blanket of fresh snow below. There we were - faced on the edge of the loading dock, and at an intuitively felt signal, dropped together into the snowy cushion below. Crumb's music inspired the making of angels - we lay there till we were numb.

We were a kind of last generation of young people – the world opening to us just before it was to convulse in a paroxysm of violence, which touched all our lives. But, the not yet having been forced by circumstance to grow up, we were still innocents – kids who still made pacts, based mostly on never-stated, but deeply felt understandings. We had a bond – one not forged in the rejection of things, but in the acceptance of things, in loyalty, and in devotion to things. We shared a lot – all of us knew, for instance, what we would now call the formative literature of mid-century "youth culture " – not a phrase we used back then. We all "knew" Stephen Daedalus, Holden Caulfield, Franny, and Zooey – we felt that we had personal relationships with them as we did with pale Siddhartha, and yes, with suffering Wozzeck and with Lulu. We were critical, but not the least bit cynical – for cynicism's onset we had less than a year to wait – November 22nd, 1963. We exhausted ourselves in music, memorised Kochel numbers, were seriously amused by the last scene in Don Giovanni, and we lay there vibrating in the snow – face to the sun, twitching, and dazzled. George Crumb's music took out breath and it silenced us.

We knew that George Crumb was the least vain of creatures, was incapable of falling into the "composer's fallacy" – the inescapable pit of the self-mythologizing cultist. Anyway, no one had web sites in those days, and even now, when there is a George Crumb website, it is not George's play, but the enterprise of an admirer in South Africa. George was a kind of innocent priest -or, in consideration of his modesty and wonderful quietude, more

properly – a prophet.

With new music such as this, how could any of us feel, to use Augustine's expression: "dissociated from our self?" Thirty-seven years later, the notion of music as transformative in function, in its very ontological purpose, has not released its grip. By the way, if you are a student, and you feel your eyes beginning to role at such an utterance, let me help them complete their orbit by suggesting that you check out molecular biology, or cosmology, or some other similarly trivial major as an alternative to music. For the musician, music is too unremitting a task and for all of us, too overwhelming in potency to fail in this, its primal function. Granted, this is an "extreme" position, but one commensurate with its rewards and worthy of the commitment it demands. Burge's premiere of the *Five Piano Pieces* destroyed nothing – it only confirmed. For me, it confirmed orthodoxies encountered at Colby, best captured by Matthew Arnold's vision of culture as "the pursuit of total perfection by means of getting to know… the best, which has been thought and said in the world, and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits." It was the young and progressive George Crumb of 1962 who made precious *then* what the young and progressive of 200 view as suspect and elitist *now*. It is nice that maturity comes with room for regret.

I want to reference just one other anecdotal matter brought to mind by the notion of the "composer's fallacy" - and that is what I recall as George Crumb's soft, yet instructive, yet thoroughly, "surgical wit." I was aware then, and know for certainty now, after more than 30 years in academia, that vanity and prolixity are two of the more constant entertainments of the university milieu. For a composer like George, whose music is so focused on concision and exactitude as fundamental values, I can only imagine that this side of university life must have been a source of constant amusement to him. But, I am remembering an occasion when it was George Crumb who amused all of us (or I should say, almost all), in responding to a university guest speaker whose endowment in cupidity was not only rich, but legendary.

Before I tell you that it may have been the passage of these years that has allowed me to see beyond his persona as a towering volcano, and to recognize the great gifts of this person. He surely had is own vision (something that was always in short supply), and his best works have a strong sense of what Paul Henry Lang called "inner necessity." Even though he was a son-of-a-bitch, he is someone I can recall with affection. I am referring here to that John Wayne of a composer, Roy Harris, who was much in favour in the USA of the 40's and 50's. In a forum on American music that included George

Crumb as a panel member, the University's guest of honour, Mr. Harris, was holding forth on the genesis and the "inner message" of his 3rd Symphony, which was still then, a big favourite with American audiences. He made the same point that all program annotators do in explicating his work – that the breadth, spaciousness, openness of texture, and grand pace of the opening of the piece was the undoubtedly authentic expression of a boy turned man turned composer, whose native environment dictated for him, as it must for all of us in his view, identity, artistic values, and even consciousness itself. In the case of Harris's 3rd Symphony, it was the expression of an American, who grew up on horseback, on the open range of Oklahoma. Still soft for such rhetoric, most students absorbed this unquestioningly - but, the best student amongst us, George Crumb, was moved to respond: "yes sir, but what kind of music would the man have written, had the boy moved to New Jersey?" You sure disarmed the old cowboy, George, and it kind of disarmed us too. Not only was it devastatingly clever, but for me it also revealed that the potent individualism of the music was in significant measure, informed by the uncompromising independence of the man.

To be sure, the world of new music in the late 60's and early 70's was in a sense, ready for George Crumb - in fact, it cried out for him. I know that this view will burden the credulity of some, but I have always felt that the George Crumb strain of American individualism had deep roots – more real, more substantial, and more interesting, with all due respect, than those of Roy Harris, which after all, find their source in Hollywood legend-making, and perhaps to some extent, the epics of Steinbeck. So, even if the listener hadn't walked the shaded shores of Walden, or lifted her voice at a W. Virginia camp meting, the sense in which the place of a George Crumb in the American psyche had been "prepared" poetically and philosophically, is for me, very compelling. His early critical success in the context of a mostly closed American contemporary musical culture – to elicit a genuine, felt response. The "spinmeisters" of the American music scene were caught unprepared and grasping for connection. Many attempted to find a place for George Crumb by citing him as the composer whose instrumental music was unthinkable, had the Crumb ear not been conditioned by electronic music. A more common understanding of Crumb was that he was the first composer to blaze a genuinely musical path empowered by new freedoms bequeathed to him by John Cage. This of course, was insulting to everyone, suggesting as it does, that Crumb's uniqueness was vested in an ability to capitalize on a bad idea where others could only idly, imitatively, or dumbly worship. With the benefit of hindsight though, it was a situation that we can view with some

sympathy for the critic. Imagine the difficulty of having to graft the unprecedentedly new onto the currently topical – categories that do not necessarily have a common boundary. Like Hansl following his breadcrumbs, it is a process that can bring you nowhere. The line of connection for Crumb does not begin with the present or the topical, but with something both more distant and more powerful – the unbroken, underlying discourse that runs through American thought - centring on the tension between mythology and civilisation.

Consider as an example, the review of the Burge premiere of *Makrokosmos* I, by one of the most influential of American critics, Alan Rich, in a review published in the *New Yorker* on November 21, 1973. Here is what he said:

> Writing about contemporary music is fairly easy these days, up to a point. Composers, except for the most conservative, are very involved with constructive principles, which they either write about in relentlessly detailed program notes, make perfectly clear in their manuscripts, scores, or both. Thus, the facts that are at the core of contemporary musical analysis are fairly easy to come by, as you can see for yourself in any of the publications devoted to the music of today.
>
> When it comes, however, to trying to write about why a certain piece of new music affects the listener profoundly while another does not, the process is no easier than it ever was. The other night, for example, I heard George Crumb's Makrokosmos, a set of twelve "fantasy-pieces," which David Burge introduced as the second half of the piano recital at Carnegie Recital Hall.

After describing the by now well known innovations in performance technique associated with this work, Rich goes on to say:

> *What I cannot so easily explain, however, is why this work of Crumb's is an exhilarating, dazzling, moving experience. That is the composer's own inexplicable genius, but it is a real part of the music. The sounds themselves are fascinating, and so was watching Burge at work; the score, like so many others today, is an experience both musical and theatrical. Most important, the elements in these pieces – (…) draw upon each other, and create a logic that becomes unshakeable and*

> *involving. On the strength of this music, and the other scores of Crumb that I have heard, I do not hesitate to place him among the major composers in the world today, a refutation of the notion that serious music has nowhere to go anymore.*

Here, clearly the critic sees himself as the spokesman for the intelligent listener – able to appreciate music of "unshakable logic," as he puts it, but who is nonetheless shut out of the world of contemporary music by the composers themselves. He is the spokesman for the intelligent listener, frustrated by what is viewed as contemporary music's syncretism and pretensions, as epitomized by the composer's retreat into "justification by word" – word, which in the end, leads only back to itself and not to "musical involvement." Crumb however, is viewed as exceptional. In fact, what makes him a great composer is his ability to convince the critic's ear of the music's logic, while also brightly illuminating the path to "musical involvement." This is accomplished not through recitation of intentions or post facto theoretical justification, but through the music as encountered. Crumb's music seemed both a way out of the psedudo-emperical (*the artifice of civilization*) - so suspect to the critic, and way into legitimacy arising out of the vividness of the listener's experience (*the mythic correspondent)* - so galvanizing the critic. And it is here, at this juncture that George Crumb's voice enters the discourse with the message, inherent in his music, that these are not self-banishing oppositions, but parallels – to embrace myth is not to reject modernity, but to open it. Small surprise – what is it that we expect from prophets anyway?

There is an American poet I know, who grappled bravely with this same tension between knowledge and mystery – between civilization and myth. He potentialised the discourse in the most eloquently profound way. Like Crumb a century later, he realized that civilization and myth are parallels, and that it is the poets "job," so to speak, to reconcile them. Once, he went to a lecture given by a celebrated astronomer, went home, and wrote a poem. This is what he said:

When I heard the learn'd astronomer,
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them
When I sitting heard the astronomer where he lectured with much applause in the lecture room,
How soon unaccountable I became tired and sick,

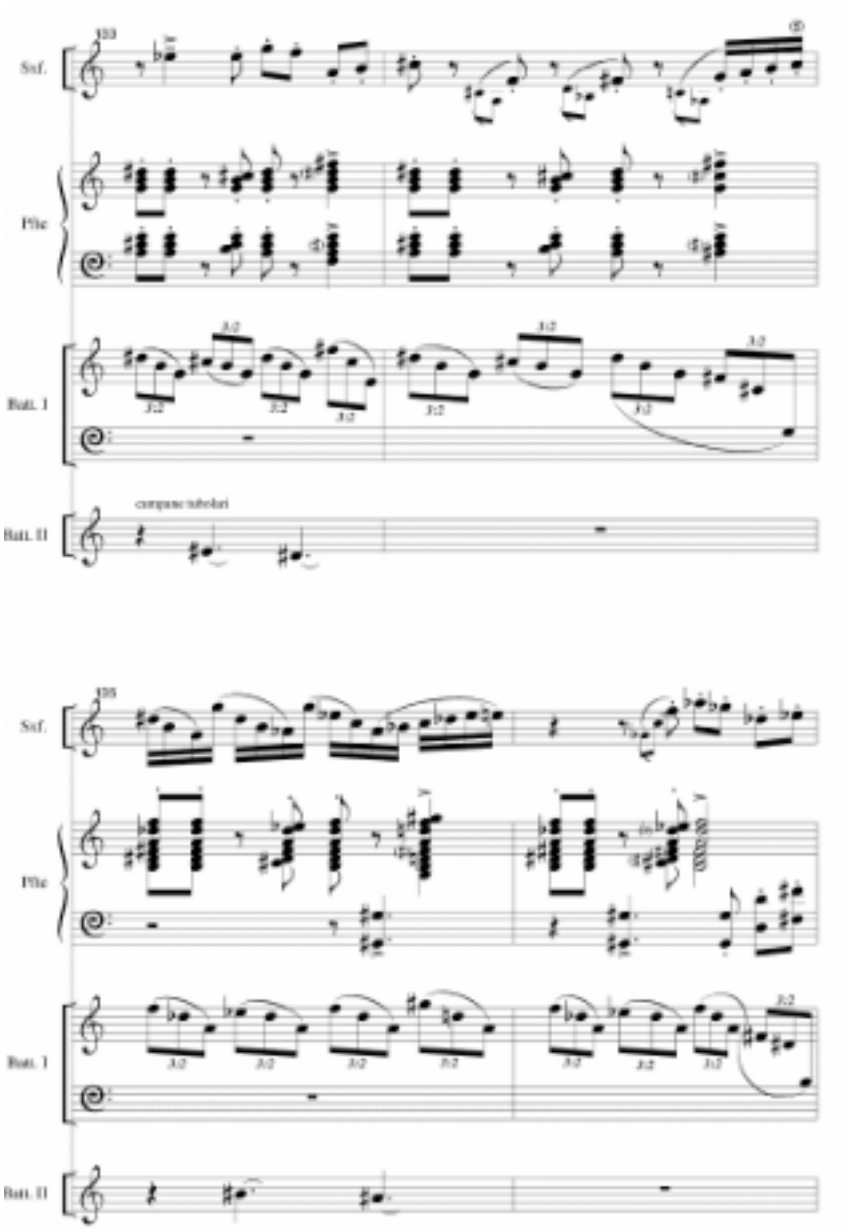
Till rising and gliding out I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars

In Whitman's scenario, the response to the lecturer's words is to exit and return into what he views as real experience – to the experience of silence and the infinite as preferable to the oppression of definition and measurement. For Whitman, this is a return into experience that is so vast, but irreducibly real and mysterious that it provokes – indeed, it requires reconversion to sound – to sounding art – to poetry. Whitman was, after all, another one o those prophets, and prophets don't meet epiphany with silence or passivity. In his review, Alan Rich makes clear that he, the critic hungers for the same nourishment that sustains the poet, and that inspires his poem – the nourishment that, in his opinion, eludes many composers, but exceptionally sustains George Crumb and fills his music with what the critic can only understand as unaccountable beauty – with art that proceeds from life and returns to life, as does the art of Thoreau, of Ives, and in quite different ways, of Faulkner and Cage. For me, this is the line of a radical American aesthetic from which George Crumb arises.

In its beauty, polish, and integrity, this music constitutes a bright node of connectivity of thought and creativity rooted in soil that remains still fertile and sacred – even here, in the "true north." Crumb's music, like no other, has reawakened us to the enchantment of myth and mystery – but, it rewards us by leaving no space for mystification - that would be too easy. Crumb's music is never "easy" – it always challenges, but its strength is that it does so through engagement. Its great service and utility are that it arms the listener with a counterbalance to all that is clichéd, craven, cute, bombastic, and empty. Those musicians, whose confidence in their own unmediated response have not retreated under threat, know that music like George Crumb's has the power to collapse into quivering banalities - those sweeping theories of culture that have generated such fears. I realize that in making such a statement, I simply counter post-modern subjectivity with my own unreconstructed elitist subjectivity. Do bear in mind however, that while deconstructionalist theorising has generated a comprehensive accounting for language, art, dress, sexuality, and much more, it has yet to account for the need served, or the wonder produced by the art of George Crumb.

Here is an old-fashioned idea, and I have to acknowledge that it identifies me as an unreformed essentialist. Not such a big deal – I have been called worse things. The idea is this: the difference between sound and music

is not so much organization – the presence or absence thereof; it is that music has a moral dimension, and that composers have a moral obligation – an obligation to silence the world – to provide the gift of suspension from the oppression of attribution, systematics, and politics. Listen to the silence tonight; in the contemporary music world, Crumb's music seems particularly powerful in this regard. So powerful in fact, that I understand it to be, in the end, a form of resistance. Perhaps there are others besides myself for whom the whispering of *Ancient Voices of Children*, the apocalyptic thunderings of *Star Child*, and the Mephistophelean poetry of *Black Angels* apotheosize this resistance as creative acts. And even now, in the full bloom of its currency, already this music is gathered in the embrace of a great repertory, which itself can be viewed as a narrative of resistance to the mundane, the contrived, and the vulgar. Crumb's is not music that leads back to itself – it leads beyond itself – it leads back to life and the renewal thereof. Entering the new millennium, can you think of more eloquent resistance?



Alfred Joel Fisher, from *Deux Tableaux* for Alto Saxophone, Piano and Two Percussion (2000), p. 32. Reproduced by permission.

Jerry A. Ozipko, Edmonton AB

Resonances, Reminiscences & Repercussions: The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra at Fifty

"It can provide a community with the experience of large symphonic concerts taking place live in the community, performed by people who live in the community and who teach in the community, who are woven into the musical fabric of the community. The ESO can play splendidly. It can give breath-taking concerts, both classical music concerts and popular concerts. The combination of that orchestra and that hall is just dynamite!"[1] The recently appointed current CEO of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra's administration, Elaine Calder, sees the symphony orchestra as a valuable community cultural resource. In fact, major industries and businesses often view the existence of a symphony orchestra within a city as a valuable cultural asset component of the quality of life of the community in making decisions to establish offices in such a community. That's why Enbridge Pipelines Inc. and Nutron Industries have become long term major corporate sponsors of the ESO's *"Enbridge Symphony Under the Sky"* Festival and *"The Nutron Lighter Classics"* concert series respectively.

William Dimmer, trumpet player, ESO musicians' negotiator and Secretary Manager of the Edmonton Musicians' Association local of the AF of M, also sees the orchestra as a resource. "Not only do we play the main concerts, but we're also there to do all kinds of interesting concerts with pop artists and anybody else. The educational component is really significant. The fact that there are major significant cultural institutions in a community is significant to attracting business and to attracting high-level corporate types. The fact that there are those kinds of musicians in town that are available to teach and to do other things and play chamber music in the community is a really significant resource to the community. That means that sons and daughters and other people have access to really good training and really good examples."[2]

The existence of a world-class symphony orchestra in the middle of flat prairie land bordering on boreal forest might at first seem somewhat out of character, but that was not the view of many of Edmonton's pioneers who saw musical culture as an integral part of a vibrant community. Visionaries like businessman and musician George Purches; real estate developer and

[1] Quotation from taped interviews with Elaine Calder (March 27, May 10 & 29, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

[2] Quotation from taped interviews with William Dimmer (May 7 & 29, 2002). All Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

sheriff Walter Scott Robertson (who constructed Edmonton's first theatre and opera house); organist/educator Vernon Barford; and violinist and conductor Mrs. J. B. Carmichael (the first woman to conduct a symphony orchestra anywhere in the British Empire) played central roles in the establishment of symphonic musical ensembles in the early years of Edmonton's history.

The actual birth of the current ESO a half-century ago was a process of somewhat protracted labour pangs. Several aborted attempts to form a permanent orchestra in Edmonton had begun as early as 1893, but each one, including other efforts by Barford in 1910 and 1920 eventually led to a halt in operations. The current orchestra, which celebrated its Fiftieth Anniversary season during 2001-2002, grew out of two ensembles that had developed during the 1940s, namely the Edmonton Philharmonic Orchestra, which began operation under the musical direction of Abe Fratkin in 1941 and a Summer "Pops Orchestra" under the leadership of native Edmontonian Lee Hepner. The latter group had been established by the Edmonton Recreation Commission in 1948. There was no Jubilee Auditorium in those days and the summer "Pops" concerts were performed in the old Sales Pavilion (lovingly called the 'Cow Palace' by many of the players of that era) on the Edmonton Exhibition Grounds. Most of them were broadcast live over CJCA radio, and the aroma which wafted out to both the players and the audience members was not that of perfume or cologne.

On September 17, 1952, Mrs. F. W. (Marion K.) Mills gathered together a group of more than sixty individuals interested in the formation of an official symphonic organization. Included among the "interested parties" were U. of A. music professor and Head of the then Division of Music, Faculty of Arts, Richard S. Eaton, along with accountant, financier and philanthropist Francis G. Winspear. Following application to the Province of Alberta for Letters Patent, the Edmonton Symphony Society was incorporated as a registered not-for-profit organization on October 31.

The newest incarnation of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, comprised of sixty musicians from both the Edmonton Philharmonic and the Edmonton Pops Orchestras, performed its first concert under the baton of Lee Hepner at the 1300-seat Capitol Theatre on Sunday, November 30. Beginning with a budget of $19,500 for the first full season, the inaugural programme featured Hamilton Harty's arrangement of George Frederic Handel's *Water Music,* Johann Sebastian Bach's *Concerto No. 5 in F Minor,* Felix Mendelssohn's *Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25* and Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4 in F Minor, Op. 36.* Guest Soloist in the Bach and Mendelssohn concerti was pianist Soulima Stravinsky, son of the famous

composer Igor. During the same year, Edmonton Public School Board Music Supervisor Keith Bissell organised the Edmonton Junior Symphony Orchestra with 12 players. Following the construction of the Northern and Southern Jubilee Auditoria during 1955 - 57, the ESO made the local facility its home for the next forty years.

Harlan Green was a long-time veteran of the ESO and its Philharmonic predecessor, serving as Principal Flute from 1949 until 1984. One special memory which he recalled was "some of those northern tours that we did in the fifties. No orchestra in the world had ever been that far north. We did tours up in Yellowknife and Whitehorse and Grande Prairie, of course. Grant McConachie [and] these guys literally flew us up there in their planes. We had some spectacular tours. We were a new orchestra to start with and they had never seen orchestras up there before."[3] He went on to comment that several years ago the Toronto Symphony Orchestra went north and "they were going on saying, 'Oh, this is the first time that they'd ever seen a symphony orchestra up there.' Well that's not true because the Edmonton Symphony was up there [long] before they were." It was during that same decade that the orchestra became the first ensemble of its kind to perform at a federal penitentiary in Fort Saskatchewan.

Lee Hepner invited Vancouver concert violinist Thomas Rolston to serve as Concertmaster beginning in the 1958-59 season and after Hepner's departure as Music Director at the end of the 1959-60 season, Rolston became the interim conductor. Under Rolston's leadership, the orchestra started up an innovative programme in music education for children. It was also on the cusp of artistic growth. "The orchestra was right in the transition between what you might call happy amateurs and professionals. And there was a lot of pressure on me, which I enjoyed actually, and that was to make one orchestra [for all of] Alberta. At one point we were going back and forth to Calgary and they wanted me to be the Concertmaster of both orchestras, but local pride prohibited that. Calgary wouldn't put up with a non-Calgary orchestra and neither would Edmonton."[4] Rolston noted that the Canada Council kept pushing for that type of artistic organizational structure but it never came to fruition.

"You were wearing white socks!" So was the collective comment from family and friends of my own otherwise expected inauspicious debut as

[3] Quotation from taped interview with Harlan Green (April 28, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

[4] Quotation from taped interview with Thomas Rolston (April 28, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

a newly hired second violinist of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra in the autumn of 1966. I had been persuaded by one of the viola players in the orchestra (a brilliant musician who turned out to be somewhat of a trickster) and sincerely came to believe that white socks were an integral part of the wardrobe of a tuxedo-garbed symphony musician. 'The socks will go with the white shirt,' I had been assured.

My own interest in music had been nurtured and fostered from three different sources. My earliest memories were of my mother singing to me as a young child. Then there was my father, an amateur fiddler who made extra money for the family by playing dances with his Ukrainian band "The Melody Kings." The third influence came from my maiden aunt Jennie. She was a self-taught violinist and viola player who learned trombone and played with the RCAF Band during World War II. After the war she moved to Edmonton and became involved with first the Edmonton Philharmonic and then the Edmonton Symphony Orchestras, initially as a sessional player of any of the three instruments she mastered as needed and then as librarian for the orchestras until spring, 1960. A couple of years later she introduced me to the world of the symphony orchestra by taking me to a concert featuring violin soloist Lea Foli.

Those were exhilarating times of growth for the ESO. English conductor Brian Priestman had been appointed Conductor and Musical Director of the orchestra in 1964 and during the decade to follow, the organization would become transformed into one of Canada's foremost interpreters of our western musical culture. For the most part, we felt that we were part of a large family of musicians. Rehearsals and concerts were somewhat relaxed and perhaps even a bit laid-back at times, although the music-making was always serious. Everyone had a full time job (in fact, several of us were University of Alberta music students at the time!) and rehearsals were usually conducted on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, with a Saturday afternoon dress-rehearsal before the weekend pairs of concerts given at the Jubilee Auditorium on Saturday nights and Sunday afternoons. Those years featured some of the foremost musicians of the last century as soloists with the orchestra, including violinists Ruggiero Ricci, Henryk Szeryng, cellist Mstislav Rostropovich, pianists Marek Jabłoński, Shura Cherkasky and Guest Conductor Arthur Fiedler.

Violinist and violist Mary Clarke, who was a veteran of the orchestra between 1957 and 1971, recalled an especially comical anecdote concerning Conductor Brian Priestman during the 1963-64 season. "[He was preparing] to go on stage and his zipper stuck, and I was already on stage and I was the one that had needle and thread and pins and everything else in my purse. I

got hauled out. 'Unburden your needle and thread.' The zipper was completely broken. He would have been in shorts conducting the orchestra, especially when he turned around and took a bow. So I took a needle and thread and sewed everything together and I sewed his underpants with it! [Later,] he went to go to the bathroom and he said, 'Get Clarke in here. Bloody hell,' he says, 'I can't get undone right now!' in that English [accent]. He said Clarke. Well of course Allan [Mary's husband and second flutist in the orchestra] came down and he says, 'Here, I've got a pair of scissors. . . .' "[5]

One of my many favourite memories as a player was the ESO in Concert with Lighthouse during the 1970-71 concert season. Under Paul Hoffert's direction, the orchestra became the first professional symphony orchestra in the world to perform with a rock band. This led to the landmark recording with Procol Harum in November of 1971. As a result of that collaborative live concert recording, the ESO would eventually be the first symphony orchestra anywhere to receive a gold record (and later on platinum) for total record sales.

The year 1971 proved to be somewhat of a watershed for the musicians in another respect. At the end of the spring season, a core of fifty-six players formed the foundation of a fully professional ensemble. Rehearsals moved from evening to daytime hours, enabling the musicians to pursue regular private teaching activities in combination with their symphony commitments. Eight of us who had played during the 1970-71 concert season resigned to pursue active careers in the professional education field. Most of us still found occasional work as sessional musicians in the ESO and its offshoot the ITV "In Concert" Orchestra during the late 1970s and early 1980s. The number of core musicians has remained the same ever since.

In January of 1979 I learned first-hand of the awesome feeling of musical power experienced by a symphonic conductor when I bought the opportunity at a symphony auction fund raiser to conduct the ESO at a pops concert. The selection I directed was "The Grand Waltz" from the opera *Faust* by Charles Gounod. Outgoing Musical Director Grzegorz Nowak gets to do that sort of thing every day of his life. He saw a very special potential in the orchestra when he first arrived here in 1995. "The one thing which I probably do much more in depth than many other conductors is that I work on many musical nuances and phrasing and sound and colour. In other words I'm not just leaving it to musicians to follow my baton and to play whatever they

[5] Quotation from taped interview with Mary Clarke (April 28, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

want in the tempo I give them."[6] Nowak observed that the musicians were very interested in that approach and responded well to his direction. "They did get very quickly sensitive to all the ideas of sound and quality of sound and phrasing. That's why we have so much fun working together. I saw potential right there, that they were flexible; they had means to do things. It was obvious that for most of them it was the first time ever that they were asked to do so much in depth musical interpretation and they were very intrigued with this. While continuing working on a regular basis they got better and better into this way of playing." He feels that during his tenure, their greatest contribution in an overall way has been the quality of their interpretation and musicianship.

City Lawyer Andrew Hladyshevsky, Q.C. was a member of the Board of Directors of the ESO for ten years from 1992 until early 2002, and sat as the Board Chair during the 1996-1999 seasons. In clear and precise terms he is able to project the qualities that define what the ESO is today. "There are a lot of accomplishments for a symphony. One is the different series that you project to the audience, the different levels that culture is given to people whether it is given from a 'Masters' series perspective, or 'Pops,' or '[Symphony for] Kids,' 'Lighter Classics,' or something like 'Symphony Under the Sky.' These different series by their programming usually tend to attract completely different audiences. In the end, it comes to having created a permanent kind of professional arts community with those artists and all of the things that have been built around that and how that affects the every day life of the Edmontonian."[7] In addition, there are the benefits which come from having high calibre musicians providing musical instruction to the community's younger generation. Hladyshevsky went on to comment on the possible benefits of the ESO's educational programmes on students who may not necessarily continue to study music in their adult years. "The net effect is [still] the exposure to the music and having that broad influence in a community makes the community."

Another major contribution which the orchestra has made to the cultural life of the community has its focus in the educational outreach programmes to local schools and music students, especially as it pertains to the parents of children who usually see no initial value in music. Hladyshevsky is very animated about this subject. "You should see what these 'jocks' [sports-minded parents] look like when someone like an Allan Gilliland or a

[6] Quotation from taped interview with Grzegorz Nowak (May 6, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

John Estacio works with these kids in elementary or junior high school and their kid writes a minute-and-a-half of music that is then performed by a symphony orchestra. The lights start to go on."

Solid financial support is essential to the economic health of any arts organization, symphony orchestras not being excepted. Hladyshevsky believes that Edmonton's orchestra has both a unique outlook and is perceived differently from other similar organizations on the continent. "The symphony here is not perceived to be elitist the way it is in Chicago. In some of the United States the whole cult around the symphony are usually some fairly well-heeled people and some musicians that are kept quite a bit at arm's length from the rest of the community. In Edmonton even our professional hockey team is sort of a quasi community-based organization in a business that's entertainment and big money. The Edmonton model has always been: get a lot of people onto your board, get a lot of people involved as volunteers and the more people that are involved in the organization, the stronger it will be. In other parts of North America it isn't as wide-ranging or as big kind of a volunteer commitment."

While major corporate financial support is necessary and important, it does not provide all of the necessary funds to operate the orchestra. "In a community like Edmonton, an organization like this needs an army of volunteers in every area [to conduct fund raising activities]. The amount of people it takes to do the 'Beat Beethoven Race' which raises money for the symphony is a huge volunteer commitment. Even something that sounds as simple as a car raffle -- there's a lot of things that administration does -- but at the end of the day, there's a bunch of people with books basically flogging tickets in malls and in board rooms and at soccer games, because you need every one of those dollars."

In most US jurisdictions fund-raising does not hold the same priority due in part to lower tax structures and other economic conditions which allow for the establishment of substantial endowments to fund local orchestras. "We're sort of stuck in between [the] US and Europe. We have some government money involved, but we don't have the underwriting that European symphonies do." Hladyshevsky went on to cite the important cultural commitment made by the province of Québec in support of the Orchestra Symphonique du Montréal. In contrast to Québec, here in Alberta, we appear to have a different culture when it comes to Arts and Culture. Government policies are geared to the views of the legislative caucus. "In Alberta the attitude is 'Don't ask us to fund pure culture without mass buy-in.' Funding formulas in Alberta are structured towards if you can get your end revenue up

that tells us people want to go see you, therefore we're prepared to help you along further than an organization that has less people to come and see it."

The planning, development and construction of the Francis Winspear Centre for Music was not without its own set of growing pains. Early in the 1980s there was the establishment of the Edmonton Concert Hall Foundation, spearheaded by musician and now Senator Tommy Banks along with several other parties. But at the time it never got off the ground. Violinist and Associate Concertmaster Broderyck Olson joined the orchestra in 1961 when he was only 16. He was Concertmaster Thomas Rolston's student at the same time that his father LeRoy was a player in the orchestra as well as a private music teacher. During the transition from semi-professional status to a core of fifty-six fully professional players, Olson remembers that "we were told back then that we would get an addition of approximately three players a year. The times were arguably the best financial decade that we will ever see. It never happened. And then we hit the hard times in the 80s and it never happened."[8] He eventually became a part of the process to lobby for the construction of a concert hall in Edmonton from 1978 to 1984, during which time a feasibility study was carried out. "We went to the City and they said, 'No, we won't build it. Times are tough and interest rates are high, blah, blah, blah... Lougheed[9] was retiring from politics at that time and moved to Calgary and the Olympics were coming, and so he took our feasibility study and ran with it. In a matter of three or four months they had the land acquired in Calgary and Bingo! they built it [the Jack Singer Concert Hall]."

According to Hladyshevsky, "some early money wasn't there. Francis Winspear was very much in favour of it but there wasn't a momentum for the hall. There were problems with respect to venue location and many obstacles that seemed to fall in its path. The Symphony Society in consultation with the Concert Hall Foundation basically said, 'If you will allow us to take this project over, we'll try to make a go of it.' " Phil Ponting, who was a member of the Board at the time as well as an advisor to Francis Winspear, offered to work as a member of the Foundation in order to get the hall up and running. Winspear then offered to provide some substantial financial backing on the potential of obtaining matching government funding. After some political genuflection on the part of both levels of government (provincial and federal), it began to look like "this could be a possibility. The next issue was [that] we needed some support from the city and we needed land." The Con-

[8] Quotation from taped interviews with Broderyck Olson (May 12 & 29, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

[9] An influential Albertan politician (b. Edgar Peter Lougheed on July 26, 1928 in Calgary, Alberta), provincial premier from 1971 to 1985. (Ed.)

cert Hall Foundation was eventually able to acquire the old Police Station (situated on the site of Edmonton's original City Hall) that was being used at the time by its SWAT teams. It was ultimately to be taken out of service by the city, according to Hladyshevsky, "because it had outlived its usefulness." Then the serious campaigning for the final planning, development, funding and construction of the concert hall truly began.

Despite the protracted efforts that led to the eventual construction of the orchestra's present new home, the Francis Winspear Centre for Music, Olson feels that we have been blessed by its existence. "I think we're fortunate to have it at the price we were able to build it for and to have lucked out on such an acoustical gem, because people that compare this to Calgary as an example, [the hall was essentially designed and constructed by the same companies that built the Jack Singer Hall] even the acoustical guys will tell you that this is a little better hall than Calgary's. We did our's for about a third of what they did Calgary's for. Calgary's tendered at $40,000,000 and it wound up costing [them] $120,000,000. The province put in $108 [million], within the city, the philanthropists raised $11 [million] and the feds put in $1 [million]. Here in our hall the feds put in $15 [million], the province put in $15 [million], Winspear put in $6 [million] and we raised $15 [million] within the city to come up to $51 [million]. The tender was $48 million and it wound up costing $45 [million]."

Alberta historian and author Brian Brennan notes that Francis Winspear desired to leave his community with a legacy, rather than an inheritance. He believes that the Winspear Centre is Francis Winspear's legacy to the community.

As the city of Edmonton has grown, so has the budget of the orchestra. The budget for the fiftieth anniversary season was just under $7,000,000.

Looking back over a half-century of growth as a musical entity in tandem with the phenomenal growth of the city both economically and in terms of population, it is not difficult to list the contributions which the orchestra has made to the cultural fabric and the music making of Edmonton and the province. In the 1950s it became the first orchestra in Canada to travel to communities in the Northwest Territories and open up local audiences to live symphonic music performance. It also was the first national orchestra to entertain prisoners of a federal prison, namely the Fort Saskatchewan Institution.

Over the years, the musicians have developed from a certain general core of players into a fully professional class of musicians instructing and graduating students into the fully professional world of concert music -- cel-

lists Shauna Rolston and Amanda Forsyth and pianist Angela Cheng being only three such examples. As the orchestra grew in stature and became more established in the community, it began to be featured in radio broadcasts and commercial recordings. The orchestra has been involved in the production of twenty commercial recordings from 1971 to the present, most under the auspices of the CBC.

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra became only the second orchestra in the country to initiate a composer-in-residence programme in 1992 when John Estacio was hired to that posting. This has led to a further involvement of the orchestra in the performance of works not only by the composer-in-residence, but by those of many other local and Alberta composers such as Ron Hannah, Allan Gordon Bell and Piotr Grella-Możejko, to name only a few. The introduction of the rESOund Festival of Contemporary Music in 1999 and 2001 added yet another new slant to the orchestra's programming line-up. The ESO was also the first orchestra in Canada to introduce Canadian artists as the opening act during its pops concerts.

Romance has played an important part in the lives of musicians of the orchestra from the very beginning. Conductor Lee Hepner fell in love with and married concert pianist Patricia Rolston on August 3, 1951. Since then, there have been at least eight marriages between musicians in the orchestra. Among the notable ones are violinist Richard and cellist Gillian Caldwell (1980); violinists Tom and Mary Johnson (1987); violist Stefan Jungkind and violinist Debra Belmonte; trombonist John McPherson and violinist Dianne New; violist Andrew Bacon and violinist Susan Flook; violinist Murray Vaasjo and flutist Elizabeth Koch; cellist Tim Khaner and oboist Lidia Żabka; and clarinettist David Quinn and bassist Janice Brine. There were other couples in earlier years of the orchestra. Many of these marriages have produced offspring. Four current members of the orchestra who are married to non-musicians have young adult children playing in the Senior Youth Orchestra. Will the children of the musical couples become musicians following in the footsteps of their talented parents? Only time will tell.

Janice Quinn, whose own mother played string bass for the ESO during the late fifties and into the early seventies, remembers being taught to play by her mother on a 1/8th size instrument. "I think that I was some kind of guinea pig [at the time]."[10] Quinn has since graduated with a Masters degree from the Juilliard School of Music in New York and graces the bass section of the current orchestra. When asked whether she expects her own new-

[10] Quotation from taped interview with Janice Quinn (May 29, 2002). Other subsequent quotations from the same source.

born daughter to carry on the family tradition, her stock reply is: "Have you seen the cost of music lessons? I think we'll put her into soccer!"

Fiftieth anniversaries are supposed to be happy, celebratory occasions. In stark contrast to the music making, Calder, who arrived in Edmonton in the last months of 2001, has faced a very challenging season. The passage of time has exposed deep divisions among the musicians of the orchestra as well as a falling out with administration. On January 8, the ESO Board announced that the contract of the current Musical Director, Grzegorz Nowak, would not be renewed. The very next day, the local press reported that funding was in place to start up another orchestra under Nowak's musical leadership. Then on February 11, the Edmonton Symphony Players Association gave the ESO Board 72 hour strike notification. In response, just after noon of the 12th, the Board cancelled its contract with the musicians. Ultimately, the ESO musicians withdrew services for five weeks in February and March, with a hard-fought negotiated settlement for the current season only being reached by the third week of March.

Since that time, administration has announced an accumulated deficit of $1,350,000 and the media has reported withholding of some funding support. Along with all of this came the announcement of the departure of ESO Concertmaster Martin Riseley to Ottawa. So the search is now on to find his successor.[11]

The combination of an announced deficit and a musicians' strike during the same season has not been healthy for the future outlook of the organization. Among the heart-wrenching subjects which have been addressed by the media and concerned subscribers are those of administrative governance, labour-management relations and general communication. There have been statements reported in the general press that the ESO administration is much too top heavy for the size of the core orchestra. Then there is the "we versus them" paradigm of union versus management which still exists between the musicians and the Board, but which is rapidly becoming a cooperative collaborative-based model in much of the business world. There have been innuendoes made that not all information has been passed on to either side. Stuck in the middle of all of this are the musicians -- ordinary people like you and I who are striving to make a living, pay their mortgages and support their families. These are the more critical issues which have yet to be resolved and which will ultimately determine the future existence and course of the orchestra in the twenty-first century.

[11] Soon after the article had been submitted the ESO announced Mr John Lowry as its new Concertmaster. (Ed.)

In spite of the very real possibility of the orchestra's possible demise down the road, along with the likelihood of not many people mourning its passing, there is still a sense of optimism and hope. On June 12, at a small media gathering at the Citadel Theatre, Grzegorz Nowak announced his own independent concert series called "Metamorphoses" for the 2002-3 concert season. During the moments preceding a postponed "Pops" concert on June 18, CEO Elaine Calder reported that a settlement had been reached between the ESO Board and the musicians for the 2002-3 season. She believes that over time, trust on both sides will be nurtured. William Dimmer openly admits that classical music is not dead in this city. In his mind there will always be a market here. Andrew Hladyshevsky is also cautiously optimistic. "The musicians, unlike other elements that are involved in labour units -- it's a little different than when a car plant closes -- [they] have the skills in their heads and in their hands and in their ability to basically start up again very quickly, to carry on with a different form of it." He believes that it is important for people to recognize what they themselves contribute to the not-for-profit sector of the community. "If it's X million dollars a year that is funnelled into these people, that's sort of like the research and development money you put in to the cure for cancer. What you hope to do with an arts organization is break even. Over the course of fifty years to have invested several hundred million into the Edmonton community and at this point being down a million or two, you have to give it a perspective of the fifty years. The amount that is contributed in the spinoffs of that is not calculable. The fact that you have put this equity into this enterprise in this city isn't diminished only because of the deficit. If there's a legacy there for Edmonton out of this, the deficit maybe is a way of bringing home to people how precious this fragile art form really is. Just like a garden that's in some trouble, you have to take care of it. It just doesn't take care of itself."

FURTHER ESO FACTS

ESO Conductors/Music Directors

Lee Hepner	(1952-1960)
Thomas Rolston	(1960-1964) (Associate Conductor)
Brian Priestman	(1964-1968)
Lawrence Leonard	(1968-1973)
Pierre Hétu	(1973-1981)
Uri Mayer	(1981-1995)
Grzegorz Nowak	(1995-2002)
David Hoyt	(Artistic Director, 2002 -)

ESO Concertmasters

Alexander Nicol	(1952-1957)
Walter Holowach	(1957-1958) (Interim)
Thomas Rolston	(1958-1964)
Marguerite Marzantowicz	(1960-1964) (Interim)
Marguerite Marzantowicz	(1964-1970)
Charles Dobias	(1970-1972)
James Keene	(1972-1994)
Martin Riseley	(1994-2002)
John Lowry	(2002 -)

Edmonton Symphony Orchestra DISCOGRAPHY

1. (1972) ***Procol Harum Live In Concert with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra*** • Chrysalis/A & M Records Canada Limited SP 4335
Musicians:
Gary Brooker - Voice and Piano
B. J. (Barrie) Wilson - Drums
Alan Cartwright - Bass
Chris Copping - Organ and Harpsichord
Dave Ball - Guitar
Keith Reid - Words
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Da Camera Singers
Conductor - Lawrence Leonard
2. (1974) ***Scarlet and Gold/L'Escarlet et L'Or -- Alberta RCMP Century Celebrations, 1874-1974*** • Denali Records Ltd. LP SGLP 1001
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra / Conductor - Tommy Banks
3. (n.d.) ***The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra with Guest Conductors John Avison and Boris Brott*** • CBC Radio Canada Broadcast Recording SM-284 (Stereo)
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductors - John Avison and Boris Brott
4. (n.d.) ***Wolf - Purcell - Adaskin - Warlock*** • CBC Radio Canada Broadcast Recording SM-294 (Stereo)
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Pierre Hétu
5. (1976) ***The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra Conducted by Pierre Hétu*** • Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio Canada SM-316 (Stereo)
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Pierre Hétu

6. (1980) ***Jenson Interceptor*** • House of Lords Records Ltd. LP HLR-10002
Musicians:
Charlotte Wiebe: Lead Vocals, Keyboards
Doug Jenson: Lead Vocals, Guitar
Kennedy Jenson: Flute, Piano, Clavinette, String Synthesizer, Vocals
Albert Blaine: Bass
John Fynn: Drums
Members of The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra

7. (1984) ***Orchestral Suites of the British Isles/Suites Britanniques pour Orchestre*** • Canadian Broadcasting Corporation/Société Radio Canada
LP SM 5035/CT SMC 5035/CD SMCD 5035
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer

7A. (1986) ***Classical Nuance*** - Volume 1 • CBC Radio Guide Collector's Choice RGLP001 (SIDE TWO)
Track 1. *Mattachins* & *Pieds-en-l'air* from*Capriol Suite* by Peter Warlock (this selection was re-recorded from Tracks 7 & 8, side one of the preceding recording).

8. (1985) ***Louis Quilico: Great Verdi Arias - Grandes Arias de Verdi - Berhümte Verdi-Arien*** • Canadian Broadcasting Corporation / Société Radio Canada LP SM 5043/CT SMC 5043/CD SMCD 5043
Louis Quilico - Baritone
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer

8A. (1986) ***Classical Nuance*** - Volume 1 • CBC Radio Guide Collector's Choice RGLP001 (SIDE TWO)
Track 6. *Di Provenza il mar* from *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi (this selection was re-recorded from Track 3, side two of the preceding recording).

9. (1985) ***Ermanno Mauro: Great Tenor Arias - Grandes Arias pour Ténors - Berhümte Tenorarien*** • Canadian Broadcasting Corporation / Société Radio Canada LP SM 5046/CT SMC 5046/CD SMCD 5046
Ermanno Mauro - Tenor
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer

9A. (1986) ***Classical Nuance*** - Volume 1 • CBC Radio Guide Collector's Choice RGLP001 (SIDE ONE)
Track 3. *Nessun dorma* from ***Turandot*** by Giaccomo Puccini (this selection was re-recorded from Track 3, side one of the preceding recording).

10. (1986) ***Forsyth: Atayoskewin - Freedman: Les Oiseaux Exotiques*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada LP SM 5059/CT SMC 5059/CD SMCD 5059
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
11. (1986) ***Canadian and Russian Overtures*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada LP SM 506/CT SMC 5069/CD SMCD 5069
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
11A. (1996) ***Introduction to Canadian Music/Florilège de la musique canadienne*** • NAXOS 8.550171-2
CD 1, Track 5. Godfrey Ridout**:** *Fall Fair/Fête d'automne* (this selection was re-recorded from Track 2 of the preceding recording).
12. (1989) ***Morawetz - Ginastera: Harp Concertos/Concertos pour harpe*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada LP SM 5086/CT 4-5086/CD 2-5086
Gianetta Baril - Harp
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
13. (1989) ***Tom Cochrane & Red Rider: "The Symphony Sessions"*** • Capitol Records/EMI of Canada CD C2 0 7777 2654 2 8
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - George Blondheim
Red Rider:
Tom Cochrane - Vocals, Guitars
Ken Greer - Guitars
John Webster - Keyboards
Ken "Spider" Sinnaeve - Bass
Randall Coryell - Drums
Peter Mueller - Guitars
14. (1990) ***Great Orchestral Marches*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada LP SM 5093/CT SMC 5093?CD SMCD 5093
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
15. (1991) ***Morawetz - Bruch - Fauré - Dvorák - Bliss*** • CBC Enterprises /Les Entreprises Radio-Canada LP SM 5105/CT SMC 5105/CD SMCD 5105
Shauna Rolston - Cello
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer

16. (1993) ***Britten - Willan*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada CD SMCD 5123
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
17. (1997) ***Russian Sketches / Esquisses Russes*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada CD SMCD 5169
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Uri Mayer
18. (1997) ***Electra Rising: Music of / Musique de Malcolm Forsyth*** • CBC Enterprises/Les Entreprises Radio-Canada CD SMCD 5180
Amanda Forsyth - Cello
William H Street - Saxophone
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Grzegorz Nowak
19. (1999) ***P.J. Perry and The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra*** • Justin Time Records Inc. JTR 8481-2
P.J. Perry - Saxophones
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra and the Da Camera Singers
Conductors - David Hoyt and Rick Wilkins
With Special Guests:
Mark Eisenmann - Piano
Neil Swainson - Bass
John Taylor - Bass
George Ursan - Drums
Arnie Chycoski - Lead Trumpet
Bob Tildesley - Solo Trumpet
Ravi Poliah - Latin Jazz Percussion
20. (2001) ***Smetana: Má Vlast*** (original version) - ***Janácek: Moravské Tance*** • Music of Central Europe CD MCE 5001 [Limited Edition CD]
The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra
Conductor - Grzegorz Nowak

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Edward Blodgett, Edmonton, AB

Poetry: Why Write It?

Heard Melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter....
John Keats

I can remember reading once that Pablo Neruda said that when he died he would like to die in a word. Or was it that he wanted to become a new word? No matter: he wanted to enter language fully. I have often thought that writing poetry is indeed an activity in which words are of overwhelming significance, but that there was something else motivating it. The nearest analogy I can find is that of someone always trying to return to a remembered country, but a country that always has to be found and then remembered each time one sets forth into a poem. Where is one to go? How will it reveal itself? Is the country that one gradually catches glimpses of and returns with in words the country that is always thought to be irrevocably lost or is it another simulacrum of a country that does not exist?

These are, perhaps, not the right questions to ask. But why take all the trouble to make a poem if it were only a matter of words? Because words, as soon as they become engaged in the process of recovering something so lost it may be beyond the grasp of anything, those words have to be understood as possessed, and what they are possessed of is what possesses the poet. They are the signs of a certain real hallucination without which there is no passage from the inertia of what has the appearance of language to the language into which one falls without a sense of gravity, a language that lifts one to the point where it seems there is no distance between the sun, the moon, and whoever you might be. Then the light is without night and day, time loses its yesterdays, familiarities are exchanged with gods and goddesses. This is the threshold of the other country, and nothing we might say can translate it. It is in many ways heart-breaking to undertake any of this: the way in is uncertain, the way back is a giving up.

Ineluctably, then, one is always between the language of the lost country and the country where one spends one's other life. Nothing that is heard in the lost country makes sense in the other country. Indeed it is hardly audible. It is music, but no known music is like it. Only silence can comprehend it. Rilke hints at this in the initial quatrain of his Sonnets to Orpheus. In Orpheus' music, "alles schwieg" (everything grows quiet). But of

course, for Rilke, "Gesang ist Dasein" (Song is existence, the life of everything), and so to cite Rilke so is unfair. The beauty of it—and how powerful it is—is that the world for Rilke arises in the ear. Its coming into being is heard. Failing that perfect symmetry of being as music, if being is elsewhere, its recovery requires that silence that will allow it to reappear. In many ways Rilke's great sequence is a celebration of the poet as singer and, therefore, a celebration of himself. But—and this is the question I never stop asking myself—are our singing words, no matter how beautiful, any more than a distraction? Can they really recover the lost country?

I spend a lot of time looking a trees with inarticulate wonder, especially apple trees, gazing first at their dazzling early summer flowers and later at the slower ripening of their fruit. What I can never fathom is how this takes places as, I suppose, a kind of music, but in fact in complete silence. We like to think they 'speak' to us, as flowers do, and it may be that we have a certain intimacy with each other, but all transpires in silence. Grass has the same silence, and the moon. And so while I agree with Rilke that music subtends everything, a music that only seems to enter the 'inner' ear, but when I gaze upon the universe this side of the other country, it only displays itself to me in silence. It is a silence, however, as active as Rilke's music. It is always moving through its seasons, indeed its ages, and can only make one profoundly cautious when venturing to speak of it, because in many ways our language violates its silence. We delight in speaking for it, but is this not all an illusion? I cannot speak for apples. The more I speak of them, the more I move away from the lost country that I would so much desire to enter. The golden bough has always appeared to me to be silence and hidden in silence.

Yet when we remember (how easy it is to forget) that music arises from silence, is enveloped by it, and makes it audible in its conclusion, we see we have not strayed very far from Rilke. Silence is where music enters, and silence is its ground. Rilke's music, then, was poetry, and the analogy he made of them can hardly be surpassed. And so, after Rilke's music, the world that is left is silence, and that is the world into which I have occasionally strayed, catching glimpses of it. Once seen, however, it always appears lost, it cannot be appealed to, and it will not reply. There is nothing that does not contain it, it is the interior shape that we all possess and what makes us finally not only akin to each other but also everything we cast aside or overlook—pieces of wood, stones, dirt. They are without drama, without *us*, and yet they are us when we least think of it. It is one of the reasons I love the few poems I know of Zbigniew Herbert, especially the final lines of "The Pebble": "—Pebbles cannot be tamed / to the end they will look at us / with a

calm and very clear eye." They come, then, from the lost country I have been seeking, whether they are aware of it or not, and so they have a claim upon our reverence, especially when we speak of them. As words, they signal the place of infinite desire.

And so words, when evoking not simply pebbles but the world from which pebbles fall, can only work with the same patience toward and away from that world, calling to and waiting for the silence. Poetry, at least the poetry that holds my affection, is never in a hurry. It unfolds, it waits, it takes a turn, it leaps where possible, but, more than anything else, it is an endeavour to gather the silence that impels it and somehow become, for those who understand silence, a guide to its recovery.

I have suggested that gods and goddesses inhabit this lost country. To put the matter less mythologically, silence, when it is the foundation of music, is the sacred and its threshold. It means, of course, that the world we know, which I have referred to as wood, stones, and dirt, is full of signs of the sacred, and in them and through them we are given small sightings of the sacred. Poetry, then, enacts the sacred in the manner that it seeks silence and the shapes it takes. When we speak it, we take it into our bodies where it rests, after we have spoken and heard it, in its silence. But this silence, you might say, is not quite the same as the silence of stones, this is silence that has been awakened. So to enact the sacred is to bring it alive for ourselves so that we are no longer exactly as we were before. The silence that was always in us is now a shaping silence, and a silence that has grasped its own eternity. So if the dirt is blown to dust so fine that we no longer know it as dirt, its silence is alive in us and to everyone to whom at has been given. Which amounts to saying that although all flesh is grass, dust does not die.

And so poetry continues to be written, partly to bear witness to, and partly to find the silence that is its deepest summons. Contrary to what everyone supposes, it is in all of us in various measures. Unlike most forms of the sacred, it requires no assertions of belief: it is happening in the simplest of gestures, a hand moving in the dark. The world is unimaginable without it or, to put it another way, the world would not live without it, without the awareness and indwelling transformations of silence. But once aware of it, the lost country always seems beyond one's grasp and only perceptible as silence. Paradoxically such silence is always somewhere below the level of the awareness we are familiar with. It is a silence that takes us unawares, so to speak, and wakes into consciousness anew, at the inception of each effort to make a poem.

So poetry, strange as it may sound, is a celebration of itself as si-

lence - its silence is alive in us and to everyone to whom it has been given. Poetry emerges from silence and disappears into it. So it is that poetry not only enacts the sacred but it is also the memory of it, faulty, not always apt, maladroit. Why not say nothing? We write poetry, at least I do, because of an inability to inhabit the lost country. I can only act as its messenger, making things that are designed to break silence in order to awaken it. It is a kind of destiny to be an apple, its flower, its suspension in the air. It is another to enter its silence, to become in turn shaped by it, and to break momentarily in a poem that in some way gives articulation to that silence. It is the nearest the lost country can be approached, never fully entered, but in our repeated (ap)proximations something of it remains, echoes of it rising in the silence the poem makes in its conclusions, its pauses, the memory of it that occurs with the first word. It is a destiny to awaken silence, and poetry as music need do no more than this, and in so doing preserve the being of the world.

E.D. Blodgett
Edmonton
July 26, 2001

Game

The world that I want is nowhere—not upon the sea, nor is
it hidden in the moon, departures of the birds at twilight, nor
voices of children calling through the darkness—nowhere but where you
might be, a lift of light when you might leave a room, an echo that
cannot be placed. I thought it was a child's game that when it reached
an end would open into all that was unknown, and we would be
discovered to ourselves, the who that we had been but suddenly

a you and me that somehow were unlike, not fleshed but hidden in
a further darkness where the children were not heard, a darkness where
the absence we had thought was what the silence was could move through all
the pitches we were able to take in, and silence sang as you might sing,
your eyes in rapture gazing through the world, and in them not the rose
but what there is of roses in their mystery about to be
uncovered: silence falls so slowly from your eyes it could be held,

autumnal silences that are so distant in the air they would
not be for us to hear, but they are in you, songs that come from where
you are, that country that I am unable to attain, and when
they reach the surface of your eyes, they float abandoned there, and what
I hear as silence is the drift apart that they contain, and we
are nothing other than the child that we think that we are not
that sings to us, our bones unseen a music passing through our eyes.

Residence

Your eyes were closed: horizons of the moon were neither here nor there,
and palpabilities of trees had fallen from your hands, the grass
a sharper sound beneath the wind. What residence is yours inside the dark
whose everywhere is now within your bones, your nearest neighbor next
to me, that leaves the three of us with nothing more to do but rest
together where the darkness lay upon us, blanketing the stars?
We did not know that darkness was where light arose, but we recalled

how light, wherever something was, was shadowed, light that was by
darkness
plumbed. We did not know that darkness enters us in layers, light
but deeper, more unfathomable when it rests in what we thought
were our bones alone. We did not know that our origin
is darkness where inside it light is sleeping, galaxies about
to leap into the fire, our bodies what we did not know,
their brooding full of other stars that wait upon the fall of night to burn.

Flowered

Where you passed by, the birds as one fell silent. All the trees, from branch
to branch were filled with them, their eyes grown bright, the trees illumined
with
the light of smaller suns that gaze upon each other, knowing what
the sun has known from what it was forever, all their knowing grasped
with no more effort than an eye that opens and beholds a world all
at once, from that first moment when a god became a flower in
the emptiness of everything, a flower that sprang open, speaking

in the place where nothing heard what had been said, the sound of what
was said in his becoming flower, falling through the absent place
of everywhere, a primal rain of all about to be—stars and moon,
whatever was at first a word and now in its immensity
is mute—of stars, the moon, and hands that rest upon the silence of
your lap, around them rain that no one hears, and there are birds whose eyes
never close, in them a world where a music flowers stars.

Muse

You sit alone inside a room. Around you are no walls but those
eternity has made. The light of stars is all you breathe, and when
you speak, it is not air that issues forth but light that takes the shape
of words, and each is so translucent you might move your fingers through
them—bright anaphoras of what you are that float around your face,
their contours yours. They rise and fall at random, you in aspects that
possess a sense you cannot grasp before they disappear and are

replaced. The only darkness visible is where your breath is spaced
by what you say, and if there is desire in eternity,
it is desire for the dark refusing to be word, and so
eternity has unsuspected endings, all the dark that seeps
inside your words and takes up residence at last inside your breath:
you cannot speak the dark, but it speaks you in echo, echo of
the you that you are not, that other breath that says what you would say.

Calling

The moon rises in the mind, everything ceding in its passage,
all the stars around it fired in the thought of it, a sky
unable to recall the darkness but as dark dissolving in
the presence of the moon and other light the wake of it: no
one thinks the stars are more than silence in their sky, but these are stars
that when the moon appears, make music that cannot be heard—it falls
as rain invisible, and all the air awake, its wakefulness

the music that we had forgot, the only silence darkness gone.
So the stars, and what the moon is is you, the place where music
turns toward in its emergence from the dark, and in its turn
the time it keeps is given to it by the moon that is not known
but in the music that is nowhere it is not. I cannot say
that I possess my mind, and if it is, it is in music, a
refrain of stars that has no other calling but to utter moon.

Dharma

It seemed as if the snow that lay upon the branches had been there
forever, and the light surrounding them the absolute of blue
that was their shape in echo. Of the trees the only memory
is where the snow returns in us, a snow that is the shape of what
we know, the light inside us and the snow the blue where branches and
the burden that they bear against the sky is open, all that they
have been imprinted there. Perhaps it is that no one is recalled

by anyone as what they might have been, unable in the air
to find where they had been, except as something that might fall into
the eye at random, quickly taking shape. You might say *O*, and in
that moment, that circumference the what of it is taken, whole,
unable to be lost. But what in you is that completion, utter
knowing of the snow, the trees, the shape they take inside the light?
No one knows who we have been unless as snow we fall through that

remembering embrace of air, the place where we have been and then
are not, the our that we knew given again a figure that
we were unable to perceive ourselves, to be a tree that holds
the snow, around us that recalling O without awareness of
itself, an O that is the echo of another sphere where stars
are in their light with no distinctions of the night and day—*there*
we are, another absolute of blue that keeps the tree and snow.

Sunrise

We were walking in the sun, horizons everywhere beneath
our feet: I heard you speak, and it was not words that came from your mouth,
but what you said was standing bright before your eyes, nothing that had
more sound than grass might have beneath a windless sky, speaking at first
of what you were when you were in your childhood, and it was not
a child that we saw, but joy stood there upon its toes, beside
it sudden sorrow, afternoons that never seemed to end, the sense

of something that cannot, a shadow of a bird with wings that do
not move, and all of them together strung upon the air in sighs
of syllables of their desire, each a sentence that poured forth
into our eyes with no shade of meaning falling to explain
their being in the air. What did I say but something of the glass
that always stood between the world and me, of trees and how they rose
inside the glass, their presence in the world lifted into light?

And so they were again before us—trees of glass and shadows of
infinities of afternoons—the breath that issued from our mouths
inaudible but absolutely shaped, our words more than shapes:
this is how *fiats* leap into the space that planets keep,
and moons turn, suspended always on our breath, another breath
inside it coming from the centre of the sun where silence is
its radius, and our voices the circumference in fire.

Homing

Birds were floating through your body, nesting in your heart, akin
to birds that I had seen above the towns of childhood, the light
grown dim above the hush of trees, a winter dusk that slipped into
my bones till I was chilled, a naked boy upon a naked plain,
immensity the only home in sight, but all the birds that found
their way into your body one by one became invisible,
barely to be heard as voices that rise up inside your voice,

the burdens that they bear of memories of air and sky when they
descended through their emptiness and stood upon your heart: for them
it was a coming back to somewhere they had never been, unknown
but known, the place that came upon them in their dreams when they would
dream
of where beginnings are, and what they sang of I had heard before,
but farther in the evening where they disappeared, their singing now
as soft, and turning on the silence where one gathers breath at first.

Across

I have given up apocalypse—: we are already on
the other shore where day and night do not stand opposite each other
and the moon is always in the morning sky, the stars beside
it brilliant as the sun, and where we thought it was an apple tree
in flower, it was you, and all the bees around you smaller stars,
their fire not a fire we recalled, but fire that contained
a universe in alphabets unknown to us, and everything

that was to be already spelled but still without the shape that seeing
needs, its knowledge given us without the space that falls between
the thing that rises up before our eyes and its becoming an
idea, all of it inside us and complete, and we were nought
but places of a larger affirmation where a world lay
already formed in that shape their *fiat* would assume when it
unveiled sprang spoken into air, the sound of its beginning gone.

Angel Music

An O upon the surface of the sea! and through the opening
the fish could gaze beyond the canopy of heaven that they knew
to watch the suns go by and stars in their lucidity at night
appear, the empyrean given over to their wonder. You
and I were walking close to where the sea was lapping at our feet,
and through the opening the O had made the docile schools of fish
came into view, unmoving in the newness of the sudden light—:
we must have been within their deepest contemplation, angels that

could bear the thinnest air, unscathed by bright proximities of fire.
An awe rose up from the silence of the sea beyond the heaven of
its shores that was not heard by us but by the birds that filled what we
beheld as heaven, and the music that descended over us
was music that was made of silence and of fire, its burden *O,*
an O that echoes through the elements till it becomes a sleeve
that fits around our flesh, the limits that we bear uncertain in
the light, a universe afloat, the surface of the sea dissolved.

Epiphanies

For you there was not anything that did not hold epiphany,
the smallest flower capable, a drop of water rain had left
upon a cup of leaf, a footstep that remained behind, the shape
of hands upon a wall, their shadows mimics of a universe—
or is that all that anyone can be, nothing they see but what
they are in what stands up beside them unadorned? Then you, that I
would summon now in these barest words, you would be there, and not bereft
of anything, and certain instants of the light which starts from where

you would not think it possible, from deep within the ground to well
up in the air and overcoming sun and moon, a fountain of
the light that stands beside the things that are the world, of light that were
it possible would speak, the history of things that are laid bare
and each of them becoming known as what they are. Then you would be
within that fountain, gestures of your knowledge rising up above,
the summons of your hands a world flowing over you, and we
the everything that you behold, disclosed in your eternity.

Sotto Voce

You were watching children passing by the house, the little group
amorphous as it paused and circled, then moved on at random, its
shape a kind of cloud apart from other clouds and moving through
from nowhere into nowhere under its own wind, your eyes drawing
down upon them in a silence that recalled the silence of
a tree that fills with birds arriving unperceived—in our minds
before becoming birds—and I was standing by your side, my eyes

upon your thoughts as they would form upon your face, another dance
upon another landscape in the twilight, thoughts that were the sounds
of other birds, of pigeons after rain upon a distant roof,
the murmurs that they make almost inaudible so that we hear
them but without our knowing that we hear: they hid beneath your eyes,
only to reappear beside your mouth, assuming shapes that might
have been a smile, but fleeting, thoughts that seemed to cover other thoughts

that would not be revealed, their shyness that of children that are deep
inside whatever in the world they appear to do, their play
the shape of what they are, their bodies the intent of what is in
their mind, but an intent they share, a dancing mind of bodies that
passes into the light between your eyes and where they come again
long after they have gone as music we remember, music or
a rain that stops farther away, not known, but somewhere in the air.

Asleep

The world lay asleep within my ear, only its breathing to
be heard, and there lay tragedy and planets and the cries of birds
that used to pierce the day, whatever is was there where it had found
a place to fall, each one a ruin in the shape of children sleeping
there, and you and I, who are the world too, picked carefully
a way among them, all consumed in merely taking in their breaths

and letting them depart into the night that lay upon them in
their absolute surrender. When you spoke to call upon me, all
the words that you were saying wound into their breathing—so it was
impossible for me to get the sense, but only notes across
the breathing air. I said that we could not be lost, this was the world,
and we were in it, all of it, there was no other place to go,

and when it woke, it would be death awake that was a child here,
and nothing would illuminate the change, the unremitting dirges
of the trees that wake to find themselves alone upon the margins
of the skies, the wind gone, and silence rising in the space
that they had held, their silence then within my ear, silence and
the memory of breathing through the night, no other voice but yours

that floats across it calling through the dark. Perhaps our only life
is when we are completely given up to sleep, and fallen and
as children are, our mother but the air, all that we are the draft
and giving up of what we have been given to take in, the rest
the loss of our abandon, waking into trees that rise, but rise
to disappear, a wake of children crying out among the leaves.

Frogs

Before we were to fall asleep, the music of the singing frogs
rose up above the marshes, over the grass and settled near us in
the room where we lay gazing at the air above us filling with the song
they made, its cadences a pulse of earth released and given to
the air: there are no angels that could utter all the joy that filled
the twilit air that moved around, and as we gazed, the walls that framed
our house became the air, and we were not reclined upon a bed

but what they sang of moved beneath us, all our sense of gravity
in what they said, untranslatable as grass and flesh but all
of it, the silence and the sound exhaled, was known, as we would know
a moon that we had never seen, whose light descends across the dark
and stays where we would stay, an intimate that we take in without
a word exchanged, our only house this knowing that suddenly comes
for just a moment out of emptiness inhaled, the music ours.

Antiphonaries

Trees have other majesties: in their effulgent summers they
alone define the sky, the clouds their echo, mute between the leaves,
but you, closer to the earth than they, their one desire to
attain the sun, their leaves the wings of great birds that are bereft,
unable to depart, but you, when you are standing in their midst
give up to them the light they cannot reach, but light that comes upon
them from beneath, and they are taken by surprise, the shade that held

the sun returned wherever it comes down across your flesh, and you
by moments are for them a moon that rises in the dark that they
have shed, and all around them motions of the sea rise up and fall,
their leaves the sea's antiphonary that in silence answers, rising
toward the sun and falling toward the sea that follows you, the pace
it takes never uncertain but in measures that are not within
a range we know, larger and larger where the trees encompass us.

Remembering Iannis Xenakis

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz, Vermont

The Continuing Composer
A Personal Reflection on Iannis Xenakis

There are startling moments of existence that, with age, one rediscovers. No, I never thought I'd use the word 'age' in a self-referential way, but there it is. Though forever young in my own mind, I tipped the scales of five decades many months ago. My mentors are releasing their hold on mortality.

I never met Iannis Xenakis - nor most of the composers who formed my art. Not their flesh, at least.

But there was the day I encountered Xenakis, the X-Man. On vacation from the chemical wasteland that was my home state of New Jersey, I walked into the French pavilion at *Terre des Hommes*, the 1967 Montréal Expo, as a wide-eyed but self-assured 18-year-old composer whose most recent creation was a (pitiful) *Symphony in C*.

It was Expo, one hell of a party, man, in a foreign country, yee-hah! And then something happened. Sure, any exposition is intended to be a Land of the Future, but this French pavilion was a real future. There was new music - no, *new sound, new freakin' sound!* - around me. I had no idea whose music/sound it was, or even *what* it was, but I was taken over. Enchanted. Humbled. Confused. Challenged. And in love.

As with most students attending artistically trivial universities in the 1960s, I was pressed to learn only the traditional sounds and forms - Mozart and Bach, mostly, with the occasional foray into the 'contemporary' music of Richard Strauss, which was as far as the limited theory they taught could stretch without breaking. Incomprehensible and hence unworthy of study were Stockhausen, Cage, Partch, Ayler, and marginally, even Stravinsky. Far more to their detriment, all had the arrogance to be *alive*. (As was Xenakis, whose name was unknown, along with the alphabet-ending Zappa.)

So my true studies began to diverge from the university, a place I left behind long before I actually walked out its doors.

But even within its dreary halls, I learned through my insolent questioning that the shape and direction of musical compositions were always, in a sense, capricious. Where once the connections had been familiar, perhaps based on dances or songs, the formal traditions had become so disconnected from their origins that they might as well have been arbitrary. Patterns, varia-

tions, changes, stasis, development, color, threads, texture, even purpose—the whole repertoire of musical composition is indeed infused with an uncertain balance of the vaguely traditional and the personally arbitrary.

So it was 1967. I learned later that this soundscape (*Polytope de Montréal,* a light and sound spectacle for four identical small orchestras) and many other pieces had a mathematical basis. Oh, yes, that's a simplistic way of saying it, but nevertheless it was a revelation to a just-post-angst teenager sloughing through the emotional swamps of *Die Götterdämmerung* and *Gürrelieder* and even *Gesang der Jünglinge* on the way to the (seeming) dry land of *HPSCHD* and *Bohor* and *Synchronisms.* (I also learned, with considerable not-so-secret pleasure, that Bach and other traditional composers were no strangers to the number-as-guide.)

But what was new to me were space and time and *control.* The young and already-world-buffeted composer within me longed for the control that performers enjoyed—the ability to conduct an entire weather system of sound from one's hands ... the clouds, the storms, the sun, the wind and rain and hail and fog, the tides and the spinning of the planets, the ebb and flow of the continents, the moments of perfect calm.

Surely these are poetic terms. And they're terms I once found embarrassing, unattractive, even ugly. I explained away (to myself and others) the reasons Xenakis moved me in terms of fascination with The New, an intellectual *camaraderie,* a lesson taught to & learned by a heathen world, a Tothian smashing of the old and dull *Pietàs* of music.

And there *was* objective New to be found: Computers. Their absence then is hard to imagine from here in our bold, bright 21st Century. That era's high-tech was the dial telephone, the stereo LP, the office fax, the electric typewriter (low-tech myself, I had a manual one), and the rubber tires on Montréal's new subway. Pearson was Prime Minister (when de Gaulle came by to say "Vive le Québec libre"), Johnson was President, Martin Luther King was campaigning across the U.S. The Doors put *Light My Fire* on the music charts, *Star Trek* was in its first season, and everybody loved *Cool Hand Luke.*

Computers were reserved for special rooms. But in a splash of sound in an ephemeral building, computers disrobed to become another source of ideas, another set of paths along which to lead a composition, another palette of color and texture. And finally, they offered a way to conduct the weather, the wind and the rain—and to let *it* splash and blow without leading each individual drop along its path. Control set free from control.

Home again, I sought this name. This 'X' composer. This X-Man.

The only one. Oh, thank you, Theresa Sterne, for that record. You (who have also recently gone on from this world) had the foresight to bring *Bohor* and *Concret P-H* and *Orient-Occident* and *Diamorphoses* to vinyl. And then *Akrata* and *Phithoprakta.* And even the staid Musical Heritage Society (before its double-retro spasm, and probably by accident of contract) plied listeners with *Nuits* and *Medea.*

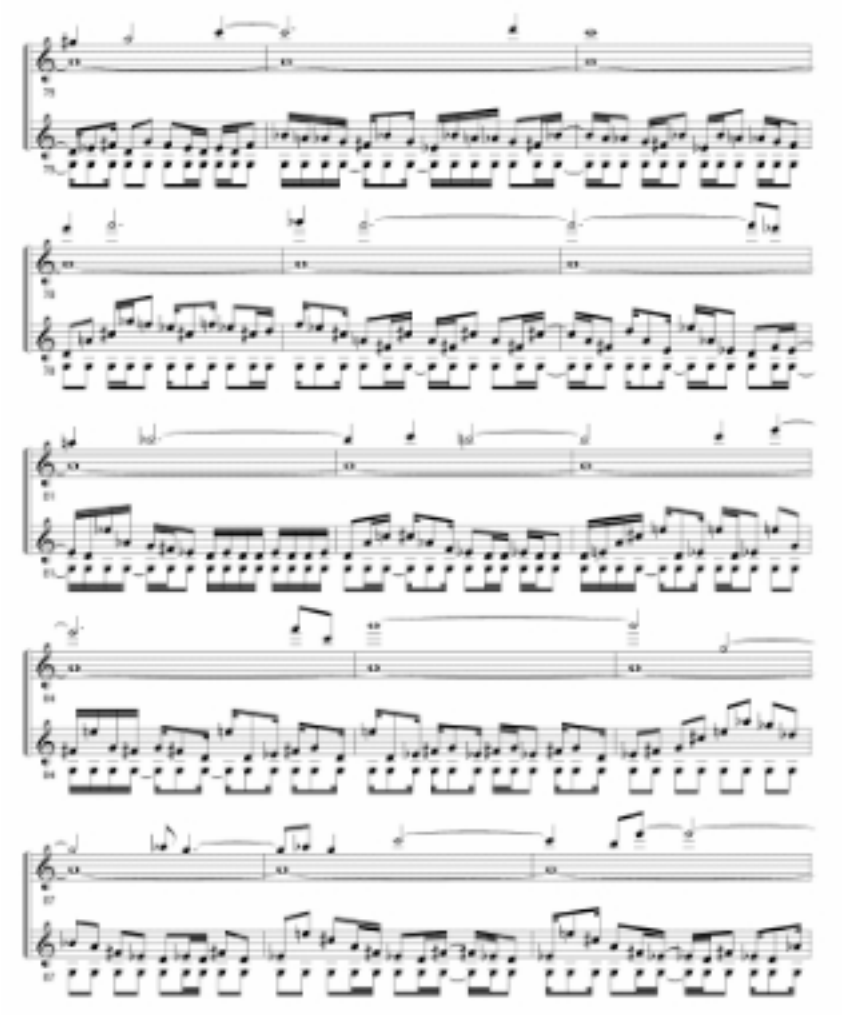
Density and mass structure, set theory and symbolic logic, probabilities and calculus, laws of numbers and theories of sieves, stochastic (ah, sweet mystery) music. It was aleatory with a mind, or perhaps methodological Zen, and definitely outside the figures of I-IV-V-I or boom-boom-bap.

Not being a mathematician, you see, I invented words to translate what Xenakis did into my own understanding.

And something else was present: Ritual. Despite its rigorous adherence to serialism, the post-war avant-garde believed itself to be an objective, anti-ritualistic movement. Not so Xenakis. He called upon unabashed ritual and even bacchanal. Fellini's crowds and clowns and mimes were pale ghosts beside the fleshy bodies, terrifying whips, and metallic streamers of *Oresteia.*

Which brings me back to those poetic terms I once abhorred. No one can objectively terrify. No, it was not the New Romantics that brought emotion back into music; it never left, especially in the mathematical abstractions of Xenakis which were but his search—a successful one—for rejuvenated sources of shape and form.

Yes, I was one of those composers moved by Xenakis's death. And I didn't expect that, for I believed him to be a composer-who-continued, a kind of immortal on earth. In the ensuing decades since *Polytope de Montréal,* he was always background to my thinking, and his well was among those I visited when in need of renewal.

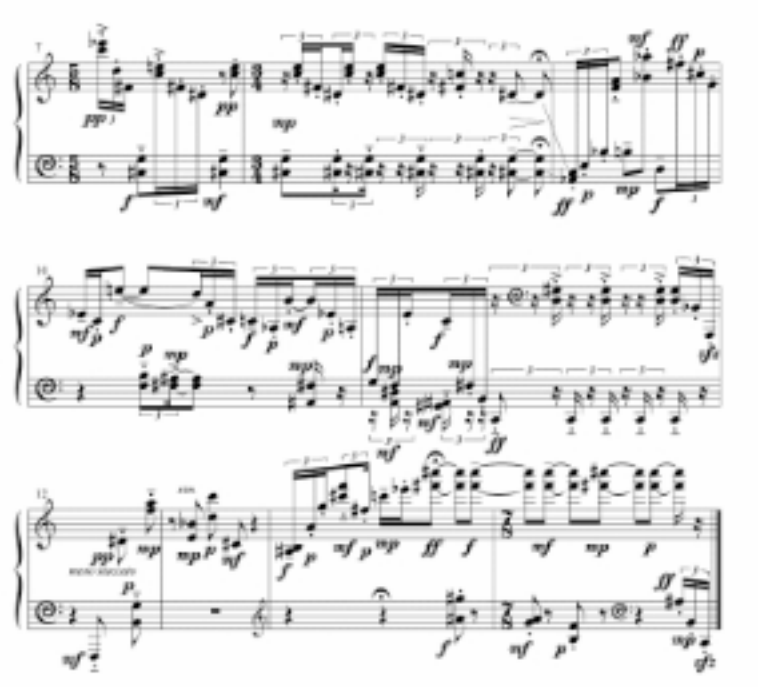


Dennis Báthory-Kitsz, from *Falling Into the Sun Again* for two violins (1995), p. 6. Reproduced by permission.

Reinhard von Berg, Edmonton, AB

Reflection on Iannis Xenakis

From the first time I heard his music, I was very taken by Xenakis. I really admired the way his music seemed to develop, free from arbitrary personal interference on the part of the composer-- but without the rigidity of serial music, nor the arbitrariness of chance music. It seemed like the distribution of stars in the night sky, for example, or a chart of climatological statistics. Only later did I learn what the word "stochastic" meant. I wrote Xenakis in 1971, asking him how much mathematics I would need to be able to study stochastic music. He replied that calculus would be useful. So, next fall I enrolled in a course in calculus. I also ordered his book, *Musiques Formelles.*



Reinhard von Berg, from *Bagatellen* for Piano (1968-69), p. 4. Reproduced by permission

D'Arcy Philip Gray, Montréal, PQ

[routine]

```
[routine]

[title]
Never-ending Everest
[end title]

[comment]
The following is based on my notes for a short presentation on
Rebonds for a round-table discussion on the work of Iannis Xe-
nakis on April 15, 1993. The talk was part of a multi-day
"Xenakis Festival" featuring musicians from McGill University
and le Nouvelle Ensemble Moderne. Some of these notes, I don't
remember which, may have been lifted from Marc Couroux's talk
on Evryali and À R. I had the pleasure of giving the first Ca-
nadian performance of Rebonds during this Festival; Marc gave
the Canadian premiere of À R. (Hommage à Maurice Ravel).
[end comment]

[def ThisIsUnplayable]
In Rebonds, extremes of speed make for stark contrasts.
Lightning fast polyrhythms and transparent, running sixteenth
notes. Strong accent and soft tremolo. Thirty-second notes
flourishes pierced by silence. The work is rhythmically power-
ful with a boundless energy that is executed by a series of
rapid-fire physical motions that exceed the performer's physi-
cal strength.  Xenakis pushed performers beyond their capa-
bilities.
[end def]

[def ExcitementOfPanic]
Structurally, the architectural perfection suggests musical
anemia. Our experience of the work contradicts this suggestion.
The key is the energy level in performance. Physical impossi-
bility forces performers beyond their technical comfort zone
but their inherent stubbornness prevents them from capitulating
to the notes.
[end def]
```

```
[def RolePlaying]
The scenario is created by the work. Missing are the objective
and the means for its realization. These must be discovered by
the performer. We must adapt techniques to meet the demands of
the pieces; what about the reverse?  The solution, no doubt,
lies in compromise: adapting both the work and the technique to
find a happy medium.
[end def]

[def PerformerResignation]
Chance becomes a factor; not at the compositional stage as with
Cage, but at the performance stage. The performer must admit
that a certain degree of control will be surrendered to the
piece, therefore the performer cannot predict exactly which
notes may come out. The challenge and excitement lies in trying
to achieve the impossible; climbing a never-ending Everest.
[end def]

[function ClimbEverest]
ignore ThisIsUnplayable
if PerformerResignation = 0 then goto end routine
if ExcitementOfPanic = 0 then goto end routine
if RolePlaying = 0 then goto end routine
climb everest
make note
[end function]

[function EverestTop]
get distance EverestTop
if distance EverestTop ≠ 0 then goto function ClimbEverest
[end function]

[function Credits]
CreationDate = 04.15.93-02.15.01
Author = D'Arcy Philip Gray
Thank-you = Marc Couroux-James Harley
[end function]

[end routine]
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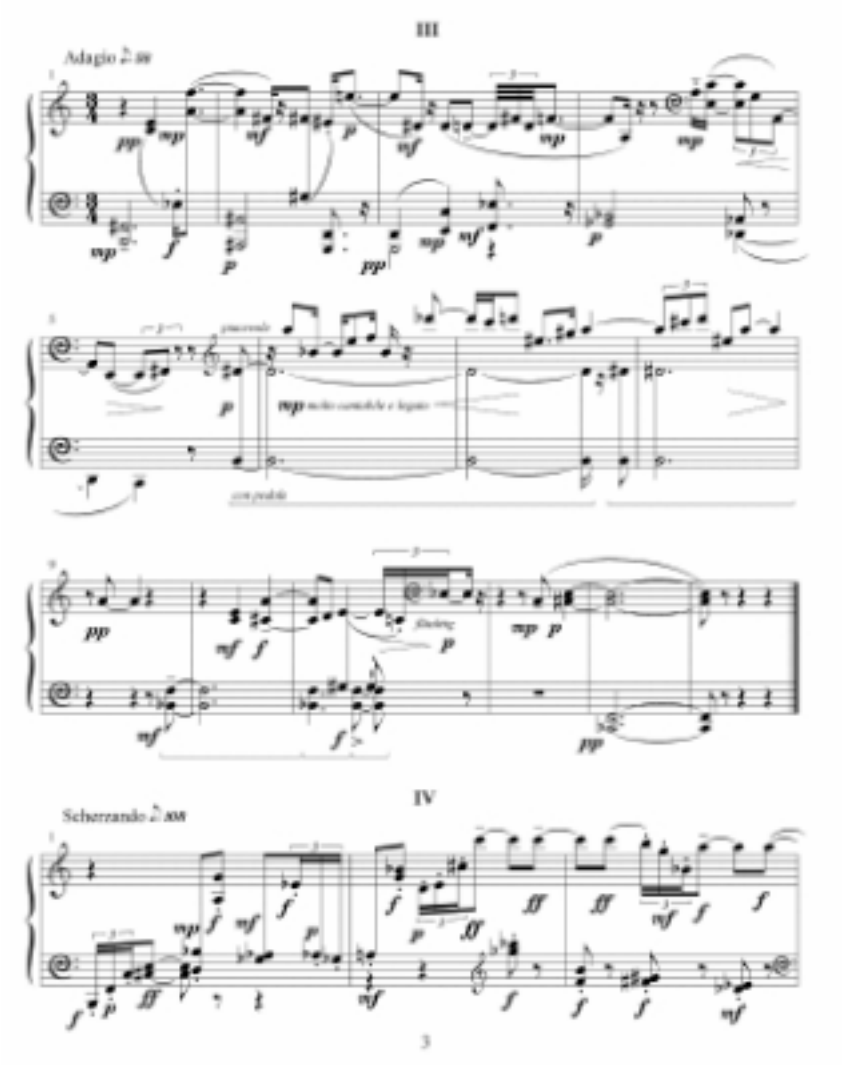

Reinhard von Berg, from *Bagatellen* for Piano (1968-69), p. 3. Reproduced by permission

Karen Tober, Edmonton, AB

HE WAITS

Murky clouds passing over the bright moon cast an iridescent glow on the shriveled landscape of autumn.

The pungent aroma of freshly turned earth hangs in the air and permeates the senses.

Piles of dank musty leaves – abandoned at dusk by their raker – swirl distractedly in the evening breeze and the acrid tinge of smoke from neighboring fireplaces wafts through the air.

The echo of silence is periodically punctuated by shrieks of hysterical laughter (fueled by adrenaline) and accompanied by the rapid pummeling of footsteps as the young goblins scurry home.

Tiny flames flicker bravely inside their brittle temporary homes of hollowed out gourds.

Soon total blackness would overtake and all would be silent.

Crouching in the elongated shadows of the eerie landscape, he peers into the dark. Colorful little heads of the unsuspecting trick or treaters pass below. He waits. Wary. Alert.

His plan is timed with precision, care, and cunning. His execution would be flawless.

He knows the routine. He glances around. It's still a bit early, he reasons, and he gingerly flexes his limbs that are beginning to stiffen from cold and inactivity. Agility is key and he must be ready. Silently he stretches to and fro several times before sinking back onto his haunches, preparing for the inevitable. As with a hundred times before, he mentally steps through his plan. The difference is, this time, he will act.

The boy will come. Of this he is sure.
And, he is ready.

The time ticks on and despite his resolve to remain aloof and detached, he finds himself blind-sided by remnants of memories long since past. A life-time ago, it seems. …maybe more.

Halting, broken memories appear in shattered pieces in his tortured mind. How long had it been? 18 months and still the bitter taste of bile rises in his throat when he considers all he had ripped from him.

… a cheery gingham-checked kitchen
with sunshine spilling across the counter
as she lovingly prepared his evening meal.

… lazy afternoons spent lounging together on the living room sofa.

… long, loving gazes passing between soul mates –
words were seldom required,
yet the connection -- implicit.

Then, HE came.

From out of nowhere, it seemed.

"Just for a while," she said.

He shakes his head violently as if to clear his mind of any trace of compassion or sentimentality.

Abruptly, he slams his eyes shut – as if to do so would transfer special acuity to his already sensitized hearing.

Then,

he hears it.

The click click of confident footsteps leisurely approaching from down the lane.

What kind of fool would risk travel on the shrouded back lane at night? Least of all, this night? Ahhhhh, the innocence of youth.

Step by quickening step, the **boy** approaches.

Totally unaware, he swiftly enters the arena predetermined by his assailant.

A barely audible tinkle of a tiny bell is heard amidst the confusion of rustling leaves and a whoosh of air as furry flesh lunges at its target.

SMACK

Silence.

Murphy!!! You silly cat. You scared the liver out of me!!!
Where have you been?
Let’s get you home…. Mom’s been worried sick about you.

Karen Tober, Edmonton, AB

Middle-Aged WHAT?

It has been said that you can tell how someone lives their life by watching them at play. Have you ever felt confined by your choices in life? Even the choices of play?

I certainly have. As a child I was always cautioned to BE CARE-FUL. Get down from there… you'll CRACK your head open. Not much encouragement there to go out and take risks. Too dangerous. Too messy. The result was, I chose – on a somewhat subconscious level – to cling to the sidelines. To risk little and fear much. I shut down any sense of adventure that might have dwelled within that little soul and I watched as other lived. I am happy to say however that as I findmyself being hurtled towards the twilight years of senility and incontinence, I'm daring to challenge that self-concept and make new choices. My mantra is "I CAN DO A NEW THING." Downhill skiing, White water rafting, country dance lessons, public speaking… each one a walk on the wild side – for me.

I'd like to share a life's learning with you from last winter. It makes me smile as I think of it.

My daughter Suzie was taking her boyfriend's kids – age 4 and 10 – tobogganing. She invited me and Joseph (my little grandson who was 2 at the time) to meet them on the hill for an afternoon of fun and bonding. I felt this would be a terrific opportunity – an activity the boys would enjoy and hot chocolate at the end of the outing would be my extrinsic reward! On the way to the hill any misgivings I may have been having were overcome when Joseph, who was just newly talking, announced in his most grown-up manner: "I so 'CITED." I KNEW I was on the right track. We got to the hill and met up with the others. I looked around at all the folks in varying stages of ascent and descent – pulling, pushing, or dragging all manners of sliding apparatus. My curious eyes sought out my daughter's choice of vehicle.

Ahhhh, there it was. A tiny piece of cherry red plastic – one side bearing a tiny cautionary note about slipperiness. Now, I have underwear bigger than that little slip of plastic – I felt my life flash before my eyes. But, a promise is a promise. It was obvious that Joseph couldn't ride this by himself – and he wasn't willing to trust someone other than grandma to transport him down the hill.

Meanwhile, grandma was wondering what on earth she might be

dealing with here: what is quantum physics anyway? Weight plus Thrust plus Degree of Incline equals EXACTLY WHAT SIZE OF SPLAT? But that little boy was waiting. And he was "so 'CITED." I placed the little "magic carpet" non shiny side down. I was SURE, given all the conditions, that would provide speed enough. I made sure we were back a ways from the lip of the hill – so as to avoid taking off before we were "ready." I then parked my ample rear on the wee bit of plastic, placed Joseph safely between my legs. I picked up my shaky and somewhat inflexible limbs and tucked my boots – sole to sole in a crude circle – so that my dragging limbs would not impede our flight. I indicated to Suzie that she could give a gentle shove and I held my breath. Like a tired old locomotive pulling out of the train station, we began the descent. Jerk. Jerk. Jerk. Not wanting to have to endure the loading process again, I frantically whipped my spine forward several times in succession. Jerk Jerk Jerk Jerk!!

Slowly we began to accelerate. Well, as you might guess, gravity of the largest, densest object began to take over. With one quick movement, the little carpet whipped around and we were facing up the hill. All my body parts were in the same position but the magic ride stalled. We had travelled about… 10 feet. Picture the process. Extricate the small child entwined in my legs; roll haltingly over onto all fours; creak into an upright position. Grasp the so-called "magic" carpet in one hand, small disgusted boy in the other and trudge to the top of the hill. …which, did I mention? Wasn't far. We repeated the entire process. Not twice, but 3 times. Finally the wee child who was "so cited" announced in a tone filled with disgust "this is <u>NOT</u> fun." He decided with all the finality a two-year old can muster that he was finished. Done. Get it right or go home. Grandma couldn't get it right and he was *humiliated.*

Rather than echo the sentiments expressed by this morbid little soul, Grandma decided to see if there was more than one way to skin this cat. (roll up sleeves)

Joseph went over to where the other little boys were sledding. They were having their own problems with the uncooperative hill and the less than magic carpet. Meanwhile, back at the ranch. I gingerly sat down on the slippery slope. Bravely flipped that crazy carpet to "shiny side down" and placed it on the hill in back of me. I dug my newly-determined heels into the packed snow of that treacherous hill.

A furtive glance to my hoped for destination ensured there were no trees, rocks or warm bodies in my path. With my heels still dug in, I hurled my body back upon the metre or so of brittle plastic. In a single movement

(graceful I'm sure) I swung my knees up over my chest and grabbed them for all I was worth. Eyes skyward, I began to hurtle towards my destiny. Much like a conscientious golfer who shouts "FORE" as the ball slices through the air, I let out several wild shrieks as I was propelled down the hill. The little carpet shifted and spun as I shrieked and laughed hysterically – all the way to the bottom.

But all good things come to an end and my wild ride of freedom ground to a halt. Newly subdued, I rolled my girth onto my knees, stumbled to my feet and began the trek to the top of "mount everest" – red-faced and puffing but not without exhiliration and more than a little self-satisfaction. So much so, I had to do it again. Joseph, however, still wasn't convinced that grandma discovered how to have fun, so he watched from his vantage point of safety. Jessie and Jordon, however, liked my style and soon began to emulate it – although they made quite a bit less noise than I did.

I found out later that they told their Dad, "Sue's mom was AWESOME."

So, the moral of my story is:

Life is more fun if you're in it
It takes guts to be the fool, but it's worth the effort
Dare to laugh at yourself and you'll find an endless source of amusement

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Ōba Minako - Poems

Poison

Ah, please,
don't tease me.
Next time there's a misunderstanding,
I really might use
the poison you gave me.
If that happens,
please don't blame me.
It doesn't really matter if you think I have been
too kind.
But, please,
be careful,
don't let me get the wrong idea.
Let's not make any lovers' rendezvous
at the foot of the rainbow bridge on a
misty evening.

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brown

Silkworm

near to the day it will spin its cocoon, the silkworm
its pale skin
bestowed with love
bewitchingly
finally vomits from its mouth
glistening
sticky thin threads
that conceal its ugly, shrunken body

round completely white the cocoon
jewel
boiling in the pot
on a balmy autumn day the thread bobbin turns
round and round
the silk thread shines
the corpse of the chrysalis yellow

Ōba Minako

Transl. Janice Brown

Jellyfish

In the moonlight
jellyfish
frolic.
Swaying
in the waves
from their transparent bodies
hang silver, silken threads
twisting, turning
when squeezed
the jellyfish
burns
with a pale flame.

If you make me a garden lantern, I'll draw on it jellyfish, moon, and seaweed. And when you light it, they'll sway and shimmer as they turn.

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brown

Salmon

Once the salmon lays her eggs
she gazes at the blue sky
her eyes swimming slightly with tears
letting seagulls peck at her innards.
The eggs like red jewels born from her body
sway in the water
and shine like rubies spread over the surface of the river bottom
from out the beak of a seagull she gazes at her eggs
nibbled on by other fish, young cousins born earlier,
she knows her eggs will not all be taken by death,
and she entrusts herself calmly to the gulls.

Ōba Minako

Transl. Janice Brown

Lost Love

when your gentle words disappeared
in a hoarse voice I shouted
gii gii like a seagull
and putting on a kimono of dirty clouds
I walked searching for food
among dead and dying fish
when hornets and robins buzz and twitter in the
wild strawberry bushes
I smelled apple blossoms
and sat down under the leaves of butterbur
blocking the sun with the palm of my hand, I tried
to catch its rays
but all I caught between my fingers
were black decaying leaves
in the sunset like the red of an old man's bloody vomit
are stains the same as the color of the skin of a fish
attacked by a bear on the riverbank

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brown

Lazy Desire

in a distant, muddy wilderness in early spring
a hungry wolf wanders howling

the lazy cat
surrounded by admiring eyes
wants to forget it's admired
yet it's the one who is loved, that's for sure
preferring to ignore that fact
and tired out by black, earth-colored desire,
by jealousy that creaks like rusty iron
the lazy cat
can't even chase a wet sewer rat
and lazily
is gobbled up by the hungry wolf

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brown

One-sided Love

on the sea in the white arctic night
a pale, lonely wind
has brought
a faint white petal
in this barren spring
weeping, a black bird
pecks at the petal
perched on driftwood waiting
for a deceitful
puffed-up lover
waiting

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brown

Dreaming of a Desert Island

Just the two of us,
should live on a desert island, he says,
we could dig up shells, pick bananas, and dance
to the sound of the waves.
Then I say, what if one of us was bitten by a
scorpion or poisonous snake
and died
what should the other do?
He replies, well, the other, too, would let him or herself
get bitten by the same scorpion or
poisonous snake.
That's okay, I think.
So that's why the two of us are gathering up
bits of wood
and building a boat.
When we are washed up on a desert island,
we plan to set the boat afire
and let it burn.

Ōba Minako
Transl. Janice Brow

CD REVIEWS

fff - Superb; *ff* - Exceptional; *f* - Very Good;
mf - Good; *mp* - Average;
p - Poor; *pp* - Very poor; *ppp* - Unacceptable

RECORD OF THE ISSUE

Stringtime: Canadian Chamber Music

ECLECTRA ECCD-2050

Index: 1. David Wall: *In medias res* (1991); 2. Linda Catlin Smith: *As You Pass a Reflective Surface* (1991); 3. – 8. Alfred Joel Fisher: *In Darkness* (1985); 9. Keith Hamel: *Each Life Convergest to Some Centre* (1992); 10. Alice Ho: *Caprice* (1994); 11. – 13. Ron Hannah: *String Quartet* (1973); 14. Piotr Grella-Możejko: *Strumienie snu* (1995).

The Penderecki String Quartet (Jeremy Bell and Jerzy Kapłanek, violins; Christine Vlajk, viola; Paul Pulford, violoncello); Jennifer Bustin, violin (9.); Tanya Prochazka, violoncello (3. – 8., 10.); Roger Admiral, piano (9.)

Music: *fff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *fff*
Production: *fff*
Design: *fff*
Overall impression: *fff*

The Edmonton Composers' Concert Society 1999 CD *Glossa: Chamber Music from Canada & Poland* received a lot of air play on various European radio stations. That will most certainly bode well for the Society's most recent compilation, *Stringtime: Canadian Chamber Music*, which was recorded and released last year. Given that this is the sixth production from the ECCS, the music on the disk is as varied as the instrumental configurations and their respective performances. There are seven major works in all by Canadian composers, some of them from or still living in Alberta. The disk opens with David Wall's *In medias res*. A graduate of Grant MacEwan Community College, the University of British Columbia and the University of Alberta, Wall now free-lances as a guitarist and composer and teaches at Red Deer College.

The piece is a superb musical representation of human stress and angst and the performance by the Penderecki String Quartet is stellar. The middle section of the work is somewhat rhapsodic in nature in contrast to the more structured thematic forms of the outer sections which serve as bookends. But just as in life, the anxieties and the tensions somehow keep on intruding. We've heard of smoke and mirrors with respect to the performance of theatrical illusions. In Linda Caitlin Smith's *As You Pass a Reflective Surface* the composer endeavours to express the reflective surface of a mirror or a lake in musical terms. This work as well is given yet another insightful interpretation by the Penderecki Quartet. Within the six brief movements which comprise Alfred Joel Fisher's *In Darkness* for Solo Cello are found extremes of anger and serenity, tension and release, lyrical melody and discordant fragmentation. All of this is carefully and prosaically performed by Edmonton cellist Tanya Prochazka. Manitoba-born Keith Hamel is currently the director of the Electroacoustic Music Studio at the University of British Columbia, but there are certainly no synthetically generated sounds in *Each Life Converges To Some Centre* for Violin and Piano. For the most part, the violin material is somewhat Bartókian in flavour and texture while the piano line tends to be more angular. The violin solo opens in the manner of a *moto perpetuo* with continual driving and incessant sixteenth notes sprinkled with double-stops along the way. About midway through the piece, the music becomes more sustained and cantabile. Then the driving *moto perpetuo* returns. Violinist Jennifer Bustin and pianist Roger Admiral deliver a technically commanding performance though I sensed that there was yet more unfulfilled passion still lying within the music. Hong Kong born Alice Ho, who now makes Canada her home, is a freelance composer and pianist who has dedicated her life to new music. In her *Caprice* for Solo Cello, she makes quite daunting demands on the performer -- literally covering the entire gamut of technical and musical expression. There are fast sixteenth note passages, double stops, leaps across strings and up the fingerboard, ponticello bowing, harmonics and left-hand pizzicato effects, to name only a few. Perhaps *Caprice* is too flippant a title for what this piece evokes. Ron Hannah's *String Quartet* from 1973 is the earliest work featured on this disk and is also a representative example from the composer's early catalogue of pieces. The first movement opens with a melancholy viola solo and develops into a dramatic musical tug-of-war. The slow movement at times reminds one of the early quartets of Dmitri Shostakovich, so derivative of the late music of Tchaikovsky, yet full of repression translated musically into melancholy expression. The music is dissonant, yet not highly so. The final work on the disk, in contrast to the last-mentioned

piece, is the most recently composed. Dating from 1995, Piotr Grella-Możejko's *Strumienie snu* (*Streams of a Dream*) for string quartet is a worthy outgrowth of the earlier experimental movement spawned by the greatest Polish composers of the last generation. In fact it is reflective of the entire panoply of the Polish contemporary musical tradition, beginning with the pre-experimental expert string writing of Grażyna Bacewicz, passing through the experimental voicings of Witold Lutosławski, Krzysztof Penderecki and Bogusław Schaeffer and extending into the post-experimental musings of Henryk Mikołaj Górecki. There are musical flashbacks paying homage to George Crumb's *Black Angels* as well as the quartets of Penderecki and R. Murray Schafer. This rhythmically complex work requires much delicate playing and attention to detail and receives both from the Penderecki Quartet. This is a work which grows with each hearing -- providing successive musical revelations of something not recognised or heard before.

The performances on this disk are masterfully superb (The Penderecki Quartet are at their very best here, it seems that they are having the time of their lives!) and the sound quality pristine and clear throughout. Insightful programme notes of the works have been provided by the composers themselves. With marvellous production provided by MAESTRO CMP, this recording on the ECLECTRA label will receive international distribution more readily than in the past. Hats off to the ECCS for this one! (Jerry Ozipko)

Christian Lauba: Morphing

ACCORD 472 370-2 (2002)

Music: *fff(f)*
Performance: *fff(f)*
Sound: *fff(f)*
Production: *fff(f)*
Design: *ff*
Overall Impression: *fff*

Total Time: 77:06

Born in Sfax, Tunisia, French composer Christian Lauba has, during the past twenty years, finally come into his own -- being recognized internationally by

his colleagues and peers. His music has often been described as derivative of both Luciano Berio and György Ligeti, yet still highly individual. His personal style can only be best defined as the discovery of techniques which emerge out from his environment. During a recent visit to Edmonton in September, 2002, when he presented a series of lectures and workshops, some members of the ECCS had the opportunity to meet and chat with him informally.

Morphing is an absolutely amazing disk. It takes its title from Lauba's *Quatuor à cordes No. 2* which he subtitled "Morphing." Composed in 1999, it is dedicated to Ligeti. Opening with a Gershwinesque blues chord that appears suspended in time because two different rhythms are occurring simultaneously, Lauba uses the cinematographic technique of "morphing" to transform every conceivable parameter of the music within the bounds of the piece, which is one long single movement throughout -- the rhythms, the chordal harmonies,the temperaments, the dynamics, timbres, articulations and even styles within the piece itself. Following along with the score, one is overwhelmed by the incredible accuracy of the interpretation by the members of Spain's Cuarteto Casals. The work is immensely virtuosic for all of the players and never once during this recording of a live performance does one get the impression that this music has been anything but scrupulously rehearsed ahead of time. The work begins giocoso and concludes with an extremely intense and dramatic mood.

Blue Stream (2000) consists of five continuously linked short movements for solo piano. It is a very 'bluesy' work, nodding its 'hat' at three noted composers for the instrument through "familiar musical fragments" quoted from the œuvres of Ligeti, George Gershwin and Felix Mendelssohn -- thereby in one way or another paying homage to those three masters. Though the musical character of each movement is distinctly different from each other, they are not sudden, abrupt transformations, but rather subtle metamorphoses from whatever preceded them. Ivo Janssen brings this work to life on the keyboard.

Saxophonist Richard Ducros demonstrates his sheer command of the alto instrument in this moody interpretation of *Jungle* from 1992. In his notes to the piece, Jean-Marc Londeix describes it as "an etude that integrates slap tonguing into legato phrasing." Lauba goes on further to state that he gives the technique "a linguistic content (a sense of diction or phrasing) and form" where both are used expressively. Sometimes there is a sense of more rhythm than pitch and there is not only slap tonguing, but key clicks as well.

Balafon for solo alto saxophone dates from the same year as *Jungle.*

It is a lyrical piece that moves continuously and incessantly without interruption, requiring its interpreter (Ducros again) to employ rotary or circular breathing throughout its 6'10" duration. Undertone sounds are often manifested as pure multiphonic timbres.

Tadj (which here is short for Tâdjikistan, the once Soviet republic which is the source of ethnic popular music transformed into this piece)(1993) is a melodic etude for soprano saxophone in three different modes utilizing quarter- and third-tones. The first is an invocation, opening much like a muezzin calling faithful Islamic worshippers to prayer. The second section or mode is more contemplative and meditative in mood, even reflective. The final mode is analogous to a perpetual motion exhortation for most of its expression. Again, there is some incredible virtuosic and musical sax playing from Ducros.

Lauba possesses a somewhat ironic sense of artistic humour. In *Brasil sem fim* for solo piano, he thumbs his nose at a compositional technique which he disdains because of its banal simplicity. Lauba takes a somewhat exciting turn away from the hypnotic effects of North American minimalist music as espoused by the likes of Philip Glass. In this piece he builds his repetitive musical energies on the enchanting rhythms found in Brazilian popular music. Unlike Glass' minimalism, which essentially remains static, Lauba's is in a state of continuous transformation. How can Janssen's hands stand the incredible pace of near constant articulation?

Violinist Benjamin Kreith makes short order of *Kwintus (2^{e} partie)*. With the title being a phonetic spelling of the latin word 'quintus,' it does not take a great analytical stretch to demonstrate that the style of the work employs principles of mediæval organum at the fourth and fifth intervals in a modern folk idiom. Parts of this piece might even be described as Arvo Pärt on speed and in a reverberation chamber. The violin solo part is daring, daunting, and full of violinistic bowing and articulation effects -- sul ponticello being quite predominant.

Stan (2001) for baritone saxophone makes up the final work on the CD. It is a beautifully crafted work, melding jazz riffs in unison with and accompanied by a tape of synthesized sounds which feature a timbre analogous to vibes or metallophone -- an accompanying instrument to which Stan Getz (the Stan to whom the title pays homage) would have had an affinity. Within the textures are also shades of tintinabulation. Sounds more resembling electronic keyboards than synthesizer create a very melancholy solo without the sax near the close -- a sort of reverie with an echo of Stan at the end.

Everything about the production of the CD is high class, from the

quality of the musical performances to the French and English liner notes by Jean-Marc Londeix. However, a little bit of corrective proof-reading might have been in order. (Jerry Ozipko - JO)

Ensemble contemporain de Montréal: Nouveaux territoires, Volume 1 (2000)

ATMA Classique ACD 2 2229

Music: *f*
Performance: *ff*
Sound: *f*
Production: *f*
Design: *ff*
Overall Impression: *f*

Total Time: 59:39

The latest recording of the French Canadian Ensemble contemporain de Montréal conducted by Véronique Lacroix contains four works of vastly different styles and musical character. Scored for almost identical instrumental resources, here is a disc of richly textured and highly inventive Canadian music.

Born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Ana Sokolovič has made Canada her home since earning her Master of Music degree at the Université de Montréal. *Géométrie sentimentale* (1997) is rife with colourful sonorities which are expressed in disorienting as well as hypnotic rhythmical displays. There are three distinct movements - fast/slow/fast - which are musical personifications of three characters from a novel who relate their interpretations of the same event as witnesses. Identical musical material is expressed through three different geometrical forms translated into sonic expressions -- a triangle, a circle and a square. Of the three movements, I felt that the first was the most inventive. *La joie éclatante des jeunes époux* (199) is Pierre Klanac's musical vision of the joy that is expressed in weddings and festive occasions. The choice to programme this work following *Géométrie sentimentale* was an inspired one, since the piece seems to flow as a natural consequence out of the Sokolovic. The general instrumental timbre, though related and containing not dissimilar rhythmical treatments, grows and evolves, and the music becomes more animated and playful as it progresses. *Masques et chimères*

(1996) by Montreal native Jean Lesage is another stylistic derivative distinct from yet related to the previous two works. It is quite dramatic and at times the instruments generate a sort of musical pomposity. Hong Kong-born Ka Nin Chan has made Canada his residence since 1965. *Par-ci, par-là* is described by the composer as "a social comment on the diversified cultures of Canada." Also incorporating a kind of musical search for his own identity, the work can be best described as a series of intimate musical conversations. There are a lot of things happening in this composition.

Along with Musical Director Lacroix, the producer of this album, Carl Talbot of Studio l'Esplanade, has put together a wonderfully balanced quartet of works all commissioned by or written for the Ensemble. (JO)

Panorama Nowej Muzyki Polskiej - V/The New Polish Music Panorama - V: Muzyka Elektroakustyczna - Electro-Acoustic Music (1999) Acte Préalable AP 0014

Music: *ff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *ff*
Design: *f*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 69:01

This recording is the last in a series of disks presenting the music of contemporary Polish composers in various configurations, namely Organ and Choral Music (I), Chamber Music (II), Symphonic Music (III) and Master and His Pupils (IV, the Master being the distinguished Polish composer Marian Borkowski). If the works on this CD are any indication, the rest of the series would definitely be of serious interest to lovers of contemporary music.

Polish electronic music dates back to the earliest days of the genre. Composers such as Andrzej Dobrowolski, Włodzimierz Kotoński, Tomasz Sikorski and Zbigniew Wiszniewski, though not exactly household names in North America, can easily stand alongside the more well-known pioneers such as Bulent Arel, Henk Badings, Herbert Eimert, Hugh LeCaine, Otto Luening, Pierre Schaeffer, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Vladimir Ussachevsky, to name only a few. The current generation of Polish composers of musique concrète, synthesized electro-acoustic music and computer-generated compositions are

definitely carrying on the tradition of their esteemed predecessors. There are seven works on the CD, and the first, *Great Mystery* for tape alone, is a collaboration between film composer/computer music specialist/music critic Grażyna Paciorek and Marcin Mateusz Wierzbicki. According to the liner notes,"[t]he title refers to the mysterious character of the composition" (which is episodic and contrasted by the two fundamental sources of sound realization utilised by the composers, namely synthesiser and computer processing) "as well as to the poorly known computer sound processing techniques known at the time of the work (sic) creation." The piece opens with what could be interpreted as sampled piano riffs on LSD. Non-rhythmical sounds contrasted with constantly pulsating background motifs gradually transform into layers of sound material. Near the close one hears sounds of [demon?] voiced spirits attempting to break free from restraints. The work ends as it began, with the same sonic textural effects which open the composition. *Emet* for violin and tape by Maciej Żółtowski is a wonderful melding of violin timbres with computer-generated sounds. The work, which is handsomely performed by the composer on the solo instrument, is a concerto/elegy in miniature. The composer defines the title as "a word written by magus on golems -- artificial creations made of clay or wood. The word had the magical power of animating objects and removing the first letter caused the destruction of the animated creature." Anna Ignatowicz's *Zaniki pamięci (Lapses of Memory)* for percussion and tape blends the synthesised sounds with the percussion wonderfully and creatively. The tape becomes part of the percussion -- in one instance generating the rhythmic impulse, and in another, the accompaniment. An interesting contrast is provided by a simple melody sung by a female voice on tape which provides the impetus for a passage in the percussion and then again on the tape. White noise like white clouds opens *Clouds* for tape by Maciej Zielinski. The white noise then transforms the billowing clouds into wind and a variety of other foreboding sonic landscapes which eventually form into rain, beginning as single droplets and then developing into a full blown storm. Eventually, the environment calms down, and the sounds of nature - birds and other creatures - return to life. In the end, the white clouds return, this time as a windy background to a traditional melody. In Marcin Wierzbicki's *Music of Silence* for flute and media, the flute becomes computer becomes flute. Not exactly representing the music of silence, the work more properly illustrates the environments which exist between the extremes of sound and silence -- environments which include discrete sounds, murmurings, echoes, noise and harmonics. *coloratura for Charles/ disco(n)notation* for baritone saxophone and electronics by ECCS member and President Piotr Grella-Możejko, is an amazing work. This reviewer encountered so many colourful saxophone timbres which he had never heard before, even in his imagination! The piece is a virtuosic vehicle for the solo

instrument and employs leading-edge extended playing techniques including key clicks, multiphonics, double-stopping, extremes of articulation and rotary or circular breathing. In the words of the composer, "[t]he instrument becomes a 'persona' expressing itself through a specific 'internal' monologue." The Charles of the title is Canadian saxophonist Charles Stolte, for whom the work was composed and who premièred its public performance. The final composition on the disk, Pawel Łukaszewski's *One Week in London* for Tape, might be viewed as the electro-acoustic equivalent of George Gershwin's *An American in Paris* and Darius Milhaud's *A Frenchman in New York.* The incorporation of jazz elements in combination with more traditional tonal elements results in a work which infuses the sounds of the city against a backdrop of noise and more typical electro-acoustic sonorities.

If there is one drawback, it is only that the biographies of the composers are too rigidly academic, sounding more like job application resumés rather than more broad perspectives of the styles and oeuvres of the individuals. These are individual human artists, but they all sound too much alike in their life stories. (JO)

Sarah Peebles: Suspended in Amber (1996)

INNOVA Recordings Innova 506

Music: *ff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *ff*
Design: *fff*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 70:20

Sarah Peebles is an American-born composer who has happily made Canada her home. Now residing in Toronto, she incorporates inter-disciplinary art and computer-assisted composition along with performance art, installation work and video production into her music -- most recently collaborating in producing works based upon or inspired by Japanese court music (gagaku) and court dance (bugaku) which she has studied in detail. *Suspended in Amber*

can easily be classified as cross-cultural or trans-cultural music, being a series of oriental cultural atmospheres transplanted into a contemporary (western) musical setting. Most of the recording is based upon a live concert presented at Shukôji, Kawasaki, Japan in September, 1993.

Blue Moon Spirit is titled after a painting by Japanese artist Mizuko Uchida, and was inspired by the sound of the *shô*, a 17-pipe mouth organ which produces a timbre of tonal clusters. Performed on that instrument by Kô Ishikawa, the piece sounds much like an electrified harmonica or what is called the *khaën* in Thailand -- an instrument belonging to the same general family as the *shô*. *Tomoé (Revolving Life)* is a multi-movement work about cycles and process, utilizing environment and sound to explore the natural elements of the seasons, creation, death and rebirth. Just as in life itself, the six movements of this improvisational tableau (Version 4) flow continuously without interruption. Considering that this work combines environmental elements (temple prayer bells, loon sounds, crickets, water, etc.) with instruments, pre-recorded sounds on tape, installations and calligraphy, it is regrettable that the CD is not a video-taped or DVD performance -- it ought to be seen as well as heard. In *Phoenix Calling* the music is continually transforming itself -- agonizingly slowly, like intricate bugaku (theatre dance). Having myself been to the Orient, I missed the visual impact which would have made an obvious enhancement. The concept behind *Aqua Bubble* is interesting. It is improvisation and it is music installation and both are combined with the sounds of the electronic ondes Martenot, electroacoustics, shô and toys. Continuous tones become transformed and reshaped -- sounds, instruments, environments and cultures clashing, overlapping or melding together.

Unless you really enjoy and appreciate the sounds and intricacies of traditional Japanese art music, this recording might not be easily accessible to the average listener [we do not agree with the notion of the so-called ‘average listener’ - Ed.]. It is just too bad that Peebles didn’t include any visuals from the performances. (JO)

Whose Forest?: A Benefit Compilation Defending Our Public Lands

HORNBLOWER RECORDINGS HR98104 **(1998)**

Music: *mp* to *ff*
Performances: *mf* to *ff*
Sound: *f*
Production: *ff*
Design: *fff*
Overall Impression: *f*

Total Time: 75:32

In 1998, the Government of the Province of Ontario passed a law which privatized the management of public lands, thereby giving the forest industry carte blanche control of how and when the citizens of the province could make use of their public forests. The compilation album *Whose Forest?* was recorded as a form of artistic protest, with all net proceeds going to The Partnership for Public Lands in their defense of Ontario's Public Lands. This album contains music of such wide stylistic variety as would be hard put to find anywhere else. Contemporary fiddler Oliver Schroer and the Stewed Tomatoes along with Jani Lauzon, Brent Titcombe and other guests open the CD with *Earth Logic*, a piece which can only be described as nuevo classical aboriginal celtic.

Northern Soma, otherwise known as NOMA, offers up *Desert Dog*, a work of surrealistic jazz with spoken voice. The text comes from a collection of poetry by Michael Ondaatje, who narrates the text through this piece which could also be described as 'Miles [Davis] Meets Michael [Ondaatje].' Richard Windeyer's electroacoustic piece *Postcard from Oxbow Lake* was composed especially for this compilation. In society around us we sometimes hear complaints about noise pollution. The response is this example of sonic musical ecology. Sarah Peebles' contribution is *Blue Moon Sky* from her CD *Suspended in Amber*, which has been reviewed elsewhere.Wende Bartley originally composed *Sparkling Crystal Moistness* as an electroacoustic tape component/accompaniment to *Fragmenting footprints, Unveiling the dawn*, a work for electric guitar and tape commissioned by Tim Brady. The solo tape version appears here and is quite evocative and haunting -- almost like ghost voices of nature crying out "Help!" with shades of György Ligeti's *Lux aeterna* thrown in for good measure. The electronics become voices become electronics. It's hard to tell them apart at times. But it all resolves in the end

-- sort of... *Shen Khar Venakhi (Gurian Version)* is a traditional sacred chorale from the Eastern European Republic of Georgia. The Kavkasia Trio, formed in 1994 by Carl Linich, Alan Gasser, and Stuart Gelzer, perform this haunting Hymn to the Virgin which also incorporates and intertwines the Georgians' love of wine making, an allusion to a story of human redemption arising out of human error from the Old Testament, and a description of some of the amazing miracles which manifest themselves in natural environments. The music defies description. George Gao is a virtuoso of the erhu (the two-string Chinese Spiked fiddle) who amazed Edmonton audiences last fall with his dazzling performance of Sarasate's *Zigeunerweisen* with the ESO at the Symphony Under the Sky Festival. In *Song of Sadness (1920s)* by Chinese erhu composer Tian-Hua Liu, the composer drew inspiration from a time of extreme personal struggle. Gao recorded the work especially for the compilation. Zheng Ting Wang performs his own arrangement of a traditional Chinese folk tune, *The Water Festival*. His instrument of choice is the 20+ pipe sheng (the Chinese mouth organ). The selection depicts the joyous spirit of townspeople who are attending a public celebration. They express their closeness, friendship and brotherhood by fiendishly tossing buckets of water at one another. The percussion ensemble Nexus presents William Cahn's *The Birds*, a work which incorporates whistles and bird-sound-makers along with harmonicas, cymbals, gongs and piano. The whole thing turns into a raucous soundscape. The Toronto-based trio Cinnamon Sphere create music which must be seen as well as heard. It is a melding of altered electric guitar and effects by Nilan Perera along with computer-assisted performance and shoh by Sarah Peebles, as well as the calligraphy of Chung Gong Ha. In *Insect Groove*, excerpted from an hour-length performance of Korean calligraphy with live improvised music and soundscape, the insect creatures are from another planet, but what sensations they arouse! Joining Cinnamon Sphere is Jin Hi Kim, who plays on and generates special sonic effects on the electric komungo. The title of Robert Cruickshank's *And so Fir Fell...* is an anagram, although the composer never reveals what the anagram represents. This is an electroacoustic piece which seems to defy analysis and categorization. Bass clarinettist Lori Freedman created the improvisational piece *Four Ways Home* with a quartet of different sections which eventually all lead back to one single theme. Formed in 1994 by Rob Clutton, Nilan Perera and John Lennard, Handslang plays 'spontaneously-composed music.' *Silent Witness* demonstrates the power inherent in the softness of dynamic and motion. (JO)

Mei Han • Randy Raine-Reusch: Distant Wind - New Direction For Chinese Zheng

ZA DISCS ZA-NWJ10 (2001)

Music: *fff*
Performances: *ff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *fff*
Design: *fff*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 54:17

Improvisational composer and world music specialist Randy Raine-Reusch, who over the past several years has created distinct new performance styles on a number of Oriental instruments, most especially the Chinese guzheng (23-stringed zither), the Japanese ichigenkin (1-string zither), as well as the khaen (16-reed mouth organ) from Thailand, has collaborated in international performances with zheng specialist Mei Han. Their partnership has resulted in a slightly 'foreign'-sounding album of music which remains melodic and easily accessible to the listener.

The CD comes with tersely written, but clearly explanatory descriptions of the music and the instruments used to play it, with the text both in English and Chinese versions. Each piece is introduced in almost poetic form, so artistically crafted are the individual works. The title track *Distant Wind* evokes the motion of a breeze through tall grass as it blows through time and space. The music is comprised of an interesting juxtaposition of a contemporary western classical melody and form performed on traditional Chinese classical instruments using an oriental scale. After listening to this piece several times, I decided that I would like to hear it played on two harps! The next two works, *Nokoto* and *Dragon Dogs* are clearly improvisatory in conception. *Nokoto* combines traditional Japanese elements with more western ones, while *Dragon Dogs* receives its creative impulse from two signs of the Chinese zodiac. According to Chinese tradition, when the dog and the dragon meet, they are "two volcanoes waiting to erupt." Formally as well as stylistically, the piece can best be described as east meets west in a very jazzy manner. *Forest Rain* is a musical interpretation of the different sounds made by rain falling as it is perceived in several different areas of the globe -- the West-

coast Canadian rainforests, the jungles of Borneo and the Japanese bamboo forests. In *Clouds in an Empty Sky*, the fluid sounds of the sho (bamboo mouth organ), kotsuzumi (a small double-headed waist drum) and kyi-zi (small Burmese brass plate gongs) are employed to express the sense of suspended clouds evoking timelessness in an empty sky. The next piece, *Tokyo Crows*, recreates the raucous din of the conversations of those avian creatures known collectively as crow or raven. This work is truly a mood impression which introduces the cries of the crow in the midst of sublime textures. *Black Zheng* is a true mood piece, almost ominous and oppressive sounding in its evocation which finds its inspiration from bowed versions of the Chinese ya zheng and the Korean ajeang. There is a lot of unique sonic exploration going on here, with the incorporation of multi-tracking of the bowed instruments, along with some undertone singing, bass and didjeridu.

All in all, this is a colourful musical pastiche offering explorations into sonic realms that we don't often hear in the west. It is quite significant that this recording is categorized as a combination of styles, encompassing New Age along with world music and jazz. (JO)

Tim Brady: Strange Attractors (1997)

JUSTIN TIME RECORDS JTR-8464-2

Music: *fff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *ff*
Design: *f*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 67:32

Montreal-based guitarist/composer Tim Brady paints pictures with electroacoustics. His seventh CD, released back in 1997, is worth more than a second hearing. In addition to the wealth of musical variety expressed, Brady's use of enigmatic-sounding titles only proves his adeptness at blending sound with concept. The six selections on this disc have been described as works "created using a wide variety of contemporary electronic technology ranging

from re-tuned guitar to works for computer controlled sound and guitar." They are definitely that and more. *Linear Projection in a Jump Cut World* creates the illusion of disembodied time. Stylistically, this multiple layered piece could be a sonic offshoot of Steve Reich's early experiments in phase shifting. Rhythmically, the overlaying of textures makes for some very interesting and arresting juxtapositions. *Collapsing Possibility Wave* opens with a science-fiction soundtrack-like introduction, not unlike early musique concrète. With all of the synthesized sounds and processing taking place, the guitars are almost lost in the texture at times, but when they do emerge from out of the dense sound mass, they kind of sneak out at you. Overall, this is a finely crafted composition. *Different Engine #1, #2, #3* sounds an awful lot like style études for solo guitar. *#1* is comprised of fast finger riffs over a series of chordal and textural variations. *#2* is a somewhat skewed jazz flamenco ballad backed with chords and harmonics, while *#3* combines the two. With respect to *Pandemonium Architecture* I have to ask the obvious question -- does the title mean that the 'form' of the piece grows out of chaos theory? The work sure sounds as though it does. *Minimal Surface* exemplifies true economy of expression in an electro-acoustical context. Spare, simple melodic materials are shrouded in veiled accompaniments. Just when you think you are getting somewhere melodically, motifs keep getting intruded upon just as they start developing. From there you are transported into totally different times, places and moods. Such is the essence of *Memory Riot.*

This album is a definite must-have for anyone who specializes in instrument-enhanced electroacoustic music, if for no other reason than the creative ways in which acoustic and electronic sounds are brought together. (JO)

Tim Brady: 10 Collaborations

JUSTIN TIME RECORDS JTR 8484/5-2 (2000)

Music: *ffff*
Performance: *ffff*
Sound: *fff*
Production: *ff*
Design: *ff*
Overall Impression: *fff*

Total Time: CD-1 54:46
CD-2 67:08

Although this recording could easily be described as being in the same vein as his earlier release *Strange Attractors* -- fast paced, with dense sound layering and complex rhythmic manipulations -- this two CD set is also much more. In creating this recording, Brady, who is a noted guitarist/performer as well as a composer, asked other musicians to work with him in interpreting the music which he desired to record. And the two discs also offer common themes. The first CD [*Ensembles*] consists of four works which feature interactions in real time between Brady and his collaborators.

In *Doubling* with harpsichordist vivé vinçent, the opening unison melody reminds one of a similarly fast-paced syncopated unison movement -- namely "Dance of Fury for the Seven Trumpets" from Olivier Messiaen's *Quatuor de la fin du temps.* Although the sounds and textures here are much different, the moods of build-up and tension are not. vinçent manages to generate an incredible variety of harpsichord sonorities in this piece.

Dance Me To the End, performed with the Penderecki String Quartet, is an interesting experiment in acoustic versus electronic processed instrument sound interactions and juxtapositions. The three movements of this work demonstrate much contrast in terms of the uses of melody, harmony, counterpoint and tempi.

Japanese electroacoustic composer and guitarist Yasuhiro Otani is Brady's partner in *Tokyo Nightscape.* Even though the unmodified, unprocessed solo electric guitar sounds don't appear until near the end of the work, it is almost mind-boggling to think that all of the digital sampling and signal processing that occurs before then was performed live using a Powerbook computer!

According to Brady, *Waiata Tohutohu* (a duo for guitar and voice) "demands instant communication between the two partners." Bradyworks vocalist Annie Tremblay is Brady's partner here, and this five movement work provides sonic, stylistic and emotional support as well as contrast to the accompanying text, which is a New Zealand Maori protest song from the 19th-century entitled *Te Kooti Rikirangi*. The first movement is an electronic hymn in which the guitar sounds much like an organ heard through a mist of sound. In the second section, the mood is much more dramatic. The guitar has finally emerged from out of the mist. The third portion features a change of mood again, with the atmosphere being more reflective than before. The fourth movement is quite dramatic. During the first minute Brady dazzles with a pure guitar solo demonstrating brief snatches of virtuosic styles from Chet Atkins to Jimi Hendrix. The same atmosphere emerges in an interlude halfway through with some dramatic sound processing effects added. The fi-

nal section ends with a vocal elegy that is almost pleading. It is wonderful to know the origin of the text, but it would have been useful, even helpful, to have been provided with either a translation of that text or at the least a summary of the song's meaning.

The second CD [*Solos*] consists of six works which utilize studio technology integrated into the music of five other composers who have written works for the electric guitar.

Ipsissimus by Norwegian guitarist/composer Atle Pakusch Gundersen is the sort of electronically processed guitar music that Brady does on his own. In Brady's own words, "when he came to write a work for me, he used every trick in the guitar tool box to create a dramatic work that moves from heavy metal riffing through electronic soundscapes to a Mahlerian adagio finale."

UK composer Jeremy Peyton Jones originally composed *18 Guitars* for 18 live guitarists, which in realization proved problematic to the live performance. As a consequence, Brady and Peyton Jones revised the piece for solo guitar and seventeen (and sometimes more) guitars on tape -- essentially Steve Reich's *Violin Phase* redux! This has all been done before, though in somewhat different forms.

Vampyr! by French composer Tristan Murail is nothing less than thrash metal screaming guitar! Brady describes his interpretation of the original work as "a bit more rock and roll than [Claude Pavy's] in terms of tone and attack, but that is the beauty of music -- the same score can be pushed in two clearly disparate directions and still be true to the composer's intention."

In Wes Wragett's *Kali's Axe*, solo may be a "somewhat restrained guitar part" in the words of Brady, but the tape accompaniment by the director of the University of Victoria's Electroacoustic Music Studio could be analogous to a melding of a thunderstorm set to music along with the soundtrack to a crime thriller motion picture. The tension... the drama! Axe could easily be taken two ways here.

Brady's own work, *Red Melisma*, is best summed up as an unplugged approach to the guitar which explores the expressive capabilities of the instrument as realized by pitch bending and natural colour shifts which are able to be realized using the ten fingers of both hands -- Brady's "10 original collaborators."

The final work on the CD is *Fragmenting footprints, Unveiling the dawn* by Wende Bartley. It is a journey of musical exploration and discovery which is both highly dramatic and at times disturbing. Occasionally the soundscape consists of incredibly dense sonorities à la György Ligeti.

Brady's copious liner notes provide a good balance to the music, giving an excellent contextual overview of the origins of the pieces along with some details of the collaborations and recordings as well. (JO)

Georgina Williams: Live in Concert (2000)

[INDEPENDENT] GWCD-1001

Music: *ff*
Performance: *ff*
Sound: *mf*
Production: *mp*
Design: *mf*
Overall Impression: *f*

Total Time: 57:12

ECCS member Georgina (Gina) Williams could almost be described as the modern version of the Renaissance woman. She is a multi-talented singer, actress, songwriter, composer and concert pianist who is highly regarded in Christian music circles and who has also made her mark on the local black community as the winner of several prestigious awards for her contributions to arts and culture in Alberta and internationally.

The release of her first privately issued album of piano music could be viewed as a tribute to her two late pedagogue mentors, Marek Jablonski and Ernesto Lejano. Recorded in concert at the University of Alberta's Convocation Hall on February 6, 2000, the album features works by Chopin, Brahms and Williams. The CD opens with three short late works by Johannes Brahms, namely Nos. 3 and 6 of his *Seven Fantasias (Intermezzi & Capricci)*, Op. 116 and No. 2 from *Four Klavierstücke (Intermezzi & Rhapsodie)*, Op. 119. Williams demonstrates confident and expressive pianism in these short works, with her playing covering the gamut of musical expression from delicacy to bombast with shades in between. Next follows her own piece, *Look - I Don't - Want To - Hurt - Again*. Compared to her earlier recording of the work on the ECCS *Glossa* album, this is a somewhat intense interpretation -- quite a contrast from the more relaxed approach which she appeared to take on the earlier disc. Perhaps the presence of an audience helped to generate that sense of intensity? The remainder of the album is devoted to

the four Chopin *Ballades*. Since I am somewhat partial to these pieces, especially to the first, let me state at the outset, that their interpretation would have pleased Jablonski. They clearly express the independent temperaments which characterize each separate work.

If there are any drawbacks to the album, it has to do mostly with the sound and production. The placement of the microphones lent an air of distance from the keyboard which detracted from the dynamic ranges which could have been more accurately recorded. The applause actually appeared to have more presence than did the keyboard! Regarding the biography, the use of black type on a dark grey background might make the readability of the text awkward for anyone with vision problems. However, these comments are not meant to take away anything from the terrific performance of the artist that still managed to get through. (JO)

New Music for Piano: the things in between

Eve Egoyan, piano.

Artifact Music ART 019

Music: *ff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *ff*
Design: *ff*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 69:28

At some point in their studies most pianists are forced to focus their attention on contemporary music, but it is relatively rare to find a performer who has dedicated their performing life to the playing of new music alone. Such is the case with Canadian pianist Eve Egoyan. Her debut recording, *New Music for Piano: the things in between* demonstrates one of the reasons why Egoyan has chosen this genre of music to focus on in her performing career: she has a facility for it that is truly uncommon. It is a testament to her skill as a musician that what is so often difficult to communicate to an audience is so suc-

cessfully captured on disc, but this is a captivating recording. The five works represented are quite diverse and well display Egoyan's superb command of her instrument and the musical intelligence behind the performances.

What is probably most often thought of in terms of twentieth-century music is the austerity of many of the composers: the lack of passion with which they worked and how expressionless the music seems. The music, it may be argued, began as a reaction to the excesses of the nineteenth-century and all that it stood for. However, there is no need to believe that this recording contains expressionless music, let alone playing that is dry and purely technical in nature. Eve Egoyan has assembled a programme of works that compliment each other emotionally, while on their own represent fine contributions to the contemporary piano repertoire.

The first work is by Michael Finnissy, who was born in London, England, in 1946. His *Strauss-Walzer* were composed between 1967-89 and are superb examples of the miniature, with a contemporary vocabulary. The three pieces are entitled *Wo die Zitronen blühn* (*Where the lemon trees bloom*), *O, schöner Mai* (*O, beautiful May*), and *Geschichten aus dem Wienerwald* (*Tales from the Vienna Woods*). The inspiration for the music came as a result of Finnissy's work as an accompanist for ballet classes and these three pieces are from a longer set of 23 *Poems/Fantasies* composed between 1960-68. They are quite captivating from the outset and Egoyan gives the immediate impression that there has been nothing left to chance. The sound from the piano is something that would make many great players rather envious of Egoyan's control and range of colour which is used to fine effect in this opening work. It is a fine introduction to the playing of Eve Egoyan, and as shorter works it is a nice contrast to the three central single-movement works on the disc which are longer, but also quite accessible.

Three of the five works on this recording were either composed especially for Eve Egoyan or dedicated to her, and each of them are of a distinctly different character, allowing her to stretch her abilities of expression and technique to fit the needs for each work. The second work on the recording, *Piano Diary* (1995) by Michael Longton, a Canadian composer, was composed for Egoyan and is a work that explores the composer's effort to develop self discipline in composition by composing one fragment of music each day. As the composition developed there would be a forced recurrence of ideas at two day intervals, then at three day intervals and so on so that the new musical ideas and the accumulated ideas would interact with each other. The note about the music is quite compelling, but it hardly does the music justice. This is a masterfully crafted composition that Egoyan has fully grasped the heart and

spirit of and it is a pleasure to listen to. It is possible to hear the opening ideas as they are expressed in a piecemeal manner, but very shortly the music takes on a life of its own and Longton weaves a work that captures the imagination of the listener and takes you on a wondrous musical journey.

The third, and longest work of this recording, is by Alvin Curran, an American composer who is the Darius Milhaud Professor of composition at Mills College in Oakland California. His composition *For Cornelius* (1981-94) is a memorial work dedicated to the memory of English composer Cornelius Cardew who was tragically killed by a hit and run driver in December of 1981. Curran's work is set in three sections, the first of which is a lamenting song that is quite lyrical and exploits the rich bass of the piano. The second section is a dramatic minimalist explosion of sound that virtually assaults you, but it is so powerful and well controlled that it fits perfectly in the context of the language around it. Here Eve Egoyan demonstrates some amazing pianistic skills in that you can clearly hear the individual movement of the voices in the repetitive chords which adds tremendously to the drama of the composition. The composition ends with a chorale that, given the circumstances of the genesis of the work, gives an appropriate sense of closure to the piece. Egoyan's performance is nothing less than fully convincing throughout.

A Nocturne (1995) by Linda Catlin Smith is a gentle work that was also composed for Eve Egoyan. This composition is one of the most challenging on the disc, not because it is inaccessible or poorly composed, nothing could be further from the truth. The fact of the matter is that the music is so evocative that I found myself listening to it over and over again, trying to solve the mystery of the music. With each playing something new was revealed in the poetic language that Smith had used, and the masterful playing that Egoyan had employed to communicate the ideas. It is a breathtaking composition that fits the title well, as a "nocturne" literally means "night music". Smith's musical language is at once engaging and challenging without alienating the listener. She is in complete control of her materials and her composition reflects this through the fine craftsmanship of the music. This composition, and its performance is the emotional highlight of the entire disc, which speaks volumes given the tremendous quality of the entire recording.

The final work of this disc is by Stephen Parkinson and is entitled *Rainbow Valley* (1995) and is also dedicated to Eve Egoyan as a gesture for the composer's "admiration and respect for her skilful performances and enthusiastic support of experimental music." This is a very decent thing to say considering that there is nary a note in this composition that is played in the traditional manner by a piano player. What you hear is strumming on the

strings, scraping the strings with plectrums and various other sounds. Now, if that all sounds rather like something out of a John Cage work, guess again: this is not a prepared piano piece, and it sounds fascinating, even a little haunting at times, but fascinating. When you finally do hear a note played by having a key struck, it is quickly obvious that other things are happening too, making the execution of this work fiendishly difficult. The exploration of different sounds and textures is something that has been done before, obviously, but the important thing in this work is that Parkinson strikes an interesting balance without being excessive in the use of any single effect and, in the end, producing a work that holds together quite well. The work is in three sections, John Martin, Morgan and Eleanor.

It is not without the considerable talents and dedication of pianist Eve Egoyan that this music could have come to the place it has. There are very few performers who would be bold enough to dedicate an entire disc to music that might not seem to "fit" onto a conventional recording in the minds of others. But moreover, far too often pianists who tend to specialize in contemporary music play with a calculated coldness, but technical excellence. Eve Egoyan breaks that idea completely by playing with both technical perfection and warmth, combined with a musical perception that permits her to understand every aspect of the music and communicate it perfectly to the listener. Every moment of this recording is a pure delight to listen to, and it is an absolute pleasure to recommend this disc to everyone. (Peter Amsel)

Bruno Maderna (1920-1973) - Orchestral Works

col legno collage 03 (WWE 20503)

1 **Ausstrahlung** (1971) 32:26
SWF Symphony Orchestra
Arturo Tamayo, conductor
Claudia Eder, mezzo-soprano
Roberto Fabbriciani, flute
Pietro Borgonovo, oboe

2 **Concerto No.1** for oboe and chamber ensemble (1962-1963) 16:07
International Chamber Ensemble Darmstadt

Bruno Maderna, conductor
Lothar Faber, oboe

3 **Giardino religioso** (1972) 14:41
Netherlands Radio Chamber Orchestra
Hans Zender, conductor

Music: *ff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *f*
Production: *f*
Design: *mf*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 63:14

According to Grove's Dictionary of Music Bruno Maderna "played an unequalled part in the early post-war development of Italian music, presiding, as teacher and conductor, over the early careers of Nono, Berio, Donatoni, Aldo Clementi and other. Given his importance you wonder why there are so few recordings of Maderna's music. Many of his major works such as Aura (1972), Biogramma (1972) and Quadrivium (1969) were recorded (Deutsche Grammophon) and have sadly long since been unavailable. Thankfully **Col Legno** has released an avant-garde music series called "collage" featuring many of important post-WW2 composers. Collage 03 fills a big hole in the current modern music CD catalogue with a disc devoted to Maderna's orchestral music. A special word of thanks to the series producer Wulf Weinmann is indeed in order.

The CD begins with what must be one of the most original and striking orchestral vocal works of the European avant-garde **Ausstrahlung**. I say this because the work the work is uncharacteristic of most post-WW2 progressive music in that it is melodic, dramatic and expressive in a manner that is to my ears breath taking – because of its aural beauty. While this is uncharacteristic of avant-garde music in general, it was characteristic of Maderna not to necessarily go with the flow. Compare *Ausstrahlung* (1971) to Henze's *der langwierige weg in die wohnoung der natascha ungeheuer* (1971) or Xenakis's *Charisma* (1971) or Nono's *Como una ola de fuerza y luz* (1971-2).

Ausstrahlung ("Emission" or "Transmission") begins with a hauntingly beautiful flute solo which is most typical of Maderna. The flute is soon

entwined in voices. The texts from an ancient Persian anthology are read by a number of different voices in French, Italian, German and English. The Persian original is also heard by means of a taped montage. Lyrical beauty is dramatically contrasted with outbursts of orchestral anger and we are reminded that this is not only music of inclusion and solidarity, it is also music of commitment. The work also features an outstanding solo soprano part that is both declamatory and melodic. Maderna's skill at using incredibly varied orchestral groups along with subtle instrumental combinations is endlessly fascinating. Extraordinary command of modern orchestra writing combined with powerful and subtle orchestration.

Maderna's music is often experimental in the truest sense and yet he always maintained strong links to the European tradition. Where as in ***Giardino religioso*** Maderna has the conductor literally stroll through a beautiful garden of sound, ***Concerto No.1*** for oboe and chamber ensemble clearly alludes to neo-classicism. Maderna was often criticized by contemporaries for his concessions to tradition. Yet in listening to his music in retrospect the criticism seems unfair and groundless. Maderna's music is obstinately his own. Like the strong poet he moves and yet he himself is not moved.

For anyone interested in the post-WW2 European avant-garde this is truly a must have disc. It is an excellent disc for those not familiar avant-garde music but are interested in getting their feet wet. Strongly recommended for novices and hardened modern music fans alike. We can only hope that Col Legno continues to produce more *collage* series discs including more Maderna. (Elgar Schmidt)

(Note: While the recordings in this series are very good to excellent it is odd that the discs are marked DDD when many of the recordings are pre-digital(?) The CD notes are very concise and informative – however a little too brief. (Could we please have more of this excellent information included). Also the question of text is always a consideration – unfortunately no text for *Ausstrahlung* is provided. So unless you speak five different languages including Persian you are out of luck! One of the great drawbacks of the switch from LP to CD is the sheer loss of physical space to include things like complete texts. Along with manufacturers seeking to cut very cost they can this trend has become an all too unfortunate frequent occurrence.)

Luigi Nono (1924-1990) - Works

Volume 1: Voices of Protest

***A Floresta* é jovem e cheja de vida** (1965-66) 40:28
for soprano, three reciters, B-flat clarinet, copper plates and 8-channel tape

Elisabeth Grard, soprano solo
Carol Robinson, clarinet
Gerard Pape, sound direction / live mix

¿Donde estas hermano? (1986) 5:19
for 2 sopranos, mezzo soprano and contralto

Djamila Boupachà (1962) 4:53
Soprano solo from "Canto di vita e d'amore: Sul ponte di Hiroshima" for soloists and orchestra
Sophie Boulin, soprano
Voxnova, voices

mode CD 87
(Comparison DG 2531 004 original recording with the composer)

Music: *fff*
Performance: *fff*
Sound: *ff*
Production: *mf*
Design: *ff*
Overall Impression: *ff*

Total Time: 50:40

» they cannot burn the forest because it is young and full of life« (text part 8 of 11)

A Floresta was written between 1965 and 1966. And as such it is a historical reflection of its time. It was first recorded by Deutsche Grammophon in 1979 with Liliana Poli (soprano) and William O. Smith (clarinet). Ten years after the death of the composer and 21 years after the original release a new recorded version of *A Floresta* is available on **mode records** featuring Vox-

nova. *A Floresta* is unquestionably a complex work. According to Nono it can be divided into two main elements: the texts compiled by Giovanni Pirelli and the various acoustic materials.

The text presented in the form of a dialectic or counterpoint (of sorts) between the "live" voices and texts composed on magnetic tapes. The acoustic materials include "new techniques by the American clarinettist William O. Smith", vocal material electronically processed (also performed live), sonic material derived from five copper plates of different thickness (also used live), along with various electronic effects engineered by RAI Studio Milan. All these diverse sources are seamlessly woven together in a frightening yet musically coherent and emotionally compelling manner. I think it would be fair to say that of all the post-Webern composers Nono is the bitterest, the most challenging and perhaps because of this the most rewarding. With Nono we are rewarded for listening without prejudice.

This new recording on **mode** by *Voxnova* is better understood as being a recreated performance since there is simply no score in the traditional sense. The work itself derived largely out of Nono's research and treatment of the human voice, and as such was created out of experimentation. In this aspect both **mode** and *Voxnova* need to be congratulated for their research and reconstructive efforts.

Is the effort worth it? Is this new version better than the original? I would have to say not better, but different, different in the affirmative. The original DG release on vinyl is very direct and hard – it clearly reflects with harsh immediacy the central theme of the work: a collective (global if you will) denunciation of the absence of freedom. The *Voxnova* version is in many ways softer, fuller and more articulate. 10 years of hind sight have been put to good use. The re-creation of a new *A Floresta* must have been a very challenging and difficult task. That *Voxnova* and company have done so in such a completely convincing manner without attempting to mimic or copy the external qualities of the original performers reveals an astounding degree of advanced musical and artistic maturity.

The **mode** recording has for me shone a new light on *A Floresta* (and perhaps Nono's music in general) in a very new and positive manner. I found it seriously compelling on a musical, emotive and spiritual level that I was not aware of in re-listening to the original recording. (Yet, not surprisingly the original recording has an uncanny historical sound and feeling). This new recording of Nono's music (there are two other shorter pieces on the disc also well performed) clearly suggests that there is more to Nono's music than any one might have thought 20 or so years ago. In the end we are left with our-

selves and the question, “is this all we can do?” (text part 11 of 11). (Elgar Schmidt)

(Note: Although I warmly recommend this new mode recording there is one shortcoming. No texts are provided with the CD. Provided with the original LP were full transcripts of the *Texts and sources of the “live” voices* as well as *Texts on the tapes*. Such material is indeed helpful in understanding such a complex multi-layered work. Maybe texts as well other related information could be available on a web site?)

Poems of a Different Sort, 15 October 2002

That invariability persists
Outlasting even the leaf
The halting of a cessation
Indignant wildfires
Recrudescence signified
Liberating wild waves
Taking spirits as their victims
Deciphering the blood paths

Tallow embalmed and presented
To indomitable depths
The fortuitous amongst creatures
Genuflect in travesty
Fronds along an outmoded route
With grace quiver and waver
Disenchanted lanterns forsake their owners
Enter a new cenotaph

Dan Albertson

Threefold Poems, 18 October 2002

Dalliance imbued and contrived as sentiment
Archly figured and postponed
Manufacturing counterfeit integrity

Embellishing not subtlety but extravagance
Bargains made via incapacitation in vain
Achieve a failure destined to honor society

Drafts forgive their draughts punctiliously
Idly ruminating flakes of a wider culture
The traces designed to ensnare the curious

Dan Albertson

Poems of a Sort, 8 October 2002

Leaves brighten their contents and yet stumble
The light no longer illuminates in the shade
Along the ground rustle the forgotten
Quietly and swiftly ruminating
Entertaining themselves
Not hoping for any relief
Speechless the struggles resume

Priorities order themselves
Whilst peering through subtle windows
The afterthoughts of a creation
Preserved indefinitely in brackish waters
Cooperation deemed a failure
Impresses none but the solipsistic
That invention that lingers within all of time

Dan Albertson

Another Set of Nothing, 19 October 2002

Pleading with the vagrant and forsaken
For resumption of something quite transient
The effect of light takes its toll
Underwater adventurers encounter only idiosyncrasy
While the nozzles of fortune erode

Dan Albertson

Canto IV

Reform.

Canto V

Ponder seriously about the effect of apathy.
Feel sorry for the injustice.
Correct the misguided.
Remember the forgotten.
Consider the thoughtless.
Partake in nothing.
Feel the air.
See the invisible.
Face the music.
Everywhere.

Canto VI

Humanity.

Canto VII

Come from all points of the globe.
Perform common tasks.
Realize the mundane.
Watch birds.
Speak.

Canto VIII

Time.

CONCERT REVIEWS

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rESOund Festival of Contemporary Music
Edmonton, Alberta
February 6 - 10, 2001

by Jerry Ozipko

INTRODUCTION

The Edmonton Symphony Orchestra's 2001 offering of the **rESOund Festival of Contemporary Music** can now be relegated to the annals of local and national music histories. After a one year hiatus due to funding difficulties, this year's festival, which ran from February 6 through 10, had, in some ways, more variety than even the first festival did two years ago. In yet some other ways it built upon and was more successful than the first one, but in still other respects there were a few shortcomings which will need to be addressed for the future.

The featured guest composer was Gavin Bryars of the United Kingdom, who had four major works presented by various musical groups, including the North American Première of his *Violin Concerto: The Bulls of Bashan.* Over the course of the five days and nights of the festival, audiences heard, or rather, experienced, 44 works programmed into nine concert performances. Of these, eighteen compositions were by Canadian composers and eight of them were composed by local residents or composers formerly from Edmonton.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

The opening night concert on Tuesday was a performance of orchestral works presented by the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (ESO). It was a varied and somewhat eclectic orchestral programme including selections performed by three exceptional internationally acclaimed soloists, a couple of them playing instruments not often heard with orchestra. The programme opened with *Mizmor* (Chant) for Santour and Orchestra by Israeli composer Tzvi Avni. The santour is a member of the hammered dulcimer or zither family of stringed instruments and has its origins in ancient Persian classical music. It is not unlike the Hungarian cimbalom, though much smaller, and was sensitively played by Iranian-Israeli santour player Menashe Sasson. The work, which is characterized by a strong middle eastern flavour, is a delicately scored piece with very transparent orchestration. The cadenza seemed to ripple through the scoring which at times was reminiscent of Bartók.

Next came the North American première of Gavin Bryars's *Porazzi*

Fragment for Strings. Based upon an unpublished thirteen bar musical theme by Richard Wagner, this work proved to be Wagner transformed and morphed (transmorphed) -- the musical equivalent, or analogy, of the transformer toys of the late 1980s and early 1990s. The piece has many lush harmonic passages, but for the most part it reminds one of *movet sine motione* (moving while standing still), possessing somewhat of a static sameness through it all.

Two Canadian compositions were then given their world première performances. South African born Malcolm Forsyth's *Concerto for Accordion,* which had been commissioned by Edmonton accordion virtuoso Nelli Antonio Peruch, received its inaugural interpretation by Peruch on the special two button keyboard instrument built by him for the work. Peruch, who has been described as "the most unique and significant artist on the leading edge of his field," has spent much of his life touring around the world legitimizing his instrument for the concert hall. In this regard he has made significant contributions to the development of new instrumental techniques and musical directions for the classical accordion. The first movement "Spiritoso," is full of the interesting rhythms and tone colours by which Forsyth's music is characterized. The music appeared fragmented at times, with some melodic angularity contrasted at other times with harsh dissonances. Peruch's role as soloist was often quite visual. The solo accordion usually entered playing harmonic clusters, and bellow shakes which were scored throughout, played an important part in the gestures of the work. The movement closed with delicate key clicking. In the "Calmato" middle movement, the accordion at times sounded disembodied from the orchestra. It appeared to this reviewer from only one hearing that there didn't always seem to be thematic or motivic links between the two. Tone quality and dynamics were sometimes haunting, sometimes bland. The movement ended in the high piccolo register of the accordion. The finale, "Allegro: ben ritmato," proved to be the most interesting and energetic movement of the work. Overall, Peruch's playing was expressive and confident, clearly demonstrating his technical and artistic command of his instrument. The orchestral accompaniment was well balanced under conductor Grzegorz Nowak's direction. This work helped Forsyth to regain his composure, so to speak, after the severest 'writer's block' of his otherwise illustrious career. In his words, "it brought me back to life."

Following the intermission, the ESO premièred Jim Hiscott's *Pilgrimage for Orchestra,* an ESO commission supported by the Canada Council for the Arts. The work is dedicated to the orchestra's Musical Director Grzegorz Nowak. The first movement, "Mountain, Bird, Cloud," in many re-

spects sounds not unlike the sound track for a "thriller" movie. The pastoral "Field of Stars" resembles a modern day caravanserai pilgrimage. The music in this section has been strongly influenced by Spanish folk elements which are somewhat derivative of Arabic music from the Middle Ages. "As leaves grow out of a branch," the final portion, reminded this reviewer of middle-aged angst. It seemed to echo a possible theme of **rESOund**: 'searching for a Canadian idiomatic musical identity.' The final work on the programme proved to be the highlight for this reviewer - Anders Hillborg's *Clarinet Concerto* which received its North American première with guest soloist Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst. This was music that is to be seen as much as heard, a work of art that is as much visual as it is aural. Clarinettist Fröst possesses an almost surreal control of dynamics and expression, and as a multi-media artist, his musical virtuosity is clearly matched by his skills as a mime. He is an amazingly gifted performer.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

Wednesday's schedule included two performances. The free noon-hour recital by the St. Crispin's Chamber Ensemble opened with Kostas Varotsis' *The Third Side of the Coin.* This is a strict serial work with unusual timbres and sound production devices and techniques. Among those effects were bowed vibraphone tones to the accompaniment of violin and electronic harmonium. This reviewer was somewhat taken aback in the second part of the piece. It was the first time ever that I had heard a cymbal moan and groan! In the third section, Varotsis combined the timbres of whistling and natural and fingered harmonics on the stringed instruments. It was an amazing work that was well executed. Next came Pierre Boulez' *domaines*, a composition for solo clarinet which is constructed in six domains or regions in which the soloist provides differing solutions to the problems given to him to solve. These included the use of multiphonics and the execution of flutter tonguing which was on the verge of raspiness in its sonority. There was also an element of theatre thrown into Donald Ross's performance as well.

The first of three Canadian works on the programme was clarinettist Donald Ross' arrangements of *Scottish Bagpipe Music* performed by an ensemble made up of two clarinets, flute, violin, bass, piano and percussion. Wearing the Ross tartan scarf as an amulet around his neck, he led the group in deconstructing three traditional Scottish bagpipe melodies and then reconstructing them with the ensemble. In "The McAteer Hornpipe," he invited the audience to drone along on C or G. Piotr Grella-Mozejko's *Numen* was interpreted in a version for bass clarinet and piano performed by Ross and Janet

Scott-Hoyt. According to the composer, numen was "an ancient Roman spirit which inhabits all things material and forces of nature." This moody and ominous work reminds Ross of Japanese Shinto shrines. The world première performance of Robert Rosen's *Glimpses of Grace,* a work commissioned for St. Crispin's Chamber Ensemble by the Edmonton Composers' Concert Society with the assistance of the Alberta Foundation of the Arts and Alberta Lotteries, followed. In this piece, each movement grows out of the previous one. The opening sounded subdued, while the second was more animated. The third tended to lean towards thoughtfulness, and the fourth sounded like a discordant conversation during which all of the participants were 'hearing,' but no one was 'listening.' The final section was a modern day fragmented perpetuum mobile. Generally, the work held together well.

The concert closed with Gavin Bryars's *Sub Rosa,* a haunting piece though somewhat naive and simplistic compared to what had been presented before. I felt that Ross's dialogues about the works before their performances went on far too long. The time would have been better well spent presenting the pieces to the utmost of their musicianship and style.

The evening's chamber music concert featuring the Edmonton CHamber Orchestra (ECHO) with a variety of guest soloists was programmed with seven works, four of which were given World Premières. *Cowboy* for marimba and orchestra by former Edmontonian Scott Godin is a composition which is constructed more of mood motifs rather than of themes or melodies. The precision of the ensemble which was characterized by marimba as insistent percussion with orchestra was not always exacting. Darren Salyn, who performed on marimba, is the dedicatee of the piece.

Next came the first of five interspersed performances (during the usual "dead time" between programmed selections to allow for set-up and staging changes) of short electroacoustic soundscapes from *les ponts de l'espace I* (another world première) by Laurie Radford, who teaches electronic and computer music at the University of Alberta. "line 1" and "triangle" were evocative of horror movie soundtracks.

The North Shore by Gavin Bryars was given an authoritative reading by cellist Colin Ryan and ECHO, with the addition of piano and percussion. The music is built around a beautiful melancholy melody which is woven out of the delicate soundscape fabric, mixing minimalism with tintinabulation -- a sort of Philip Glass versus Arvo Pärt atmosphere. Ryan played the solo with a mixture of passion, sensitivity and delicacy, bringing to his performance an aural representation of an artist creating a watercolour wash with sound.

Then followed "point 1" and "circle" from Radford's *les ponts de l'espace.* The final work before the intermission was Gordon Nicholson's *Space,* an interesting stage piece combining dance (choreographed and performed by the Brian Webb Dance Company) with instruments. This composition was also given its initial presentation by violinist Martin Riseley, cellist Colin Ryan, keyboardist Michael Massey and percussionist Aiyun Huang. This work utilized the concert hall of the Winspear Centre as a musical instrument of its own in an interesting and humourous way. The first movement, "Inner Space," was energetic, featuring robust performances from Riseley and Ryan. The piano and vibraphone were used to create more subdued textures. "Textural Space" proved to be the most interesting movement of the three. The performance drew the listener directly into the aural landscape. There were vocal dialogues from the dancers and the musicians were placed throughout the hall in differing spatial orientations. There was a gradual return to the original configurations/ placements of the players on stage. The finale, "Outer Space," was made up of vigorous and insistent rhythms with all of the players putting in quite animated and vigorous performances. *Space* was commissioned by the Brian Webb Dance Company from saxophonist/composer Gordon Nicholson who until 2002 taught at Grant MacEwan Community College.

Following a brief interval, beginning with a repetition of Radford's "circle," the audience was then treated to a performance of Michael Conway Baker's *Flute Concerto* with ESO flutist Elizabeth Koch in the solo role. Considering this was a festival of contemporary music, Baker's post-modern romantic style (the work sounded very English in its moods and evocations) seemed somewhat tame and out of step with much of the music otherwise presented. Nevertheless, ECHO's ensemble was precise and expressive throughout the entirety of the work and their dynamics matched well with Koch's warm, rich flute sonority. Her interpretation of the cadenza had a full, mellow quality. The orchestra's conductorless ensemble has become a well-honed musical precision machine for the most part though there were a couple of sloppy ritards.

On the heels of Radford's "point 2," Aiyun Huang gave the world première of Heather Schmidt's *Aubade* for percussion. Performing on solo marimba, Huang demonstrated a stellar command of her instrument in all domains - technically, musically, dynamically and emotionally.

During the next break, the final movement of *les ponts de l'espace I*, "line 2" filled the brief time interval. Having grown up with the evolution of electroacoustic and computer-generated music, this reviewer felt that Radford's

style employed in these short movements was sorely out-dated.

The evening closed with a performance of Nino Rota's *Concerto for Strings*. This piece was even more of a stylistic "throw-back" than the Baker *Concerto,* with each movement bearing its own characteristic insignia. 'Preludio,' even though it sounded beautiful and was well-played, did not sound at all 'new.' The 'Scherzo,' in the manner of its historical predecessors, evoked a playful mood. 'Aria' was the most dramatic movement, and regrettably, ECHO's intonation was imprecise on occasion. The 'Finale' reminded one of a chase scene in a movie.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

Thursday proved to be the "highlight" day of the festival for this reviewer. The noon hour recital by visiting guest artist Swedish clarinettist Martin Fröst was one of the most remarkable artistic performances ever given and witnessed in this city. The former first prize winner of several prestigious competitions including the Nordic Soloist Biennial and Geneva's CIEM Competition studied both music and theatre arts and demonstrated both to the limits during his solid forty-five minute performance.

Several multi-media concert pieces for his instrument were separated by arrangements of various Swedish folk songs. Out of the blackness of the hall began the plaintive sounds of a solo clarinet playing a melancholy folk song entitled *Ballad from Mockfjärd.* Niklas Sivelöf's *Twist and Shout (The Marionette)* was a humourous demonstration of Fröst's skills as a mime. His body was so fluid that at times he appeared to be suspended from the ceiling by invisible ropes with feet askew. The music, which was **not** a take-off of the tune by McCartney and Lennon, mixed clarinet virtuosity with guttural vocal sounds and vocalise.

This was followed by an abridged version of Anders Hillborg's *Clarinet Concerto* which he had performed in its complete orchestration with the ESO at Tuesday evening's opening performance to the total delight and amazement of the audience. This time, the work, which also incorporates mime and face masks along with plays with light and colour, was accompanied by an electro-acoustic tape of synthesized and sampled sounds, but proved to be equally enthralling and amazing in its delivery. His rhythmic and comedic timing are wonderfully impeccable. He was at one with the music.

Next came another folk song, *Polska after Höökolle.* Peter Lyne's *In the Distance, Close at Hand,* was a well-crafted work sonically, melding clarinet sonorities into and out of electro-acoustic ones. With the intricate

plays with rhythm and metre, the piece could easily have been subtitled *Lynes in Time and Space.* The traditional *Vallåt from Jämtland* proved to be another forlorn folk tune which was introduced with ripples of sound.

Fröst's own *Fantasy,* which received its Canadian Première at this concert, proved to be a free solo fantasy without accompaniment of any sort. Based upon themes from Malcolm Arnold's *Clarinet Concerto No. 2,* the music retains the inherent sense of humour for which Arnold was well-known. *Skänlåt* by Leksands proved to be a short intermodal melody.

The final work on the programme was Fredrik Högberg's *Plastmusikk,* another humorous work with features of theatre and mime. In one segment, Fröst knocked over a chair in perfect time to the electro-acoustic accompaniment.

His interpolation of folk songs in total darkness proved to be tasteful neutral interludes to a performance which was essentially spontaneous on Fröst's part. Speaking to him after the performance, he revealed that he had never done this sort of thing in concert before and felt that it had worked well for him. Regrettably, there were barely four-dozen people in the audience for this highlight performance.

Thursday afternoon's semi-final competition of the Canadian Concerto Competition presented five young Canadian musicians performing orchestral works by Canadian composers but in reduced piano reduction accompaniments. Christie Reside played Jacques Hétu's *Flute Concerto, Op. 51;* Louis Philippe Marsolais presented John Weinzweig's *Divertimento No. 7 for Horn;* cellist Olena Kilchyk interpreted Alexander Brott's *Arabesque;* Vivian Xia, performing on the yanquin, a Chinese folk instrument resembling a hammered dulcimer, introduced Mark Armanini's *Concerto for Yanquin;* while soprano Joslin Romphf sang *Three Spanish Lyrics* by Imant Raminsh.

Thursday evening's feature presentation of the festival was the Citadel Theatre and Edmonton Opera co-production of the chamber opera *Beatrice Chancy* featuring the cast members of the original performance by Toronto's Queen of Puddings Music Theatre Company. Relating a story of power, obsession and vengeance, poet George Elliott Clarke's lurid libretto set to James Rolfe's somewhat spare music revealed a bleak, dark and ominous side to Canadian history which has been too-long suppressed - that of the slave trade in early nineteenth-century Nova Scotia. The story of the opera, which was first performed in Toronto in 1997, is gloomy and menacing, with plot lines full of forbidden love and romance, brutal violence, pathos, incest and murder. Sounds just like your typical opera, only this one is genuinely Canadian.

For the sake of any readers who might not be acquainted with this

work, here is the plot of the opera as cited in the programme:

Part I

Beatrice, the 16-year-old daughter of Francis Chancy and his late slave-mistress, is returning home to her father's plantation in the Annapolis Valley of Nova Scotia, ca. 1801. After three years at convent school in Halifax, she is joyfully reunited with her sweetheart, the field-slave Lead. But when their love is revealed at a banquet in her honour, an enraged Francis chains and tortures Lead in front of Beatrice, her stepmother Lustra, and the slaves Deal and Moses. Lustra tries to console Beatrice, and counsels forgiveness; Moses likewise tries to soothe Lead's rage. But Francis, summoning his daughter to church in apparent reconciliation, ends up by raping her there.

Part II

The slaves debate their next move. Moses urges patience, but Beatrice and Lead swear vengeance; Deal takes neither side. Lustra recalls happier days with Francis, but he is drunken, weary, and empty, longing only for death; he falls unconscious. Beatrice and Lead enter, but when Lead finds himself unable to do the deed, Beatrice stabs Francis by herself. Soldiers arrive, responding to reports of trouble on the Chancy plantation, but they are too late. Beatrice, Lead, and Lustra are arrested for Francis's murder; all three are hanged.

Young soprano Measha Brueggergosman in the lead role of Beatrice stole the show with her powerful and at times delicately sensitive and expressive singing. Baritone Gregory Dahl as her villainous father was a perfect foil in the perverse interplay between their characters. Vanya Abrahams, as the weak lover Lead, played his role convincingly. Lustra, played by Lori Klassen, was assured portrayal of an ambivalent wife and step-mother/confidant. If there were any flaws in the performance, it was in the acoustics of the Shoctor Theatre, where the singers were at times inaudible from the back of the stage and at other times drowned out by the small orchestra that was too often too loud with delightful music which was somewhat overly simplistic harmonically.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Friday, like Wednesday, also featured two concerts. The performers on the noon-hour chamber music recital were santour soloist Menashe Sasson, cellist Tanya Prochazka and pianist Jacques Despres. There were only two works on this programme. In the first, Sasson presented his own piece *Exodus for Solo Santour*. This work is very Israeli-sounding music with asymmetrical

rhythms throughout, and consisted mostly of melodies rising out from textures of multiple and repeated notes articulated at different rates and tempi. The piece is divided into several different sections, each clearly expressing or portraying joy in some form. Although the santour produces a soft and exotic timbre without any means of damping the tones, at times the sustained notes became intrusive irritants to the texture of the music -- much like holding down the tre corde pedal on a piano indiscriminately.

The second work, performed by Despres and Prochazka, was entitled *The New Goldberg Variations.* This particular version of music by various contemporary composers but based upon the original theme by Bach was originally commissioned to honour the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of Robert and Judy Goldberg. The sudden death of Robert necessitated that the piece become a memorial to him instead. It proved to be an interesting concept to this reviewer. In Kenneth Frazelle's "Two Variations," I heard little or no relationship between Bach's "Aria," which opened the work, and this product apart from mood. Other than occasional scattered note groupings which were obviously derived from Bach any relationships seemed purely academic rather than musical. On the other hand, Christopher Rouse's "Two Variations" seemed to be more akin to the spirit of the original, despite the occasional very harsh dissonances. The cantilena was indeed melancholy and doleful, adoringly and masterfully played by Prochazka. Peter Lieberson's "Three Variations for Violoncello and Piano" flowed without a break. A beautifully flowing melody that seemed to have no end interspersed with fragments of Bach's "Aria" comprised the character of John Corigliano's "Fancy on Back Air." Peter Schickele's "Goldberg Variations II" featured no P. D. Q. Bach-like musical games here. His first variation was both spare and plainly derivative with a very delicate musical interplay between the performers. The second was the most interesting piece of the entire work, being a kind of quasi-blues/funk rendition of the theme. Richard Danielpour's "Fantasy Variations" rounded out the work. It proved to be the most introspective movement and sounded almost impressionistic. Throughout the entire performance there proved to be an amazing synergy between Despres and Prochazka that had to be sensed and felt. This recital had by far the largest noon-hour recital audience of the entire festival.

The programme of the evening's Choral Music Concert opened with John Tavener's *Svyati* performed by the University of Alberta Madrigal Singers under the direction of Leonard Ratzlaff. The title, which is Ukrainian for "holy," represents music which occurs in Russian and Ukrainian orthodox liturgy services. This proved to be a haunting, yet mournful work built on a

drone bass accompanied by a melancholy cello obliggato lovingly performed by Tanya Prochazka. For an Englishman, Tavener interpreted the Slavic text extremely well and the choir's pitch sense in this a capella work was dead on! Next came James Rolfe's *Three Songs* for women's voices, performed by the same ensemble, but this time under the direction of Ardelle Ries. The harmonic closeness of the voices created the sense of floating wafts and veils of sound. The third song of the group, "At Sunset," demonstrated the choir's extremely wide dynamic range. This was followed by the World Première of Rolfe's *Come lovely and soothing death.* Rolfe's songs are lovely and melodic, but stylistically, they belong to another time. The first half of the concert closed with Gavin Bryars's *On Photography*. This is a work that is both placid and full of intense passion and depth of expression interpreted with a high level of sensitivity. The accompaniments of piano and (electronic) harmonium were completely non-intrusive, adding subtle textures rather than true accompaniment roles to the music.

The second half of the programme was performed by Pro Coro Canada under the direction of Richard Sparks. György Ligeti's *Lux Aeterna* was the first selection performed by this tightly-knit twenty-four voice ensemble. The individual voices amidst the sound clusters were amazingly discernible in the marvellous acoustics of the hall. In Laurie Radford's *in pursuit of ephemera* for 24 voice choir and electroacoustic music, which received its world première performance at the most recent Pro Coro concert, the voices rise out of the electro-acoustic texture both with sung and voiced sounds - a form of sound poetry. Eventually, the reverse occurs, where the accompaniment proceeds out from the voices and then the two textures blend together.

Estonian composer Veljo Tormis's *Raua needmine (Curse Upon Iron),* accompanied by a large ceremonial hand drum, proved to be somewhat primitive in its demeanour, style and mood. Its harmonic texture could readily identify its evolution from the Carl Orff school of vocal chant. Its structure began with simple statement/response and developed through much more dissonant and intense voicings. The concert closed with *Past Life Melodies* by Australian composer Sarah Hopkins. This work proved to be the most intriguing of all, containing elements of Nepalese and Tibetan Buddhist chant juxtaposed with Inuit throat singing creating clearly resonated formant (overtone) sounds.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

The final day of the festival was also full of activity. First, visiting guest composer Gavin Bryars presented a workshop entitled "Music in the Visual

Arts" during the early afternoon. Due to another commitment, this reviewer was unable to attend the workshop.

The Festival came to a close with another concert of orchestral works presented by the ESO. The first half of Saturday evening's Gala Festival Finale Concert presented the three finalists of the Concerto Competition, Reside, Romphf and Xia, in performances of their chosen concerted pieces with orchestra. Christie Reside's interpretation of Jacques Hétu's *Concerto for Flute*, was very commanding. Although she had played well in the semi-final, Reside performed with much greater intensity, depth of feeling and confidence with the full orchestra behind her. Imant Raminsch's *Three Spanish Lyrics* performed by Joslin Romphf provided rich orchestral textures compared to the somewhat bland piano accompaniment. This reviewer would have enjoyed being a fly on the wall while the judges were making their original decisions during Thursday's semi-finals, because he continually questioned why the singer made the finals but the horn player did not. Vivian Xia's performance of Mark Armanini's *Concerto for Yangqin* opened with a brilliant, rippling cadenza-like cantilena oriental chant. She proved to be able to coax an extremely wide dynamic and timbral range from her delicately sounding instrument. The varieties of timbres which the solo instrument explores included complex percussive rhythms rapped on the box with the spoons as well as pitch bending. Armanini's orchestration is brilliantly scored to match the generally soft-spoken timbre of the yangqin with the more robust orchestral instruments. Maestro Grzegorz Nowak was very attuned to the soloists and proved to be a wonderfully sensitive and perceptive conductor of the concerti. The second runner up prize of $1500 was awarded to Joslin Romphf. Vivian Xia was first runner up with a cash award of $2500 as well as the $500 Audience Prize. Flutist Christie Reside came out the winner in the end, performing the identical work which awarded the first prize to Michelle Cheramy two years before. She took home a cash award of $5500 along with an invitation to return as a soloist with the ESO in an upcoming season as well as a performance in Calgary.

Following the intermission, the orchestra presented the North American première of Gavin Bryars's *Violin Concerto: The Bulls of Bashan*, featuring concertmaster Martin Riseley as soloist. It was beautifully played by Riseley, who also happened to be celebrating his birthday that night. For the most part, this is a very subdued, low-key and melancholy work. Most of Bryars' music tends to sound like excerpts from movie soundtracks and the hauntingly beautiful reverie was rudely disrupted by two audience members chatting idly away nearby. The splendid acoustics of the hall transported their

voices to an audible level for quite some distance.The programme closed with the symphonic poem *Krzesany* by Polish composer Wojciech Kilar. The work is scored for significantly enlarged orchestral resources, and proved to be a highly intense, dramatic work played with energy and exuberance. At times it seemed extremely cinematographic with textures moving from dense and polychordal to transparent and homophonic - even unison. Occasionally, Polish folk melodies from the Podhale region would emerge out of the varying textures. It proved to be a popular choice for the audience.

AFTERWORD

The shortcomings of the festival in general are several. First, too many of the pieces played sounded as though they had been composed at the end of the nineteenth century rather than during the latter part of the last one. Second, although there was a small number of works, where was the representation of female composers? Third, since we usually only get to hear works of this genre by Canadian composers during the regular ESO season, it would have been a perfect opportunity to present some of the classics of the contemporary orchestral repertoire by the great European composers like Penderecki, Lutoslawski, Xenakis, Berio, Stockhausen and the like. Fourth, while audiences at this year's festival proved to be just as enthusiastic as at the performances during the birth of the festival two years ago, regrettably, the overall numbers also proved to be much more sparse this year. Fifth, it also became very apparent throughout the festival that the majority of composers who had works performed for the first or near first time at the festival and who were in attendance came only to be at their performances. If composers do not come out and support their own colleagues in an encouraging, co-operative fashion, it will be no wonder that audiences will continue to believe that this music is nothing short of elitist.

Festival van Vlaanderen - Joint Venture
Antwerp, Belgium
October 18 - 21, 2001

by Piotr Grella-Możejko

Undoubtedly, the Flanders Festival, one of those big, expensive and - the horror! the horror! - state-sponsored events, and a very successful one at that (hey, in Europe people still go to concerts!) has over the years made its mark as THE Early Music forum. There is no point in listing the consecutive star-studded programmes, names of the most famous (and not-so-famous, yet exquisite) groups, soloists. Each year their numbers are staggering; the quality of productions, plus all the fun along the way of going to those decadent Flemish cafés, restaurants and bars, can be envied by the most sophisticated and discriminating New Yorkers (or Torontonians, heh, heh); and all this sponsored by the conscientious governments of every level as well as by a host of not any less conscientious businesses. When one thinks of the Canadian attempts at sponsorship which have been undertaken (or not undertaken at all) by the governments and by all those du Mauriers, Syncrudes (proud of their support of Canadian arts -- they even sponsored a production of *Fledermaus* once!) et al., one immediately realises that as far as the creation and dissemination of Canadian culture is concerned there is, indeed, a long way to Tipperary. To keep kicking the armed and dangerous environmental basher in Canada (nobody will ever convince me that oil industry is good for environment), people at Syncrude obviously do not know that the largest festival of contemporary classical music in Scandinavia, Norway's Ultima, had for almost a decade been sponsored by the local oil company, Fina, until it was bought out by the faceless international Moloch Total. Perhaps Fina was no better than Syncrude, but at least they sponsored something that truly contributed to maintaining the creative, innovative inclinations of man. Then in 2001 Adcore, a large IT company, had become Ultima's main sponsor. And there are no tobacco companies in sight (sigh...).

Now, what is even more surprising is the fact that all of a sudden the Flanders Festival's hierarchs (what a beautiful and rarely used word that is!), most likely carried away by their ongoing, unfaltering luck (such a beast is incapable of being unsuccessful; even the dinosaurs likely needed a *deus ex machina* to fail), have decided to incorporate a modern component into the programme! These artful (literally) people must have figured out that it would not hurt to broaden the scope of styles and æsthetics, and to attract yet an-

other segment of local and international audiences, who just flock to those charming, picturesque Flemish cities and towns, which often have not changed since the time of the Breughels.

So, in 2001, The Flanders Festival, approached early enough by a group of enthusiasts, incorporated New Music composers and performers into its roster. That decision proved to be a blessing, as the event increased its audience base and received additional attention from the New Music community, including some influential writers. The modern component of the festival was called Joint Venture, which name indicated the collaborative nature of the undertaking both on national (the festival being helped by the Flemish New Music community and vice versa) as well as international (involvement of participants from abroad) levels. Joint Venture was directed and managed by the legendary Boudewijn Buckinx, one of the undisputed fathers and leaders of Postmodern aesthetics in European music. Born in Lommel, Belgium on 28 March 1945, he dedicated himself to music while still very young. At the ripe age of eighteen, in 1963, he founded a New Music ensemble called WHAM (a Dutch acronym for Working Group for Contemporary and Topical Music) and began introducing works representing the newest trends by European and international composers to Belgian audiences. Characteristically, a lot of those composers introduced by Buckinx were (and still are) associated with the progressive, humanist Left, to mention just Cornelius Cardew and Christian Wolff (and also John Cage). Over several decades, Buckinx has developed a fascinating compositional vocabulary, the main, constitutive elements of which include clearly defined melody (more often than not rooted in tonality), extended functional harmony, quirky formal designs (as in *1001 Sonatas* for violin and piano or *9 Unfinished Symphonies*), collage-like and pastiche-like narratives (drawing inspiration from past musics, and especially Romanticism) as well as delightful, highly ironic humour (often noticeable in quotations and beautifully odd quasi-quotations taken from the standard repertoire). To Buckinx, music-making is organically interwoven with life itself. His colossal compositional output can be reckoned at several hundred works, some of them of quite immense durations. Buckinx writes ceaselessly – a far cry from those composers (or pseudo-composers perhaps) who will only write when paid (not that he lacks commissions...). Therefore, to him, music-making is a truly ontological act of explaining, or rather of defining one's existence, of making it legitimate. It is also a kind of existentialist game between the composer and his audiences: all these unusual titles, quotations, subtly allusive quasi-quotations, stylistic references, point out to striving for dialogue, and above all a dialogue with those who are worthy of the challenge, those

who, simply, know. In general Buckinx's music plays, as it were, with various degrees of familiarity, making it a very strange listening experience in the most positive meaning of the term. Apart from the *1001 Sonatas* and *9 Unfinished Symphonies* Buckinx composed four operas: *Karoena* (*The Mermaid*, in Russian (!), premièred in 1995), *Socrates* (premièred in 1997), *Le Valchirie* (premièred in 1997), and *Van Alle Tijden* (premièred in 1998). Other large-scale works are *La Sonate de Vinteuil* for mezzo soprano, piano and violin (texts by Marcel Proust), *Erwachen der Liebe* for soprano, violin solo and chamber orchestra (texts by Philipp Schober), *Zen Requiem* for tenor, baritone, male chorus and chamber orchestra, and *Nietzsche Talk Show* for tenor and band. In person, Buckinx is a most amiable, sophisticated companion, who speaks five or six languages fluently, and conversing with him is a rare pleasure. Given his astonishing open-mindedness, one could not imagine a better person to take care of the Joint Venture.

Among the fourteen consistently excellent concerts given between 18 and 21 October 2001, several stood out. One of the most interesting ones was concert No. 5 (every concert had its "official" number), the first of three appearances of the Hermes Ensemble, led by Koen Kessels. The concert featured three works representing brutally uncompromising, hard core minimalism devoid of any euphonious niceties often associated with that movement. First on the programme was *Prose Anthology: Distinctions/Connection* by Daniel James Wolf, an American composer born in 1961, and based in California. Wolf's music – and he admits to be influenced by Greek music, Viennese classics and American experimental tradition – makes striking use of contrasts and opposites. Slow, quiet sections or movements where long rhythmic values and tight, dissonant harmonies abound, give way to pointillistic, polyrhythmic or motoric segments in which high energy creates an impression of aggressive impatience.

Born in 1963 in Germany, Hauke Harder represents a similar orientation. On that evening in Antwerp the Hermes Ensemble played his *Pure Presence*, a successful, if depressing work full of subtle timbral shadings. When compared to Wolf's (and both composers are friends, brothers in arms of sorts) Harder's music seems more structurally patterned and texturally lean. His works are usually built of segments differentiated by persistently repeated, dissonant ostinati. This almost invariably results in a very oppressive emotional aura. The composer explores this Orwellian, dark, pessimistic and mechanistic world consistently, to which even some titles such as *112 BPM (Einfach eine Mechanik)* for string trio or *76 Beats Per Minute* for piano may attest.

In between the Wolf and the Harder, a work by another German, Ernstalbrecht Stiebler, appeared on the programme. Stiebler was born in 1934 and took part in the avant-garde turmoil during the 1950's and 60's. His impressive record includes the Bachpreisstipendium from the city of Hamburg (1966) and a prize from the Stille Musik composition seminar in the Künstlerhaus Boswil (1991) as well as several awards for recordings which he produced for the Hessischer Rundfunk. Performances of his music have been given, among others, at the ISCM World Music Days, the Berliner Kryp-Tonale, the Performance Day in Stuttgart, and other festivals. Stiebler's works have been championed by a number of leading ensembles and soloists such as The Barton Workshop, the Duo Kontarsky, Ensemble Recherche, trombonist James Fulkerson, the Ives Ensemble, pianist Marianne Schroeder, organists Zsigmond Szathmáry and Gerd Zacher, and cellist Frances-Marie Uitti.

It became obvious that both younger composers presented on that concert are indebted to Stiebler, whose music explores territories of repetition, temporal suspension and dramatic expression. The world première of his *For Boudewijn* (the Flanders Festival commission) turned out to be the highlight of the concert, the old master demonstrating impeccable compositional technique and creative imagination.

Something must be said about the Hermes Ensemble. It is a world-class group which, if based in London, Paris or New York, would be hailed as the next best thing after sliced bread. Not only are the individual musicians excellent players, but their enthusiasm and totally professional, inquisitive approach to music is most rewarding. Koen Kessels is a phenomenon – an absolute musician. In his element both at the keyboard and on the podium, he leads the ensemble with rare confidence and flair.

Later that night there was a production of *Hardscore* by Belgian Frank Nuyts (born 1957). *Hardscore* is a musical theatre work involving sung text, actors and a predominantly electric ensemble whose line-up was inspired by rock and jazz-rock groups. *Hardscore* is a family affair, with Frank Nuyts and his wife Iris DeBlaere on keyboards, and their daughter Maï Nuyts performing the vocal part. Stylistically, the music balanced between Frank Zappa (from the Mothers of Invention period) and minimalism. Here however, one would wish for fewer passages in parallel motion, more sections in soft dynamics and, last but not least, better singing. To be honest, the message was lost due to the overpowering dynamics and the shaky interpretation of the vocal part. It seems that Nuyts is much more successful in his minimalistic pieces written for conventional forces, in which he shows imaginative handling of melodic material, rhythms and instrumental timbres.

The following day, October 20, brought three more concerts. First, the superb Belgian guitarist Roland Broux performed *The Transfigurations* by Canadian composer (and ECCS member) Andrew Creaghan (born 1953). This large work (which fits an entire CD) is based on music by the old masters, namely Johann Sebastian Bach, Wolfgang Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. Following the performance an interesting discussion concerning such compositions took place: are they merely transcriptions, or shall they be treated as original works? Unquestionably, Creaghan put a lot of effort into that project, yet some interlocutors questioned his authorship, albeit in a very friendly manner – more like a philosophical question on the nature of creativity than an accusation. It is very difficult to decide who is right, and the fact that the composer was not present did not help, either. Most important, however, was the success of the interpretation itself. It was obvious that Broux approached the music with an eagerness indicating his positive attitude and understanding of Creaghan's goals.

Next came another Canadian concert. It featured eleven works by members of the Edmonton Composers' Concert Society performed by the Hermes Ensemble. The concert took place in De Zwarte Panter gallery situated in the building that used to be, if I remember correctly, a hostel for pilgrims visiting Antwerp. Then, in the late 1960's it was turned into an arts complex. To hear New Music played in that old, old building, with the massive, avant-garde (almost Neue Wilde) paintings of Marc Kennes on the walls, and the audience surrounding the ensemble, was quite an experience. Koen Kessels and his group proved once again that there are but few similar ensembles that can match the Hermes Ensemble's interpretative power. Some of the most memorable moments included hearing Alfred Fisher's *In Darkness* beautifully played by violoncellist Friedrich Gauwerky (He also gave superb renditions of Ron Hannah's *Meditation* and Jacek Sobieraj's *J. S. Bach in memoriam*, both works for 'cello and piano); Robert Morin's little masterpiece *Reflections on the North Saskatchewan River* for clarinet, violin, 'cello and piano; Monte Keene Pishny-Floyd's *Rachum* for clarinet and piano; and George Andrix's *Three pieces for Violin and Viola*.

All in all, the concert was a true hit with the audience, whose members pointed out to the fine equilibrium of tradition and modernity present in the Canadian works. This concert was most certainly the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

Still later came another performance, this time by Collegium Musicum Carinthia, an Austrian chamber orchestra founded and led by two émigrés from the former USSR, violinist Elena Denisova and pianist/conductor

Alexei Kornienko. These are, again, world-class virtuosi who do not hesitate to promote living composers. The programme was a mixed bag of works by Dutch, German and US composers. All the works represented fairly traditional styles, much appealing no doubt to the traditionally-orientated concert-going public. Probably the most successful were two world premières of American works: *Ballades and Grooves* by Michael Sahl (born in 1934) and *Three Swales* by Beth Anderson (born 1950) – very well-written, melodious, tonal and repetitive. Is their style what is now referred to as post-minimalism? If post-minimalism is characterised by the co-existence of Romantic and (neo)Classical elements, the answer is yes. To quote Michael Sahl, both composers are members of the "conspiracy to commit beauty" (i.e. beauty as understood until, roughly, 1900) and one can hear that conspiratorial attitude in their music. Such works should obviously be able to enter the so-called standard repertoire. They could easily compete with countless 19th or 18th century compositions played *ad nauseam* by orchestras. The drama is that the orchestras indulge in flogging dead horses. In a hundred years, or so, this music will be miraculously "discovered." Unfortunately, it will no longer concern Anderson and Sahl.

Another work deserves to be mentioned, the Bergian *Ballade* for violin and orchestra by Franz Hummel (born 1939), if only because of the interpretation given by the incomparable Elena Denisova. Possessing an exquisitely beautiful tone, perfect intonation, a remarkable bowing technique, and deeply felt emotions, why is she not better known in North America? After all, there are not that many violinists demonstrating maturity equal to Denisova's. Her partner, Alexei Kornienko, is an excellent conductor under whose baton the Collegium Musicum Carinthia sounded splendidly. It is to be regretted that Kornienko did not perform with his ensemble as a pianist. He is, indeed, extraordinary.

The last day of the Joint Venture (a festival within a festival) brought us two concerts. In his third and last appearance, Koen Kessels and the Hermes Ensemble began with *Sprawl Shake Shalom*, a team work by four composers: Alvaro Guimarães (born 1955), Bernard Baert (born 1963), Françoise Choveaux (born 1953) and Dirk Blockeel (born 1955). Sadly, I was not able to find anything to remember in it. Accomplished though they are as individual artists, together the four composers (or, rather, their collective creation) suffered from what often happens in such cases -- the inability to come up with convincing ideas which would bind the piece together.

On the other hand, Lucien Posman's (born 1952) *The Book of Thel* for voice and ensemble was a magnificent work. Unabashedly Romantic (it really does not matter whether "post" or "neo"), *The Book of Thel* is a tour de force. In its scope and narrative breadth, it could compete with many similar and great vocal cycles by great 20th century composers. It surely was one of

the highlights of the festival. Part of its success must be attributed, of course, to the interpreters. I was told that the singer Mireille Capelle outdid herself and I could believe that. Her interpretation was both deeply moving and technically very compelling.

The festival ended with a big bang – a concert by Koninklijk Filharmonisch Orkest van Vlaanderen (The Royal Flanders Philharmonic Orchestra) under the Finnish conductor Susana Mälkki. What astonished me most was the fact that there was nary a Flemish work on the programme! I really think that it would have been more than appropriate to play even a single work by a local composer. I do not think Belgians have too many opportunities to hear their symphonic works done regularly. The final concert was, in other words, an opportunity lost – even more so by inclusion of Shostakovich's 1st Symphony (why play something that has already become part of the standard repertoire?) and Jan Sandström's (born 1954) kitschy *Motorbike Concerto* for trombone and orchestra. The latter work is being pushed here and there, as if there were no better works by Swedish composers available. The other two compositions were Alfred Schnittke's (1934-1998) *(K)ein Sommernachtstraum* (again, why this? he is already a classic; but I agree, sometimes it is very instructive to play newer works against the ones which have already proven their longevity) and Guillaume Connesson's (born 1970) brilliantly conceived and scored *Night-Club*, a perfect example of skilfully written jazz-inspired New Music - somehow, its expressive worlds remainded me of movies by Luc Besson; in brief, music worthy of repeat performances.

The orchestra, it has to be admitted, did an excellent job (Canadian composers would be envious after hearing them play) and Susana Mälkki had truly stunning moments (even moments of greatness), notably in the Shostakovich and the Connesson. She is an artist to watch.

Despite my criticism concerning the programme of the final concert, I will freely admit that the New Music component of The Flanders Festival 2001 was an unqualified success, which it largely owed to the friendly and understanding attitude of the Festival's Artistic Director, Ms. Lieve Schaubroeck as well as to Boudewijn Buckinx's and his colleagues' all-inclusive, curiously positive and non-political attitude. The short-sighted dictators of New Music programming in Canada could learn a lot from him, and from his Belgian friends. But again, being all-inclusive, friendly and understanding requires making a conscious effort – not an easy thing to do.

(Mr. Grella-Mozejko trip to attend the Flanders Festival/Joint Venture was made possible by financial assistance from The Canada Council for the Arts.)

Musica Polonica Nova Festival of New Music
Wrocław, Poland
February 19 – 23, 2002

by Walentyna Węgrzyn

The Wrocław Festival of Contemporary Music was founded in 1962. The goal of this undertaking was the unrestricted presentation of works by composers outside of the Polish mainstream i.e. "Warsaw Autumn". In those days, festival concerts were organised, with modest help of the local musicians, at the Concert Hall of the Wrocław Philharmonic and a few other such places, and not yet at beautiful Wroclaw churches. However, as the ability to stage performances exclusively of new local works diminished for obvious reasons, works of composers from the capital and other cities began to infiltrate the Wrocław landscape. In return, works of some organisers of the Wrocław concerts started to be performed in Warsaw and at other festivals of chamber music. Over the years the Festival changed its name to "Musica Polonica Nova" (its original name having stressed the local flavour) and it featured such popular contemporary composers as Penderecki, Lutosławski, Kilar, Górecki etc. This was generally considered a drastic improvement to the artistic quality of the festival and the Wrocław event became one of the most popular in the country. Further changes in personnel and finances brought more changes to the repertoire. Artistic directors of the festival changed frequently, but in the end the most enduring director was Maestro Marek Pijarowski, who formed an Artistic Council and later hired a programme consultant. At first the position was filled by a well known composer, Rafał Augustyn, and currently it is occupied by another outstanding Wrocław composer, Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil. When observing this particular festival, as well as many others, one becomes acutely aware that the personality of the artistic director has a profound impact on the festival's artistic quality, repertoire and performance, in other words - everything.

This year (2002), preparations for the festival took place during a most challenging period for the Wrocław Philharmonic. Ms. Lidia Geringer d'Oedenberg, managing also the famous international festival Wratislavia Cantans, became the CEO of the orchestra, and in December, Maestro Marek Pijarowski stepped down and acted in the capacity of Artistic Director only until the end of February. The festival's finances constituted an additional challenge, with the Department of Culture providing the Wrocław festival with only 10% of its budget. The next few weeks were dramatic, with the

festival organisers trying to hire performers for half their usual fee or for free, but finally the repertoire was finalised.

The festival, which took place between February 19 and 23, started and ended with symphony concerts. In spite of the festival's name, the core of the repertoire was made up of the works of the Wrocław composers and their students. Among pieces of international calibre, there were works of a few well known artists, but these were either submitted by performers or presented to the festival audience as something extraordinary.

At the first concert, the world premiere of *Syntropie*, by Janusz A. Wichrowski, heralded a new phase in this highly independent composer's artistic career. The programme also included *L'homme armé* by Wichrowski's student, Bartłomiej Krcha, which earlier won an award at a prestigious composers' competition; the well known Piano Concerto by Wojciech Kilar; and the exceptional *IV Symphony*, by Witold Lutosławski. Late in the evening, another event called the *Grand Presentation of the Studio* featured pieces created in the Studio of Computer Music of the Music Academy. Under the artistic care of Stanisław Krupowicz, works of the following emerging composers were heard: Alina Błońska, Piotr Rojek, Cezary Duchnowski, Alejandro Trapero, Marcin Bortnowski, Tadeusz Półról, Marcin Rupociński and Agata Zubel. The list is long, but, as was stressed in Wrocław, it included some very remarkable new names.

The next day brought many concerts of chamber music, with works that were well known, had been awarded, or had been played in Wrocław before. Many performances were in memory of Witold Szalonek, one of Poland's most distinguished composers, who for years had taught in Germany. Szalonek was much of a visionary, to which his eccentric *Trio Soli Sono* well attested. Another interesting event featured Polish waltzes of the 20th and 21st centuries played by pianist Gabriela Szendzielorz. The performer's brilliant ideas and her approach to the repertoire (she commissioned many of the waltzes) resulted in quite a mixed programme. The artist presented 17 works, starting with one by Szymanowski and ending with a jazz-influenced waltz by Andrzej Zubek. The waltz form, with its tradition, elegance and rhythm, maintained a level of sophistication and respect for the past, and added much charm to these experiments. The audience reacted especially well to those waltzes of a more serious nature, such as *Waltzer (für Joseph Matthias Hauer)* by Piotr Grella-Możejko, *Valse brillante* by Andrzej Dziadek and the charming *Cinq petites valses* by Marek Stachowski. The waltz is often mocked today, yet these modern waltzes caused us to reflect earnestly upon our longing for that tradition.

The greatest attraction of the second day of the festival was the distinguished pianist and composer, Leszek Możdżer, and his *6 Miniatures for Strings and Improvising Piano*, played by Sinfonia Cracovia, with Michał Nesterowicz. Later there were a few world premieres: a string quartet by Leszek Wisłocki, the sublime *Ragnatela* for bassoon and orchestra by Agata Zubel, and a chamber symphony by Krystian Kiełb. Two pieces definitely stood out: *Impromptu IIA* for string quartet and accordion by Edward Bogusławski (1940-2003), and *Sinfonia Sacra* by Andrzej Panufnik, wonderfully interpreted by the Wrocław Academy of Music orchestra under Maestro Jan Miłosz Zarzycki. Twice during the festival a youth orchestra, TECH-NO-PROJECT, performed pieces by the younger generation of Polish composers. Interestingly, programme notes offered by these up-and-comers were either full of wonderful and rich imagination, or were difficult to understand at all...

During the subsequent chamber evenings, there took place some superb performances, including the new *III String Quartet* by Krzysztof Baculewski, *Sonata of 3 Planets* by Jan Astriab (very well played by Andrzej Tatarski), and the piano *Quintet* by Krzysztof Meyer. Mr. Tatarski was also the hero of a remarkable recital consisting of selected fragments of *Catalogue des oiseaux* by Oliver Messiaen. This splendid recital was accompanied by the highly elucidating comments of Jerzy Stankiewicz. For listeners interested in interdisciplinary undertakings, there was a special evening concert entitled, promisingly, *Laboratories of Phenomena by Tadeusz Wielecki and Jerzy Kornowicz*, and organised by the Wrocław Centre for Culture and Art. These multimedia performances were based on several well-known pieces by both composers.

But the biggest success of the festival was, perhaps, a performance by the Danish violinist Christine Pryn, who presented an entire recital of contemporary Polish music. She performed, among others, pieces by Hanna Kulenty, Piotr Drożdżewski and Stanisław Krupowicz, Rafał Augustyn's *Cyclical Piece Nr. 1*, (the piece which had started her fascination with the Polish music), and a new work by Ryszard Klisowski entitled *Sonata Illiriacca* (a world premiere, inspired by the often sad history of the Balkan peoples).

The Festival culminated with a concert performed by the National Symphony Orchestra of the Polish Radio, under its new director, Maestro Gabriel Chmura. Performed were three works already acknowledged by the Polish critics as masterpieces: *Ikar* (*Icarus*) by Grażyna Pstrokońska-Nawratil (1970's), *Three Episodes for Symphony Orchestra* by Mikołaj Górecki (the son of the famous composer), and the best piece of the entire festival, the fabulous *Concerto Grosso* for three cellos (Andrzej Bauer, Bartosz Koziak and

Rafał Kwiatkowski) and orchestra by Krzysztof Penderecki. In addition to the concerts, there were interesting symposia, typically featuring conversations with composers, but this time in addition to the hosts, composers Zbigniew Bargielski and Krzysztof Meyer, they also featured Carl Humphries, author of a book about Witold Szalonek, and the leading music critic and broadcaster, Andrzej Chłopecki.

Not too many pieces were truly "new" or "modern". There were a lot of repeated works and works smacking of trickery. It is now obvious that young composers create nowadays in a more traditional language, while masters... are still masters, no matter their age. In retrospect, it is difficult to comprehend this phenomenon called contemporary music.

One last thought: since music by the Wrocław composers is again dominating the event, it seems that the organizers should either return to the festival's old name or alter the current one.

(Translated by Kasia Zoledziowski)

World Première of *Violin Concerto* by Alan Gilliland
Martin Riseley, violin
Edmonton Symphony Orchestra under Raffi Armenian
June 21, 2002

by Jerry Ozipko

The first performance of a composer's *Violin Concerto* is always a much anticipated event -- probably because so few of them are composed by comparison to other orchestral works. That makes Edmonton Symphony Orchestra composer-in-residence Alan Gilliland's newest work even more special. Several composers who have made Edmonton their home over the years (Violet Archer and Allan Bell, among them) have written such a work, but Gilliland's is the first to have ever been composed while the composer was resident in Edmonton.

The fact that a violin concerto has become a composer's most daunting task in some musical circles was not lost on Gilliland. "It took me a long time to get over that," he reported in a recent interview. "I think that's why I wrote it 2, 3, 1 [the order of the movements]. The first movement is

always the 'serious' movement, you know, and I didn't want to be 'serious!' " He believes that such feelings developed more by accident rather than by design. "There are a lot of composers over the last hundred or a hundred-and-fifty to two hundred years who wrote only one violin concerto and a lot of them became masterpieces." Hence developed the tradition that such a work became the composer's "statement to the repertoire of the violin." To put that tradition to rest, Gilliland hopes to be able to compose another one some day.

The concerto was written with ESO Concertmaster Martin Riseley in mind and developed in consultation and full collaboration with him. In fact, the very genesis of the work actually came into his mind when the Scottish-born Edmontonian was awarded the composer-in-residence position in 1999. "This was literally the first piece I thought about when I got this job. As I walked up to Martin at the beginning of *Symphony Under the Sky* three years ago, I said 'I really want to write you a piece' and he said, 'Great!' "

He finally began work on the piece last September, and it was originally programmed for one of the "The Masters" pairs of concerts at the beginning of March. However, its debut was sabotaged by the ESO musicians' strike, which ended up lasting five weeks. This gave Gilliland the opportunity to make some necessary revisions. The first movement, Ayre (a medieval lyrical song form), was originally conceived in a traditional classical sonata-allegro form. "As I worked on it, it just seemed to me [that] it just needed to be more developed than the version I originally finished with. Portions were expanded and the structure altered somewhat."

Gilliland feels that one of his greatest challenges was writing a work in a three-movement form as opposed to the single pieces of continuous music that he has been used to writing of late. "Writing in those succinct three-movement forms [is something] I haven't done for quite a long time. It was hard to be succinct in ten minute chunks." The work is roughly twenty-five minutes in duration. Gilliland has assigned the orchestra to be more subservient to the solo part rather than a partner with it. "It's pretty much all about him [Riseley]."

Concertmaster Riseley offered up his own performer's perspective on the new work. "Unlike a lot of composers [who] seem to want to write a really difficult concerto and the music really becomes secondary, he really just wrote good music and didn't worry about making it the most difficult thing for the violin." Riseley noted that the piece is extremely melodic with interesting harmonies and rhythms. He feels that it will prove to be an audience-pleaser. "It's not going to intimidate the audience at all. At the same time, it's well constructed in a compositional way and full of great melodies."

The world première of the *Concerto* was given on Friday, June 21, with soloist and orchestra under the musical direction of guest conductor Raffi Armenian. The music opens with an orchestral rumble in the percussion and brass. Then comes the main theme of the *Ayre,* which was actually written by Gilliland over twenty years ago while he was a student under Violet Archer. Utilized in its new version for solo violin (Gilliland had originally conceived it with the alto saxophone in mind), the melody soars above the creative and colourful orchestral scoring. Rather than developing a true second theme, Gilliland brings about a stylistic transformation of the main subject, with the theme passing through the orchestra in various incarnations. Soloist Riseley's playing was lyrical and beautiful throughout and the violin was never overpowered or obscured by the orchestra. As a whole, the movement is very reminiscent of the first movement of the Samuel Barber *Violin Concerto,* a comparison which is not lost on the composer. As the movement draws to a close there are vague reminiscences of Sibelius.

Chaconne: Sacred Time begins with a set of descending chords above which rises a melancholy oboe solo. This leads into a brief cadenza for solo violin which is technical and somewhat virtuosic for the player but without being pretentious. The orchestra then follows with a dramatic thundering crash of sound. The main theme (which had been previously employed by Gilliland in a separate work for the Brian Webb Dance Company) is a melodic canzonetta with the orchestra replying with musical sighs. Gilliland uses an interesting musical device to create sonic balance and contrast in this movement. At the start, after the cadenza, the solo violin begins on its lowest note (open G), while the celesta and strings soar in the upper register. As the movement progresses, both pitch lines move in opposite directions to each other, crossing about midway through the movement and closing with the solo violin at the top of its range and the orchestra in the low bass.

There is no break before the third movement, *Basse Danse,* which opens with a brass chorale. The violin part of this movement reminds one again of Barber with a taste of Prokofiev thrown in for good measure. It is a perpetual motion, but unlike many of its predecessors, it seemed to lack the incessant nagging sense of urgency found elsewhere. Gilliland brings the work to a close with a return of the opening theme from *Ayre.*

All of the forces together contributed to a successful first reading of the work. Armenian's musical direction was sensitive to the overall sonic texture, never allowing the soloist to be drowned out. At the same time, the accompaniment by and the overall blend in the orchestra were pleasing and stylish. Martin Riseley seemed more at ease with the work than with some of

the other concerti he has performed, but not because this piece might have been less of a technical challenge. Somehow, when a soloist performs a work that is written specifically with him or her in mind, there is a transcendental sense of communication which is magically transmitted to the audience from the stage. This reviewer expresses the sincere hope that Martin Riseley is able to introduce the work to other orchestras in the future.

Magdalena Adamek - Piano Recital
Grand Valley State University
February 14, 2001

by Lisa Feurzeig

On February 14, 2001, the Guest-Artist Series at Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan presented a performance by Polish pianist Magdalena Adamek. Ms. Adamek, a graduate of the Warsaw Chopin Academy, specialises in Polish music, particularly pieces that are rarely heard. The first half of her program was devoted entirely to works of Chopin. The second half began with twentieth-century Polish music, by Szymanowski and Miłosz Magin and concluded with the U. S. premiere of a sonatina by Canadian composer Kurt Ellenberger.

The first half reminded us of the variety in Chopin's piano music. Ms. Adamek selected a nocturne, some mazurkas and waltzes, and the barcarolle. She tends to play Chopin quite fast and with a good deal of pedal. The result is often a blurring of the notes, perhaps to create a romantic haze; an unfortunate side effect is that the composer's exquisite melodic lines and details of his voicing can be lost. Nevertheless, it was pleasant to hear familiar works intermingled with unfamiliar ones and to explore Chopin's range of styles and moods.

In the second half, Ms. Adamek took a much cleaner approach well suited to the twentieth-century repertoire she performed. Szymanowski's *Four Mazurkas*, op. 50 nos. 13-16, composed in 1924, have a delicately ironic tone. Szymanowski applies the mazurkas characteristic rhythms to melodies and harmonies coloured by the avant-garde music of the period.

Miłosz Magin (1929-99) was a Polish pianist and composer who

spent much of his life in Paris; Ms. Adamek has recorded many of his works. The program included his *Trois Pièces Caractèristiques*, composed in 1948, and *Triptyque Polonais*, composed in 1967. The first work includes three brief character pieces; the middle one, a polka, is particularly whimsical and charming. The second work includes three Polish dances, each conveying a different mood. The exuberant and brilliantly virtuosic *Oberek* brought that set to an exciting conclusion.

Kurt Ellenberger (b. 1962) describes his Sonatina, which is dedicated to the Canadian popular singer Jane Siberry, as an eclectic work: "a quick tour of the varied forces that were fighting for dominance in my compositional palate." These influences come from his dual career as composer and jazz pianist. The first movement is based on a tone row, the second on a theme by jazz artist Kenny Wheeler, and the last reflects Ellenberger's attraction to Hindemith. Despite these various inspirations, the three movements work well together, creating a whole that is united by Ellenberger's assertive musical lines and solid craftsmanship. The piece presents notable technical demands which Ms. Adamek met with apparent ease. As Ellenberger is on the GVSU faculty, this U.S. premiere of the sonatina was quite a special event for the audience, and brought this fine concert to an appropriate close.

Daan Vandewalle - Piano Recital
New Music Alberta series
Edmonton, AB
March 24, 2002

by Jerry Ozipko

Internationally acclaimed Belgian concert pianist Daan Vandewalle has performed in concert with such artists as David Moss, Fred Frith and Chris Cutler, and has collaborated with ensembles of the calibre of Vapori del cuore, Tense Serenity and Sonic Youth as well. Possessing a dazzling technical mastery of his instrument along with prodigious musical intelligence and interpretive skills, this highly regarded contemporary music specialist made his Edmonton debut under somewhat austere circumstances. This past March 24, as part of the ECCS "New Music Alberta" concert series, Vandewalle played a

musically daunting and technically challenging recital at Studio 27 in the Fine Arts Building at the University of Alberta. Vandewalle opened with Boudewijn Buckinx' *Short Lived (in six movements)*. Buckinx is considered by European performers of contemporary music to be a Belgian 'national treasure.' The work requires incredible control from the pianist, spanning vast ranges of dynamics, tempi, and expression as well as contrasts of simplicity and complexity of line and harmonic structures. The movements varied from very short to substantially lengthy, with Vandewalle breathing movement and life into even the most subdued of passages.

This was followed by *Rhapsody, Op. 25* by ECCS composer member John Bouz. The piece is a free-form composition without time signature. Within its brief duration it encompasses very sudden and extreme changes in dynamics. These contrasts brought Vandewalle's stellar technique into the fore. His incredible control took him from sounds barely above a whisper to thundering chords and back again. In between were runs and interludes.

ECCS member Keith Denning's *Cameos 1-4* came next on the programme. *Cameo No. 1*, which is very Webernian in its sonority, features motifs which move across the keyboard through shifting metres, overlapping from one hand through to the next. *Cameo No. 2* has a much more contrapuntal texture wherein elements of the opening theme are inverted, imitated and transposed. *Cameo No. 3* features a single line played to a driving triple metre. The work closes with a simple, spare atonal melody with sparse accompaniment in *Cameo No. 4*. Vandewalle was clearly at home with the work and communicated his interpretation clearly to those in attendance.

Next came *Wariacje nie na temat (Variations not on the theme)* by Polish composer Marcin Wierzbicki. An interesting concept this and the realization of the concept swept the listener right into its framework. The piece is structured exactly like a theme followed by three variations. Texturally, each variation could be derived from the opening theme, but isn't. However, each provides enough similarity and contrast to be believable as variations. This work, too, was very convincingly delivered by Vandewalle.

Maciej Żółtowski's *Intermezzo 1* is a work constructed in a somewhat modified arch form. The first pillar is reserved - prolonged musically. The end pillar compresses the first into a more dense chordal texture. In between is a brief contrasting section of incessant urgency and tension.

Vandewalle closed his programme with Karel Goeyvaerts' masterpiece, *Litanie*. This is a work with which the pianist is intimately acquainted and he transported his audience through every nuance, every subtlety and every breath point in the music as though it were the very first time he was

bringing it to his public.

For his encore Vandewalle gave a commanding reading of the second movement, "Hawthorne," of the daunting *Concord Sonata* by Charles Ives. He proved his mettle and his stellar reputation with technical mastery and astounding musicianship.

The concert will never be forgotten by those in attendance and was woefully omitted by the reviewers of the local newspapers, much to their shame.

Canto I

Hope for a world of unity, one where strife is discarded
and our common humanity embraced.

Hope for the equality of all people, where each second is valued and is of
value.

Hope that death is not the end.

Hope that the artists will survive.

Canto II

Love.

Canto III

Allow the peoples of the globe.
To unite with a sense of common humanity.
Prove that music can be more than entertainment.
That art does exist among us.
Let art prosper.
Enable art to serve as more than a function.
As something that is not obligatory but something that is essential.
Revel in the intoxication that art can stir.
Set aside binding and conventional theories about art.
Redefine what it means to be an artist.

SHORT STORY

Kathleen Yearwood, Egremont, AB

MY WORK HISTORY

"...and you can't
pretend you don't hear that thunder--
listen now--in the back lot
over there, behind the La-Z-Boy Showcase
Shoppe, the Howard Johnson, the Carpet Factory
Warehouse Outlet, in that land lit up
by those familiar stars
we call the Milky Way."
Steven Ruhl, from *Here It Comes Again.*

Tonight I was outside staring straight up into the sky. The sky at night is disturbing. The stars, especially the Milky Way, especially disturbing. Because after I stare for a while I become aware that the sky is a dome and I am under it, and that, although the stars stretch out forever, they are trapped in a cloud of gravity so huge it sucks them into a spiral shape, which contains the earth and gives the illusion of the dome of sky, and we are a part of this spiral. The Milky Way is particularly disturbing because we are at the outer edge looking along its side as it slowly spins apart and tries to go away from us but because of gravity it can't fall apart and it can't expand, and it can't leave us and we can't leave it.

I was looking for the falling stars tonight; a meteor shower. Meteors fall close to the earth, but they look to be about as far away from us as a star. And they make no sound when they fall. When you see them slide down the sky it seems there should be some noise, but it is so cold in the December night and so silent, and you don't hear a thing; it takes a while to realize you didn't hear a thing.

The thing that disturbs me the most about the night sky, with its crown of coloured sparkling stars, is that it is too beautiful. Because what I know of the world is that it is cruel and ugly, and that people are petty and selfish- they are as unlike the sky at night as anything I can imagine. Their imaginations are infinitely small and confined, by the same amount of gravity that holds the universe together; enough gravity to squash their imaginations into black holes; and the world is the manifestation of all these gutted imaginations; a hell, not beautiful; not infinite.

Not inspiring.

I avoid inspiration now. It's too uncomfortable. But I do know that when I die, I will be happy. All these people who slaved away their whole lives doing things they hated, just to avoid being cold or hungry, well, when I'm dead I'll feel neither cold nor hunger; I'll feel no more pain and no more pleasure, I won't feel anything, that's why I want to feel everything now. And that's why I stay outside in the cold looking straight up into the sky until my eyes go blurry.

I stare at the sky and I think that it cannot belong to the world that I know. I know one thing. That is that I don't do many things I don't want to anymore. And neither do I want to be cold or hungry. On the radio today the lady who runs the foodbank was saying that they'd run out of food, and if people couldn't get help at the foodbank then they won't have anywhere to go because the foodbank is the last resort. I always liked the idea of a foodbank. You can make a deposit or a withdrawal. It's more convenient than a money bank, because you can't eat money.

Anyway, she's saying, if we can't feed these people then what is their next option? And I'm yelling at the radio "It's crime... it's CRIME!" and I'm laughing.

On the wall I have a list of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is more for reference than anything, because for at least half of it I can cite examples of somebody being denied their basic human rights. Nobody takes it serious anymore, most people around here think you get just what you deserve and you shouldn't whine about what you don't have, even if lots of other people have it. The list doesn't mention crime but I think it's implicit that if you don't have food or housing or education, then you really have a duty to steal it. I don't think it takes much skill to go to a job and do as your told until your brain atrophies, but I think a successful shoplifter has a real life skill. And it's not just me, there's always been a quiet voice, mostly from schizophrenics and other intellectuals, barely audible behind the squeal of the work ethic and the mad grab for money, saying that no one should have to trade their soul for food and shelter. That means no prostitution; public or domestic; children should have the right to live where they are the most comfortable, and that you should take pleasure in the fruits of your labours. People aren't donkeys yoked to the aspirations of their rulers.

Except, of course, they are, and those intellectuals I mentioned are always from the best families, and the schizophrenics nobody listens to.

But the quiet voice remains, and I have to agree. You can stop the aching of an empty belly with one meal, but once you have traded away your

soul, how can you get it back? I ask this question of people who have traded their freedom for security, but they don't answer, they just stare at me.

Religion, specifically Christianity, has been very bad for happiness in employment. It's all those promises of immortality that help people live as though they planned to live forever. But we don't live all that long.

I know I'll miss seeing the moonrise through the trees and the blue evening sky one day, I'll miss it more than anything. But I won't be able to stop in my tracks and watch it anymore, because I'll be dead. I guess that's why I stand so long gazing at the moonrise, and why it seems so important to me, not something that can wait until I'm comfortable and secure.

When you watch your parents grumble and go off to jobs they hate you come to accept that your only real worth is as a worker, and that anything beyond the arena of work is a luxury. Moonrises included.

In the old days, if you were at all canny, you could take a crappy job and quit it as soon as something better came up until you got one you didn't mind at all, but that was in the old days.

But the real, true working class, like my parents, always had it stuck in their mind that they were lucky to have a job and they better stick with it 'till they die.

That was the climate I took my first jobs in.

All the skills I needed for my first paying job I learned, by a process of repetition and osmosis, at home. I could cook and clean and deal with drunks when I first applied for a job at the Salisbury House, a horrible little lunch counter on the 8th avenue mall in Calgary. The most appealing aspect of the job, and the reason I lasted there for almost two years of evenings, weekends and summertimes, was the low level of supervision. I'm pretty sure I never actually met my boss. I was fifteen and I had the place to myself, me and my girlfriend, who worked there too, but she left early a lot, or hung out in the back with her boyfriend. I cooked fast food on the grill, and served coffee and cleaned up 4 P.M. 'till midnight. I got the job during a very hot July. When I went to bed at night the first few days I spent the night adding up bills in my sleep and making change. Whatever obsessive tendencies I had were exacerbated by the bland repetitiveness of the job. Naturally, I looked for ways to spice things up. As the night wore on, at the Salisbury House, things would get busy and cus-tumors (as I called them) would ask me for refills of coffee. I'd tell them, "There's the coffee-pot, get it yourself."

My regulars would come in and get themselves a coffee. The only trick was they had to lean over the counter. Once I got a twenty dollar tip from some man. I think it had more to do with my pure stupid innocence and

mini skirt uniform than with my level of cus-tumor service.

I never got to know him or any of my regulars. They were all interchangeable to me, I have a knack for forgetting a face, which I'm sure didn't help with tips, and for awhile I actually thought I was just there to serve food.

When the restaurant chain raised the prices on all the food by adding a pickle and jacking the price up 85 cents, I didn't comply. I knew the people who ate there weren't rich so I charged the old prices and everybody knew it. I never even ate the food there, it was so bad and we were expected to pay for anything we ate on our shift. I'd drop an egg into a glass of milk in the milkshake blender and drink that.

On weekend nights there were fights on the mall. It's an outside mall , bordering the interesting side of town, the side I used to visit when I'd play hooky from school. I never could understand the idea that you "play" hooky. It was serious business for me, and I learned more there than in school.

I began on these weekend nights to appreciate my position as a low paid therapist, both mental and physical. I allowed chaos to reign. It was therapeutic for my clients, I figured, to let them have a place where the normal laws of commerce did not apply. The fight victims would stagger in and I would lead them to the back room. My girlfriend would appear and we would apply raw Salisbury steaks to the facial wounds and black coffee to the internal cold painful humiliation of being vanquished on the 8th Avenue Mall. Alcohol always played a part in the violence outside the cafe. One night I got pressed up against the wall by a drunk I let stay in while I cleaned up at the end of the night. My girlfriend had left and I was alone with this big, drooling creep. I steered him towards the door pretending to dance with him and shoved him out.

Dogs were always welcome, and wieners were served raw on plates to the regular dogs and the strays. There were abundant cockroaches in the back, crawling up a lava- flow of spattered grease on one wall. One very busy Saturday afternoon, one of the cockroaches ran across the counter out front, just as I set down a plate of old-priced Salisbury Steak, which was really just two hamburger patties sqwushed together into an oval mold on the grill and garnished with a pickle.

"A bug", I shrieked, and everyone stopped eating. "Somebody call the Health Department." And nobody moved. "All the food is free from now on." I said.

My cus-tumors were loyal to my old-fashioned pricing policy and didn't see fit to complain to my boss about me and my performances. In fact, after about a year I got a raise, not because I was any good, just because the law demanded that once I was 16 I should get more. I made $2.75 and I spent

my birthday there, as well as the day my brother got married.

There was free coffee for everyone that day, and I was the one who was drunk. I told a joke that nobody understood over and over and laughed myself to tears. I forgot orders and people left, but that happened all the time anyway. I got several runs in my white stockings (they didn't have to be white but I liked the image of a nurse-like waitress, with white runny stockings and a stained polyester uniform and brown shoes painted white with liquid polish that always chipped off). I couldn't even get fired from that job so I quit as soon as school ended and caught a ride to the coast. I had 30 bucks. I didn't do the job for money, I don't know why I did it. But it led to my favourite saying about jobs, " Work is sacred, don't do it for the money."

I got so involved in my jobs when I was young that the paycheque always came as a surprise.

Even if a job was unpleasant and boring, I'd find a way to enjoy it. That may be a part of the work ethic, but later the challenges I set myself were things like how to be later and later every passing day until I didn't come in at all and have airtight excuses every time. I was slowly leaving my roots behind.

I ended up in music college for a couple of days in Vancouver, but I had no way to support myself and nowhere to live, so I quit and got a job singing in bars all over BC. I got these gigs through an agency that didn't like my style too much. I sang serious songs, thinking songs, not drinking songs, and I dressed like a nun. Women are supposed to always exist on the cusp of something overtly sexual, especially in the entertainment industry. I was a year underage but I got drunk enough in my four hour set, six nights a week to nearly fall off my stool. The agency head guy told me to "wear something slinky" and sent me off to Kamloops for two weeks.

I wore the same cotton, long dress every night but still the manager of the hotel was convinced I was a hooker, especially when a couple of my friends came to visit with me in my hotel room. He called me into his office to tell me he didn't want any "trouble". I went all the way up to Vanderhoof after that and I got fired after the first night. The proprietor was convinced the weekend crowd would eat me alive. He was wrong, but I headed home anyway, with the intention of quitting. The agency sent me a bill for their 20% of what I would have made in Vanderhoof, had I been paid, and I was stupid enough to take another gig to pay them off.

Two weeks in Port Coquitlam would have finished me had I not made the acquaintance of the stripper who worked several shifts in the bar. We shared the same name and she was a fan of thinking music so she'd come

in every night after her last show and request songs. On my fifteen minute breaks between sets I'd sit at the bar and read books like Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes From Underground*. The conversations with the patrons went like this:
Man at bar (drunken, middle aged): "Can I buy you a drink?"
Me: "Sure." He buys me a drink; I drink it and keep reading.
Him: "You're quiet tonight."
Me: "Uh-huh."

After that I just played on the street in Vancouver. Weirdly enough, many people thought I was a prostitute. I was a lousy busker. I only made ten bucks a day, four of which I spent on dinner, and then, if it wasn't raining, I'd save the buck bus fare back to Haney by hitchhiking. I only worked Monday to Thursday, I avoided the weekends because I hated crowds and drunks and besides, I had to be in church early Sunday mornings.

I got a job as a janitor at what used to be a prison and it was fun because the building was without a doubt haunted, and I used to lead excursions to the top floor to watch the spectacular sunsets every evening. But the boss hugged one of my co-workers in an inappropriate manner so I punched him in the face, and that occurred the same week he found me playing basketball in the gym by myself so I decided to move on.

I taught guitar to kids at a private music school in a lady's garage in Burnaby. I couldn't read music but I faked it and the only problem with the job was I only made enough to pay my rent. But I kept it up for awhile, supplementing my income with my street gig and I got so hungry that I could barely walk up the hill to her house. Every day the hill got steeper and longer, like those dreams where it feels as though you're running through molasses, and I would have to stop and sit down. She started feeding me, because I arrived around dinner time. One night I ate three bowls of pea soup in a row, with coffee. I had to quit because I couldn't tell her I needed more money.

All these failed career attempts aside, I finally found my m?tier at Haven House, a retirement hovel for the ex-patients of Riverview, the mental institution; ex- patients considered too old to treat; sixty years old and drugged into somnambulism and turned loose in the confines of a rambling mansion with a vegetable garden under the watchful eyes of a few completely untrained attendants, cooks and cleaners.

Haven House wasn't much of a haven, except for me. I had played a few concerts at the Riverview Hospital and I already knew that I enjoyed the company of the "abnormal" thinkers in the institution to the "normal" because they sometimes focused on the big, interesting questions, and they seemed to allow for a greater range of emotion than the standard. They were also com-

pletely unconcerned with the small, niggling details of mercantilism, a subject which consumes most "normal" people. Often, these other people seemed unaware that they lived in a consumer-driven society, they showed no concern for the physical necessities and luxuries of life, except for, maybe, food. I found I could talk honestly with most of the people I met there, and be free from judgment. Their cloistered existence appealed to me, as did the range of subjects we could discuss.

My friends at Haven House were deeply institutionalized. They had, many of them, spent their entire lives at Riverview. Their institutionalisation was like a thick fog through which their abundant personalities shone. My job, as I interpreted it, was to encourage the expression of these personalities and ignore or dispel the fog. To this end, I spent my days in conversation or facilitating a watercolour painting class in the dining room, in between serving the low- cost food and cleaning up the kitchen. I was expected to give out medication, but it didn't matter to me if the residents took it or not. I gave it into their keeping, as it were, and when dozens of doses of a powerful anti-psychotic were found in the vent under one mans' chair I was expected to watch him drink his medication in liquid form in orange juice. And when he poured the orange juice into his teapot right in front of me I just smiled and said: "I'll take your empty glass now."

My view was that the patients understood their own mental state and need for medication better than I did.

There was a strict routine in the house built around mealtimes and coffee time. John sat near the dining room door from breakfast time on and would announce all breaks with his trademark yell, "Coffee time, men." I got bored of the predictability of the days and one lunchtime I coloured a huge vat of rice pudding green with food colouring. I served it and almost everyone just got up and walked into the tv room. John, the meal announcer looked at me over his bowl of green mush and spoke to me directly for the first and only time.

"You're crazy," he said, and left the room.

After about a year, the house got a new owner-director and someone decided that I should add bedmaking, laundry and cleaning to my already hectic schedule of bullshitting around with the residents. As far as I knew, there was already a whole crew of ladies who clucked around the place doing those very things and wearing aprons and generally disapproving of everything that went on. So twice a week I would visit Mr. Bruno Beyers in his room at the farthest end of the longest hallway and he would sing me songs and we would talk and when the Chicken ladies would pass his door saying, "Where is she?,

she knows it's laundry day." He would cock his head and ask me if I heard anyone out there. Of course I didn't hear anything interesting so we continued to visit. When he realized what was going on he would lock his door behind me as soon as I showed up.

Things started to change quickly with the new owners. About half the residents got a new doctor as well. He came around and met them all then cut everybody's meds in half. This was not my method of letting them self-regulate and it didn't work as well. Barney punched the new manager lady out because she wouldn't give him one of his cigarettes. His meds got reinstated with an extra half-dose for good measure. Instead of talking about Seattle Stew and doing impressions of Elvis on top of a table, he spent three weeks docile in a chair trying to assimilate the new dosage. The manager had an actual black eye.

My friend The Walker, (so called because he walked a route to downtown and back every day), had a relapse and spent the days out at the intersection blessing cars, and then he proclaimed his love for me because, as he finally explained it , he was 66 and I was 19 and he was the Christ and I the true church and we were to be wed in a celestial wedding. He proved this to me using the bible and a copy of the National Geographic. I was off for the weekend and when I came back Monday the manager and the Chicken Ladies bluntly told me that I had to tell The Walker to quit blessing cars and buying flowers for women in town or he was going back to Riverview. I went to his room and again he showed me his proof from those two inviolable sources and I had to admit that he was right. Those people needed blessing; the lady at the ice-cream store deserved flowers; and we were the celestial couple: but we must keep it a secret, I said, because the devils' spies were everywhere. He was very discreet after that and he stayed on at Haven House.

Tommy the gardener was in perfect health and tended a full acre of vegetables and flowers every day of his life until the new doctor cut his medication. He stayed in bed moaning in pain for a week then died. The manager took me down to his room one morning and he was dead in his bed. She left me in there with him while she went to fetch someone. He had no next of kin that anyone could find and a small drawerful of personal effects. They called lots of people with his last name but no one could remember if he was their uncle or anything and no one wanted to say for sure they were related to him. I sat with him until an ambulance came.

We were all still reeling from this when Haven House started welcoming destitute, dying women into its three gloomy private rooms. The men lived in shared rooms down a long corridor, but in the front, drafty part of the

house was the office and three dusty rooms with beige curtains the colour of smoke damage. Each of the three rooms housed a terminally ill woman; one with MS, another with cancer, and the last with old age. They became my responsibility, but the men also took an active interest in their well-being, providing frequent visits and much concern. The eldest woman painted in her bed at my suggestion and produced water- colours on the theme of life and death, painting herself as a blasted oak tree with broken branches and blackened leaves falling off.

For several months I bathed, fed and comforted these women, as well as dealing with the concerns and fears of what was left of their families.

I was nineteen years old.

The trouble with doing terminal care is that, no matter how conscientious you are, all your charges die. I came to work one morning and one of the women had died, one had moved out and the other was packed ready to leave. I took their cue and, a short time later, left town for good.

In a small Manitoba town I repaired drywall and painted the interiors and exteriors of public housing, at cut rates until I landed a job at the local hotel/motel, cleaning the bar and the rooms. The pay was magnificent and enhanced by my favourite working condition: zero supervision. Menial labour is sad enough without some boss staring at you the whole time, and my boss liked to sleep in so I only saw her the day I started and the day I quit.

I hated cleaning the bar. I didn't drink and just the stench of that room at 8 A.M., with the chairs all overturned and the full ashtrays and the carpet all squishy with spilled beer, or blood, made it hard for me to go in. I developed a system. First, I'd spend a long time shining the glass door of the hotel, (which, come to think of it had a partly burned out neon sign that said HO- EL, a fact that I censored in my own mind so that I could get on with the job), to give the impression that the whole place had been cleaned just as fastidiously. Then I'd enter the stinking beer hall and run through holding my breath and kick open the fire exit door at the back, the only orifice in the room that opened to fresh air. All the green bags full in the bins got tied shut and hucked down the fire escape (no heavy lifting required). The ashtrays got dropped in the sink with gallons of bleach and scorching water and forgotten about until the water was lukewarm and butts floated all bleached-out and soggy on the surface. In the meantime I'd switch on the big TV to music videos and turn it 'way up so I could vacuum the place. The vacuum was the stand-up kind with a long cord so I could kick it out rolling into the middle of the floor strewn with cigarette butts and beer and the odd tooth, and then just reel it back in by hauling on the cord, all the time standing stock still,

watching the blaring TV It was like fishing for crap. It's a shame I didn't smoke because it would have been an ideal time to dangle a DuMaurier from my bottom lip.

Next, I'd line up the chairs in rows, as per the boss's instructions, all the time wondering if anybody ever just sat down and drank in rows like that, as though they were in a sort of drinking school. I cleaned the women's washroom, but I drew my own personal line at the men's room. If I didn't just completely ignore it, (my boss being female, why would she check?), I'd take a big breath outside the door and, cleaning supplies in gloved hands, I'd kick the door open with one foot, take ONE step inside with the other, spray Lysol wildly at the sink and turn the taps full on, spray the toilet and urinal, grab for the door just before it shut and exit into the relatively fresh air over by the fire escape and take my first breath since entering the can.

I could turn the taps off later.

The motel rooms that had been vacated got cleaned, more or less, in my own style. But those rooms where people were staying another night and had hung the "chambermaid, please make up this room" sign on the door handle, got their rooms made up alright. They got my special cosmetic treatment which meant I shined up all the fixtures in the bathroom and shower with their super fluffy dirty bath towels, replaced the towels, kicked any obvious dirt under the bed and put a "this toilet has been disinfected" (in your dreams) strip over the toilet seat. This left me more time to hang around the laundry room waiting for the dryer, drinking coffee.

All my time saving techniques bought me lots of free time to watch the purple sun rise over the motel and and enjoy the morning flight of pelicans going to the lake. I couldn't afford to rush home until I'd put in enough hours to pay the rent. It was at this job that I achieved a new record earning of twenty eight dollars a day.

After that job I tried to sling coffee again, but it was all wrong, too much supervision cramped my style. When the boss rolled through the kitchen and said "Hi, Honey ", to us women in there, I'd answer with "hello, cupcake." Which, it turned out, was not good for the gander. I complained about the broken air-conditioner when it hit 30 degrees Celsius in the kitchen, and I complained about double-shifts with no extra pay, and the very day I had decided to quit, I had spent the night before sitting on the back step staring straight up at the milky way and watching the stars slowly circle. I went in and gave a speech to all the customers about how the night before I'd poured enough oil down the back of the grill to feed a family of Guatemalans for a week, just to clean the damn thing, and he fired me, giving as reason for

dismissal the observation that I didn't enjoy my job. My dad hated his job for 25 years and he never had the pleasure of getting fired. If all your bosses fired you because you weren't having fun then this would be a much happier country. I only lasted five days there, I could have stayed longer if I didn't have to pretend to be stupid and obsequious, the work wasn't so hard, just the lack of respect for human dignity. That is a yoke too heavy to bear, even for someone used to working hard every day of their life.

I guess I've learned not to put that yoke on. And it's true, you can't ask for your human rights, you just have to take them. I can't talk yet about my latest jobs, though I'm pretty sure none of my ex-bosses can read, I just don't want them to know that what they had me do I see as a form of legal prostitution. Those people who assumed I was a prostitute were right all along. In my class, you take on the yoke, along with some form of selling your flesh, your smile, your compliance. After awhile you realize it's not worth it to sell your life and feel sick and sleep deprived and frustrated, (because if you don't follow your soul you will be frustrated), after awhile you either lie to yourself and get sick or you lie to the world and live your life as though it was precious time well-spent, and see your precious body as not just a meaningless mass of calories and electrical impulses, always ready to do whatever stupid, repetitive chore is demanded of it; not as an expendable amount of man-hours; not even as a human resource; no, not as a resource but as a human being.

Then you make the required sacrifices.

About the authors

Janice Brown is Professor of modern Japanese literature at the University of Alberta. She publishes in the area of modern and contemporary Japanese women's fiction and poetry. Her recent publications include Hayashi Fumiko's *I Saw A Pale Horse and Selected Poetry from Diary of a Vagabond*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell East Asian Series, 1997, and *Tarnished Words: The Poetry of Ōba Minako*, White Plains, New York: EastBridge Press, forthcoming.

Lisa Feurzeig is a musicologist and singer who specializes in vocal music of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including Schubert lieder and music of the Vienna *Volkstheater*. She has written on Schubert, Wagner, and Fauré. Recent performances have included Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* and Kurt Ellenberger's *Six or Seven Songs from Eight Significant Landscapes*. Ms. Feurzeig received her doctorate in musicology from the University of Chicago, and she is a faculty member at Grand Valley State University in Michigan.

Manijeh Mannani is currently enrolled in Ph.D. program in Comparative Literatura at the University of Alberta. She has presented her papers at various conferences and had her articles published in professional periodicals including the *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature*.

Heather Nicholson has recently graduated from the University of Alberta in Edmonton, AB.

Karen Tober is a writer living in Edmonton, AB.

Walentyna Węgrzyn is a writer and musicologist based in Wrocław, Poland. Considered one of the leading music writers in that country, she has published in *Ruch Muzyczny*, *Muzyka21* and others.

Based in Egremont, Alberta, **Kathleen Yearwood** is an internationally renowned musician, writer, poet and social activist. She has performed and published widely throughout North America and Europe. Her recent publications include *Self-Mutilation,* University of Oslo, forthcoming.

Dan Albertson is a composer and writer, based in Michigan (USA). His writings are primarily abstract and are arranged by sound and not by meaning. Current projects include two opera libretti for Australian and Austrian composers. His compositions are mostly for heavily amplified instruments.

Dennis Báthory-Kitsz is a composer living in Vermont. He co-hosts *Kalvos & Damian's New Music Bazaar,* and has composed more than 500 works, including *HighBirds (Prime)* in memory of Iannis Xenakis. The dreary and trivial university to which he refers is Rutgers.

Born in Germany and living in Canada since 1951, **Reinhard von Berg** is a composer, performer and educator. Between 1964 and 1968 he completed a Bachelor's degree in Theory and Composition at the University of Alberta, where he studied with the late Violet Archer. From 1968 to 1971, he was in Germany on a scholarship from the German Academic Exchange Service, studying primarily with Wolfgang Fortner, and completing a Diploma in Theory and Composition at the Musikhochschule in Freiburg. From 1971 to 1974, he worked at the University of California, San Diego, studying primarily with Pauline Oliveros, and completing an M.A. Performances of his works have taken place in Canada, the USA and Europe.

Winner of the Governors General's Award, Professor **Edward D. Blodgett** lives in Edmonton, AB, where he is Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta. He has published over a dozen books of poetry and criticism, including *Arché/Elegies*, *Apostrophes. A Woman at a Piano*, *through you I*, *speaking you is holiness* and *Transfiguration* (jointly with Jacques Brault). Apart from the Governor General's Award, Professor Blodgett received the Canadian Authors Association Award and the Stephan Stephansson Award for poetry. His poetry has been translated into French, Hebrew, Polish, Serbo-Croatian, and Chinese.

J. Andrew Creaghan is a composer, performer and writer. His recordings have received international acclaim and his concerts have taken him across Canada and abroad. His many compositions have been performed and broadcast around the world, and span almost all known genres of music including symphonies, solo and chamber works and choral music. He now teaches guitar performance at Alberta College, Edmonton, AB.

Canadian composer, **Alfred Fisher** is an independent voice in the international New Music scene. Entirely dedicated to the primacy of musical engagement and communication, Fisher eschews stylising in favour of a music rooted in philosophic/literary soil that continues to yield basic challenges of language, coherence, personal expression, historic precedent and continuity. His record as a composer includes commissions from Radio Telefis Eireann, Wayne State University, the Cork International Choral Festival, the International Suzuki Association, the Canadian Music Centre, the Canada Council, CBC and many others. Dr. Fisher is currently Professor of Theory and Composition at Queen's University, Kingston, ON.

D'Arcy Philip Gray is a performer (percussionist) and writer based in Montréal, Québec. He works with a variety of styles of music. His professional interests range from classical performance to electronic composition and circuit design. He performs regular solo and chamber music concerts in various parts of Canada and has been teaching percussion at McGill University since 1991. From 1993 to 1995 Gray performed regularly with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company in New York. Currently he is a member of Montreal's "Bradyworks" , Fredericton's "Motion", and New York's "Composers Inside Electronics".

Piotr Grella-Możejko is a free-lance composer and writer based in Edmonton, Alberta. A considerable number of his works, performed in Asia, Europe and North America, have been written on commissions from The Alberta Foundation for the Arts, The Canada Council for the Arts, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Polish Radio, to mention just a few.

A native of Western Canada, **Ron Hannah** has resided in Saskatchewan (where he was born in 1945), Vancouver, the Peace River country, Alberta, and until recently, in Victoria, B.C. From 2002 on he has extensively travelled in the Far East absorbing the inspiring atmosphere there. He holds B.Sc. in Chemistry (1969) and M.Mus. in Composition (1975), both degrees awarded by the University of Alberta. Hannah has received commissions from the Alberta Choral Federation, the CBC, and the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, among others.

A poet, novelist, literary critic, and authority on and translator of Serbo-Croatian literature, **Julian Kornhauser** was born in Gliwice, Poland, in 1946. He is one of the outstanding and most durable exponents of the "New Wave," the last significant literary movement in Poland, which was composed of writers

born after World War II who made their debuts in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He took part then in the opposition to the communist authorities. As a poet he has always been an individualist. Aside from New Wave sensitivity to the falsehoods inherent in public discourse, he exhibits an original and often surrealistic imagination and a wide range of poetic means and subjects, from reports on scenes from everyday life to unusual visions imbued with symbolic language. The evolution of Kornhauser's writing tends towards privacy, the individualisation of utterance and the search for detail. He began with protest, negation and egocentricity, then challenged the New Wave postulates to assume an ironic distance, and has now turned away from public issues and duties to private and personal ones.

G. Gordon Nicholson was born in Vegreville, Alberta. His academic background includes B.Sc., University of Alberta (1964, Honours), B.Ed., University of Alberta (1966, Secondary Education), B.Mus., Berklee College, Boston (1970, Magna Cum Laude - Composition), M.Mus., University of Alberta (1971, Composition) and Ph. D., Saybrook Institute, San Francisco (1997, studies in musical composition and the creative process). Over the years, his music has been performed, broadcast and recorded throughout North America, Europe and Australia.

Jerry Ozipko is a writer, music critic, performer and composer living in Edmonton, Alberta. He has written hundreds of essays, reviews and interviews for journals and magazines in Canada, the US and Europe. Since the late 1960's he has been active as a performer of avant-garde and experimental music.

Elgar Schmidt is a writer and music critic living in Edmonton, Alberta. He holds a Master degree in the area of Philosophy of Education awarded by the University of Alberta. Mr. Schmidt has a keen interest in classical music, and the relationship between music and philosophical ideals.

Dalbir Sehmby is a Ph.D. candidate in Comparative Literature at the University of Alberta.