

THE GEESE FLY  
NOTES ON CHINESE  
OPERA  
THE THIRD ANNUAL  
QUARTET?  
UCSD  
J. ASKS SOME QUES  
TIONS

etc., etc.

EAR

MAY 1975 vol 3 no 2

First the unfinished business. Last month we really did go on a bit too long about EAR-- Charles Amirkhanian rightly complained that EAR was forever stating its purpose and intent to the point of crowding out the illustrations of its purpose and intent. We'll try to stop that annoying practise. Secondly, we made the mistake of writing the lead before putting last month's issue together, and made a few mystifying remarks for that reason. The Stockhausen interview referred to in last month's issue was crowded out, of course, and there isn't room this time either; it'll turn up in the near future. Ernst Bacon's piece is being serialized, a point left unclear last month.

The question keeps recurring about EAR offering listings. It won't, for several reasons. City mag covers the field pretty well. It makes EAR unnecessarily regional. It's a lot of work, and takes a lot of space. And we'd rather people would advertise, as CAL and 1750 Arch have so loyally. But things come along that we do want to mention, and here are a couple or three:

First, the Oakland Museum is finally launching a series of concerts which will take place over the summer. The concerts will be free, but will pay the performers, so money has to be raised. The money-raiser will be a CONCERT OF 20TH CENTURY MUSIC ON MAY 30, with Sally Kell leading New Beginnings in Stravinsky's Ragtime and Fanfare, Casella's Serenata, Jack Fortner's (Fresno composer) 5:5 apres Jonas, Revueletas' Homenaje a Garcia Lorca (now there's a composer whodid read Lorca), and Varese's Octandre. Send a check for \$5 to Oakland Museum Music Fund, 1000 Oak St., Oakland 94607 for the tickets, which get you wine & cheese after the concert.

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Next, Herb Bielewa tells me that the Dominican College Performing Ensemble (I didn't know there was one) will play at S.F. State on May 16: Crumb Madrigals Book II, Ravel Duo Sonata for vln & cello, Langert Duo for piano 4 hands, Schoenberg Nachtwandler, whatever that is, and Stockhausen's never-performed earliest piece Kreuzspiel for oboe, bass clarinet, piano and percussion (1951): a fascinating program.

Then, Jean-Louis Le Roux is continuing the series of BYOP concerts Charles Boone began in S.F. galleries. The first one has already gone by; the next are on May 12 (Stravinsky, Varese and Malec) and May 27 (Milhaud, Crumb and Boucourechliev) at the Grapestake Gallery, 2876 California St., S.F.

#### The Better Ear

New York

Columbia University psychologists have satisfied themselves that the right ear is superior to the left ear while listening to music.

New York Times

The entire issue is something of a tempest in a teapot. The original version is somewhat boring, and so is the Sonata version. Any true admirer of the composer would do his memory a great service by ignoring

both -- and the trivial salon cello-piano Variations, opus 66 that opened the evening.

H. T.

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BEAT THE RUSH!



Ernst Bacon's *Advice to Music Patrons*, first printed in EAR 13, is currently being reissued in EAR—partly because 13 scrambled the type, mostly because I like it. Last month we published the first section which was largely concerned with money. Here with, the second...

by ERNST BACON

#### The Symphony As A Civic Institution

The orchestra has become music's city hall, its gallery, its court, its hospital, its laboratory, its school. Thus its policy and leadership are important civically, artistically, socially, experimentally, and pedagogically. More is involved than skill. The city's musical health is involved; indeed, its cultural climate. In some European cities, the opera is the axis of music, but in our predominantly instrumental world, it has always been the orchestra.

Fine and honorable it is for a citizen to assume the cost, beyond the box-office, of an orchestra. But his or her money is not the only contribution. The audience contributes admission money, the teachers bring experience; the students, eager curiosity. The amateurs bring an unbought love of music. The players bring their skills; their salaries being no measure of what went into these skills by the yardstick of other professions. Granted our debt to patrons, should they alone elect a city's musical mayor? Would money alone presume to make such a decision in medicine, law, education? Unfortunately, patrons turn for advice in selecting a conductor to management—that is to say, to music's equivalent of Madison Avenue; to those who know, in Bernard Shaw's words, "that the more it costs, the more it will be believed."

The daily, weekly, monthly, yearly subordination of individuality to the making of a good orchestral ensemble is a heavy price to pay for anyone aspiring to be a soloist. True, he learns much by playing under a conductor of developed taste and tact. But, little by little, he loses the idiosyncracies of his solo playing: the personal tone, vibrato, rubato, the freedom of style, improvisational note. But an orchestra needs the discipline of an army corps to make great music. It is too large and disparate to achieve unity, balance, and focus on its own (as in a quartet) without a leader. When this discipline becomes voluntary, the effects can be astounding: the conductor, however firm his conception of a score, yielding with flexible grace to the special qualities of his musicians in a play of mutuality which, while understood by few listeners, is felt by all. This was the Nikisch approach, represented in our day by Walter, Monteux, Mitropoulos, Ozawa, and others; as contrasted with the dictatorial manner, however successful, of Koussevitzky, Szell, and Reiner.

All in all, there is the problem of the one, as opposed to the many—which every politician knows, every classroom teacher, every college president; the problem of organization in the framework of democracy, of benevolence in the exercise of control. If the leader is inadequate, all must suffer. If he is superior, all stand to gain. To speak then of the advantage of a single, uninterrupted seasonal direction, for reasons of orchestral "perfection," as one often hears it, is idle. It may work for ill as well as good. The music is what counts, and not the perfection of its instrument. And by music is meant not only intonation, tempo, correctness, fidelity, or virtuosity—but character, life, beauty, poetry. And that is the conductor's mission. It is a spiritual achievement, involving finally the transcendence of his ego. "The real task of the conductor," said Liszt, "consists in making himself quite useless."

Guest conductors are a respite from monotony—if well chosen. A whole season under one director, however good, can become tiresome. No artist is at home in all the literature. Some tastes obviate others. The expert in avant-garde music may do a Schubert symphony to perfection, yet lack the heart to move his listeners. The reverse is no less likely. We don't go to hear twenty concerts by the greatest of pianists or violinists. Is conducting so different? Say what you will, the orchestra is the conductor's instrument no less, though it be a thing of flesh and blood.

But of late a new arrangement has developed, whereby a few favored conductors lead, not one, but two, three, and even four orchestras, not as guests, but as directors. Since they cannot be at their various posts at one time, there remain concerts that require guesting. It may offer variety; but not always quality. "Assistants" frequently take over, and it is common knowledge that they are chosen to insure no rivalry with their chiefs. Von Karajan seems to have been one of the first to introduce this new super-conductorship, yielding each orchestra only a fraction of his attention. There is an old-fashioned tradition that a major conductorship entails civic and social obligations, knowing the community's musicians, schools, performers, composers, choruses, chamber groups, lesser orchestras, conductors; planning events outside the regular season; meeting with patrons, teachers, and union officials; reading new scores; altogether a full-time assignment. Were we to translate this new hegemony into other professions, we would have to allow that Harvard's prestigious president take over Yale and Princeton as well; that USC's football coach give Ohio State and Notre Dame the same benefit of his victorious strategy. The idea is to spread the glamour of success around widely. It simplifies promotion and bookkeeping. It's more profitable to inflate five reputations ten times over than to deal with fifty reputations at par. As a result, the bottle swells, while the neck shrinks.

Murmurs may be expected from cities that discover themselves with but a third of a maestro (the arithmetic having never troubled them before); from orchestras that will feel more demeaned than exalted in the depletion of what is their due; from other established conductors debarred by the new feodality; from the profession that loses all personal touch with its chosen leader. It means that regional autonomy has less and less meaning at the very time that regional artistry warrants it the more.

Finally there is the old cry for nationalism, long and honorably graced in the lives of Mozart, Weber, Schumann, Berlioz, Verdi, Balakirev, Rimsky, Sullivan, V. Williams, Ives, Villa-Lobos, and ever so many more. Has a people the right to its own leaders? Has native mastery the right to native responsibilities? Why there should remain, after generations of sophistication, any questions like these in the world's wealthiest and most powerful state is hard to understand. Our nation has justly prided itself on its hospitality. To be sure, in music the rapid growth from provincialism to professionalism has been due largely to the teaching and example of Europeans. But all this is of the past. A giant on apron-strings is not edifying to behold. The fast transformation from infancy to maturity has not been all salutary. Youth and young manhood have been fleetingly by-passed, which accounts for much that now is bitter, imitative, resigned, perverse and unsubstantial among musicians, as well as for snobbery, presbyopia, and gullibility among patrons. They, the patrons, consider the rider at fault, when it may be the horse.

(continued on page 3)

## SAN DIEGO

I went to San Diego in the middle of March for a concert opening the new auditorium at U.C. La Jolla. The San Diego campus is quite a center for new music, with a lot of ex-Bay Area people there—Robert Erickson, Will Ogdon, Pauline Oliveros; also Kenneth Gaburo, Roger Reynolds, Bert Turtzky and a number of others I don't know.

The less said about the auditorium the better—the department had a terrible time getting its needs across to the architect, who then ignored most of them. The opening festivities had problems, too: especially a long-winded and wrong-minded half-hour history of music education in America, 1607 to the present, by Nancy Hanks, who controls NEA's purse strings, and who belittled our ancestors for using music "merely" to glorify God and affect the emotions of their audiences—who could ask to do more!

The concert, on the other hand, was a success, though long and requiring long stage changes between pieces. A sort of concerto for several flutes and other instruments by Joseph Julian, with thick grainy textures from the flutes and percussion making some good sound-moments. Loren Rush's *Dans Le Sable*, not a new piece but a fine one, with Barbarina singing her 4th act aria from *Figaro*, a piano and a solo violin playing a sentimental music-hall ballad, and a narrator (me) reading a quasi-philosophical 1st person introspection on the nature of time, from an Adamov play. A very good performance of this, the best I've heard I think. Will Ogdon's homage to Jean Cocteau, an ambitious theater piece partly out of the Bay Area mid-'60s tradition, partly out of the Paris '20s, with a pianist who seemed to stand for both Cocteau and for Will, a soprano (Beverly Ogdon, very good), and a jazz-theater-salon ensemble, together with lighting, projections of Cocteau photos and settings. A lot of the musical material very Postwar International, with angular dissonances; other of it relating more to improvisation. (*Rainbow Rising*)

And then Bob Erickson's *Rainbow* piece, for orchestra with a percussion section including his beloved aluminum rods carefully tuned to exact frequencies and bowed: a two-part work with epilogue, opening with floating pitches, then a cloud-scatter of notes with a final return—my journal calls it "overtonal": certainly not "tonal" in the traditional sense, not using tonality as do Crumb and the other quotationists, but clearly a piece whose sense is that it is tonal, uses the relationships of pitches to make its effect. And what an effect: the "tonic" gradually shifts from one frequency to another, "modulating" not the keynote but the tuning system, changing the way the ear takes in the overtone-relations. It is a very simple piece whose method is hidden to the first hearing.

The next day a long conversation with Bob and Pauline: Pauline more relaxed than in the old Tape Center days, Bob as feisty as ever, delivering a put-down of 6/8 time which makes more sense the more I think about it, arguing the importance of Stravinsky to new music (he for, myself against), looking for the seeds of ostinato: did Javanese music influence Rite of Spring through Ravel and Daphnis, as I think, or does Rite remember similar stuff from Russian songs and the like, as *Les Noces* (perhaps deliberately) implies? Perhaps Lou Harrison knows the answer—certainly his music, Bob's, Terry Riley's all pose a similar historical question.

Bob recently sent me a letter with a chapter of reminiscences of the San Francisco days—the Conservatory, the old KPFA and the like, perhaps triggered by last month's "history issue" of EAR. When Ernst Bacon's current project is finished, in a couple of issues, we'll start running the Erickson.

--C.S.



## QUESTIONS in a nut shell by J.

Are we coming to a new tonality?  
 Is there a Bay Area Avant Garde?  
 Is there any hope for symphony musicians?  
 Is the drone in or out?  
 What happened to Musical Sculpture?  
 Is Larry Austin dead or alive?  
 Is Europe the cradle of new ideas any more?  
 Or are the Americas?  
 Has anybody received musical Master from outer space or inner?  
 Is Macrame out?  
 Are musical games still around?  
 Has Cage discovered any new something?  
 Who killed Composers Forum?  
 Must we pause or go forward?  
 What happened to Mills College's energy of the sixties?  
 Is there a feminine element influencing new music?  
 Who was the Immortal Beloved?  
 Are the Harry Partch Players the right wing of the Avant Garde?  
 How many people liked Stereoptican's concert?  
 Are the rumors true about R.C. & E.J.?  
 When will dancers come to new discoveries?  
 Has the new heroine of woman conductor faded out again?  
 Is spacial music being explored?  
 What happened to Experiments in Art and Technology?  
 Is the Exploratorium helping any musicians?  
 How come we are so passive in this area?  
 Is Steve Reich on phase now?  
 Has La Monte Young reached illumination or is he just hibernating?  
 Has Terry Riley germinated?  
 Is Ashley still only a visitor?  
 Has Nathan Rubin's appetite for new music been fed?  
 What brand coffee cans does Lou Harrison prefer?  
 Will Ozawa ever come to Berkeley for anything?  
 What happened to the California School?  
 Has Penderecki outgrown the cluster? if so has he discovered twelve tone music?  
 Will the Polish school evolve into something else?

Has chance music been wiped out by the law of probability?  
 Any numbers still being used by composers?  
 Are there any composers who know what to do all the time?  
 Has Don Cobb become Montana Mahler yet?  
 Has the Oakland Museum forgotten about their successful two seasons of Sunday concerts?  
 Is Eloy's "Shanti" a labor of love?  
 Does anybody miss Beth Anderson now that she is gone to N.Y.C.?  
 Is Ear the only thing we got?  
 Will the critics ever accept criticism?  
 Will the real American Composer please stand up?  
 Are there any other answers except real and tonal?  
 What would you rather be, a real composer or a tonal composer?  
 Did Schoenberg possess the Gluckliche Hand?  
 Did the Devil ever get Stravinsky?  
 Does anybody like new music?  
 Will Davis ever be Davis again?  
 Has anybody invented any new instruments?  
 Is there a musical Depression?  
 Has George Crumb ever read any of Garcia Lorca's writings?  
 Will things ever be the same?  
 How hard is it to change styles?  
 Is there any hope for the over-40 composer?  
 Are schools of music cemeteries for composers?  
 Is there any new life in academia?  
 Is the San Jose Symphony the new source of energy in the Bay Area?  
 Is there art after death?  
 Is corporate art art or is it manipulation of systems?  
 Has computer music come of age yet?  
 Will sound be used as a healing force?  
 Has anybody solved the problem of electronic vs. organic music?  
 Do collages work?  
 What is the difference between a gong and a tam tam?  
 Does Robert Commanday need to be reeducated?  
 Does anybody know what music is?  
 Now that serialism and Boulez are dead what must we do as composers?  
 Is Stockhausen a Phoenix?

(to be continued...)

## Ernst Bacon (continued from p.2)

How is it that America, than which there is no more musical people on Earth, continues to entrust its major orchestras and operas almost solely to persons from overseas? A less developed Canada or Latin America do not do this. Exclusion, of the kind we experience in all countries abroad is bad but exclusion of ourselves is worse, and that is still the order of the day every time a major post is created or vacated. Hoping only for a fair competition, the American is regarded with condescension, his letters are left unanswered, he is given no chance to show his powers. Unmanaged (and what has a whopping retaining fee to do with ability?), he is rated a bush-leaguer. That he may have brought a civic or university orchestra, chorus, opera, or festival to the heights signifies nothing beside the routine experience of having been chorus-master in Berlin, Wagnerian conductor in Schweinfurth, or assistant in Budapest.

How long would the medical profession tolerate giving over the direction of its hospitals and medical schools to all but Americans; the lawyers, the courts and law schools; the engineers, the great public works; the scientists, the laboratories; the ministers, the churches; the army, the commands? I will not say Americans would do better with our major music institutions. In fact I will acknowledge that our existing major symphony and opera directors are men of high calibre, and I would be ashamed were we to close our doors to them, in simple reciprocity toward the nations of their origin. But foreign excellence does not imply native inferiority. Is it nothing that the American knows his literature, history, folksongs, geography, speech, and song? For better or for worse, nativity must have its say and its rights; otherwise, owning the most perfect orchestras in the world signifies little. We shall run our own show, and let us then demonstrate to the world our prodigality. Let it be from the strength of mastery, not the weakness of servility.

Music must have a home to be at home. "The American imitations of Europe," said the philosopher, Alfred North Whitehead, "will always lack interest and vitality, as all derivations do." "Why do you not orchestrate more like Ravel?" asked the conductor, Fritz Reiner, of Otto Luening. There you have the tendency in a nutshell. Bred in an environment other than ours, perhaps more refined, but certainly not more vital, the maestro from abroad looks for similarities with what he has learned; or else, rather insultingly, expects native barbarities that are at best surface manifestations. We are neither English nor primitives. The dignity of American letters was proclaimed by Emerson in the 1830's. American painting has long come into its own. But American music's dignity has appeared only by accident, to date. We remain an occupied land, with all due respect to the occupying officers (the best of whom will not disagree with me, remembering it from their own national past).

To a man's feet his native haunt  
 Is as unto the tree the root,  
 If there his labor fills no want  
 His deeds are doomed, his muse mute.  
 -H. Ibsen

(Next time: "Opera, our cultural stepchild")



# BERKELEY CONTEMP - ORARY CHAMBER PLAYERS

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Geese

Javier Castillo

Fast

Dynamics as marked otherwise  
FF always

Geese is the first of three pieces for solo guitar written last year by Javier Castillo. Like most of his music, the guitar pieces are both abstract and representational, and extremely matter-of-fact in the magic way they combine a brand new way of composing with the same old problems: how to arrange the pitches in a sort of temporal space to make interesting sounds. The guitar is electric, or at least an acoustical one with amplification. (The second piece, *Butterflies*, uses only the left-hand fingers for producing the sounds, and the third one, *Spiders*, needs three pre-recorded tracks--although, in my opinion, *Geese* and *Butterflies* would work equally well for piano, harpsichord or harp, and *Spiders* is crying out for translation into string quartet.)

These three pieces, *Menagerie* for guitar, are the tenth work Castillo has composed since 1967. Like many of the others, the guitar pieces find their pitches and rhythms in "extramusical" logic. *Geese* obviously uses the letters de-

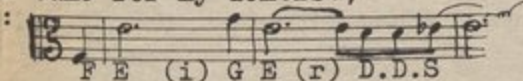
scribing the pitches: G E S (the German Schumann in *Carnaval*). Beth Anderson uses many of her pieces, and I found a great one who plays the violin, in a similar way  
viola!

I first met Castillo through the Summer by the San Francisco Symphony and the Sitting on the commissioning advisory. 1972, I saw a number of scores he had his interests, and I was struck by the solute rightness which reminded me of tal objectivity--the composer's system lessly, and the result was music which even arbitrary, but vital with its own nothing to do with compositional techn





n form for Eb, used by  
ses similar means in  
t tune for my dentist,



r Workshop run jointly  
S.F. public schools.  
panel for that year,  
sent in to demonstrate  
ir freshness, their ab-  
Varese's in their to-  
was followed out relent-  
was somehow fully logical,  
inner life which had  
iques or their exigencies.

(As I write this I smile to think of Javier's expression at reading this--an impatient "Yes, well," meaning "That's all fine if you think so, but it has nothing to do with what either I or the music have in mind." Javier's other work, all this strong:

Ravelesque, solo piano (1967)

3 Geometric Pieces, woodwind quartet and 2 percussionists

Lament on the Death of a Kitten, mixed choir

The Temple, choir and percussion  
Concentric Circles, mixed choir  
(incorporating movement and flashlights)

Sculpture, mixed choir

House of Two, two pianos

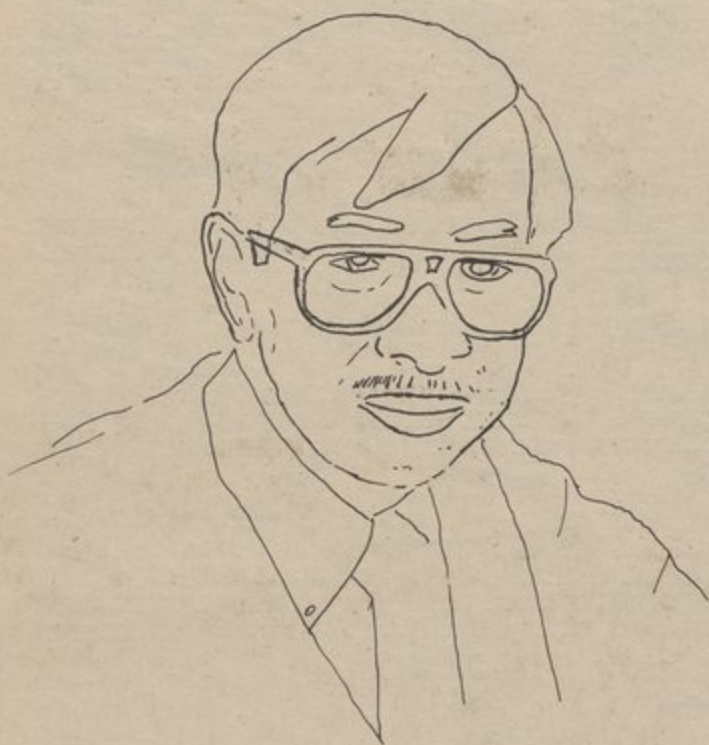
One Gross, for 12 pair of instruments (Castillo's "Modes d'Intensites et valeurs")

Sculpture, large orchestra (from the Summer Workshop)

Javier lives in Berkeley and teaches in Oakland, is currently feeling out an instrumental piece using drones and ostinati.



## CHINESE OPERA: Measureless Grace and Space



by Dr. Richard Yee, Chairman  
of the Department of Philosophy at Holy Names College.

Opera began in China, so a legend relates, when a Tang emperor brought it back from the moon, so delighted was he by the entertainment provided him in the Jade Palace by the lunar emperor. Nothing of its celestial charm, it seems, was lost in that descent to terrestrial soil, even when changed through the centuries, modified by regional differences, or brought to foreign lands. Even tonight's audience, perhaps unfamiliar with its craft and language, Chinese opera has the power to beguile. What are the sources of its power?

Immediately at an opera performance percussion instruments create a rhythmic realm where every action, every mood is given cacophonous color. Nothing that transpires on the stage is left undefined by the percussionists; nothing is hidden, nothing ambiguous. It is not only that the orchestra, playing without a conductor, needs a percussionist to mark the beat; rather he works tirelessly, hardly allowing a moment of silence, lest the audience lapse into the banality of the ordinary.

If the rhythmic patterns are easy to hear, the singing, through no less vivid, will sound confusedly exotic, even a trifle painful, to the western ear. That is primarily because the Chinese pentatonic musical scale differs from the western one and the ears are unused to the new intervals. But once the mind accepts that no single system of intervals claims a monopoly over melodic invention, then the ears will slowly begin to hear the pentatonic scale fashioned into pleasing melodic lines. Better still, when these musical harmonies are heard in conjunction with what the eyes perceive on the stage—action flowing effortlessly into song—, then one can sense the power of Chinese music. Listen tonight to the music in *The Tale of the Red Plum Chamber* and hear how it supports the dramatic meaning. Melancholic strains hang heavily over the first meeting between the scholar and the concubine, sounds which contrast sharply with the exuberant innocence of those charming and sweet tunes which playfully lighten the meeting between the scholar and Chiu Yung in the garden. In the encounter between the ghost and the scholar the music of pain and pity suggests the benign reconciliation in the gentler music at the end of the opera. Each dramatic action transpires, as it were, in a different musical space.

This musical accomplishment is astonishing when one realizes that it is done without the aid of a sophisticated method of musical notation, which the Chinese never developed. Instead, countless melodies are memorized and it is the singer who must fit the words to the melodies assigned, a task which offers infinite opportunities for improvisation and interpretative colorization. Without subtle harmonies minutely stipulated by a composer, the singer must achieve interesting vocal feats, hence the *floritura* style of singing, supported by improvisation by the instrumentalists, without which the material would be flat and trite.

This practice of Chinese opera—a traditional treasure of melodies, freely used by all in the musical community, individually vitalized by each performer—differs radically from the practice in western opera. It clashes with the modern western sensibility which confers artistic worth only upon a composer's singularity of style, faithfully preserved by the performer. If Chinese opera cannot claim the rich diversity possible when the individual composer's style is accurately preserved in written scores, it does gain by understanding the theatre as a living place of a communal

event. Chinese theatre achieves what some contemporary western performing groups (eg. Beck's Living Theatre) have tried to achieve: theatre as ritual and celebration. But bereft of a coherent public philosophical stance, the western attempts seem to express more a desire than a promise of possibility. On the other hand, for the Chinese the theatre is a place of communal ritual, unity and joy. It is a place where the senses are dazzled and the individual wills are unified; it is not a place for debate between factions, for individualized separateness, for public display of private agonies. For the Chinese the theatre is the place where the search for knowledge and understanding turns into recognition, the place where cultural ideals become "real"—ideals that make life meaningful and therefore bearable: the profundity of love resonant with fidelity, the public responsibility of political power, the civility and grace of the learned man.

The westerner may recoil from that kind of theatre which always threatens to degenerate into a place for banal stereotypes and cultural sentimentality. But therein lies the great responsibility of the performer: he must make tradition so beautiful that it cannot be denied.

Much craft is given him: along side musical elements he utilizes rich, visual elements. His eyes and brows shoot upward, radiant with life. He is decked in magnificent costumes, which seem to magnify every bodily movement. Long white extensions of sleeves, unfurled and then carefully folded again, delicately display deliberate grace. Thick soled boots worn by men add stature and nobility. Tassels toss and sway to accent the body's actions.

So made-up and attired, the Chinese actor emerges on the stage. Almost never on stage when a scene starts, he knows he can be judged merely by his entrance, for his whole body must be vibrant with the character he is granting life to. Nothing exists except what is created by the actor's living art. That is why no scenery is used: the living space of his character can only be created by a living body, not by inert scenery. Should a stagehand walk on stage during a performance to move the props, or should a corpse set up and leave the stage, unaccompanied by music, then for the audience they do not exist; they have no theatrical space in which to be "real." Pantomime, so abstract and yet so expressive, fittingly accords with this potent view of theatrical space. Swordfighting, for instance, is never executed with real, physical contact, lest that kind of contact pre-empt the illusion of theatrical reality. Real contact might increase the groan but would lessen the grace.

Nothing must lessen the space and grace wherein the performer plays out the communal ideals. Only then can the processes of real existence—struggle, death, perhaps renewal—be acted out, be created beautifully, be celebrated. All the surface splendor of Chinese opera is in accord with the presentation of communal, inner ideals.

One can easily take the ghost scene to be the epitome of the whole craft. It is filled with the sad awareness that fate favors and disfavors, that wind and rain can tear plum blossoms from their life-giving branches. The tentativeness between the two lovers in that scene results not only from the separateness between the living and the dead; it is a hesitancy urged by the knowledge of fate's cruel ways. But so beautifully is there love revealed—in song and movement—that the audience, in sighing, also knows that fate will gently yield to the final scene of regeneration. Where else but in a theatrical space of measureless grace can that transpire? And if fate can be beguiled, why not an audience too?

1750 Arch Street  
Berkeley

**MAY** 8:30

- 2 MADELINE BRUSER: SOLO PIANO. Rorem.
- 3 ALAN MARKS: SOLO PIANO. Davidovsky.
- 4 LUISE SCRIPPS: CLASSICAL SOUTH INDIAN DANCE (BHARATA NATYAM).
- 9 ELIZABETHAN SONGS & LUTE MUSIC: Tom Buckner, baritone; Joe Bacon, lute.
- 10 SONG RECITAL: SUSANNAH WOOD, soprano, w/ guitar, piano, violin.
- 11 FRITZ MAGG: SOLO CELLO. Bach, Reger, Hindemith, others.
- 16 BACH CANTATA NO. 56 & BAROQUE CHAMBER WORKS. Tom Buckner, Laurette Goldberg, and ensemble.
- 17 (See May 16).
- 18 2 p.m. ART LANDE & THE RUBISA PATROL.
- 8:30 p.m. MULTI MEDIA: CHARLES AMIRKHANTAN, JIM PETRILLO, BETSY DAVIDS. Text-sound, poetry, visuals.
- 23 LYNNE ALEXANDER: SOLO HARPSICHORD.
- 24 DONNA STOERING: SOLO PIANO. Lees...
- 25 2:30 p.m. SENIOR CITIZENS FREE PERFORMANCE of evening program: 8:30 p.m. BAROQUE FLUTES & CONTINUO.
- 30 ELIZABETHAN TRIO. 17th C. works.
- 31 NEW PORT COSTA TRIO: Mozart, Beethoven, Mendelssohn. (vln, cello, pno)

For information & reservations  
841-0232



(Richard Yee presented two operas in Oakland early in March. Performers from San Francisco to Hong Kong appeared, without scores or much rehearsal, to collaborate in as effective a music theater as a Wagner could ask for. A couple of evenings can be produced for a few thousand dollars. Are you listening, Spring Opera?)

7.

# 60S ANNUAL GALA

The Third Annual Festival of the Avant Garde took place at 321 Divisadero St., San Francisco, in April 1965, sponsored by KPFA and run by myself, Peter Winkler and Robert Moran. Looking back on it I don't know how we had the guts: later endeavors have since convinced me of the enormity of such an undertaking. But we did, and it worked for the most part.

It was a sort of celebration of having the hall at all: KPFA and Ann Halprin joined the Tape Music Center in renting it. (Ann is still there.) We put on three concerts in the Festival, which was of course the first Third Annual. (There was a second one the following year, of which the less said the better.)

The opening concert gave Earle Brown's *Four Systems* in a realization by Moran (piano), Georges Rey (violin) and Gwen Watson (cello). Moran's *Interiors* followed with the whole 3rd Annual ensemble of 8 or 10 musicians. Then came Peter Winkler's *But A Rose*, a song for counter-tenor and piano 4 hands to a text by Grandma Kroeger, a celebrated convicted murderess of the day whose doggerel was printed in the newspapers. John Thomas sang, with Peter at the keyboard and his wife Judy working the piano insides. Then Joshua Rifkin's *Winter Piece*, the same ensemble as the Brown; John Cage's *Wonderful Widow of Eighteen Springs* with Thomas and Winkler; Ian Underwood's *The God Box* for solo horn (the redoubtable Nelson Green, who sparked a horn renaissance in those days), and Douglas Leedy's *Octet: Quaderno Rossiano*, the first quote-piece collage I ever heard and still the best, a mobile of flute, clarinet, violin, cello, bassoon, piano, horn and bass drum parts from Rossini, all in their original keys and tempos, hung together in a funny but somehow moving ensemble. That was on Friday night, April 2, and the hall was just about full--say 150 people.

We had decided on a Soft Concert for Saturday night, because quiet music seemed like a good idea. A big Ernst Bloch memorial concert had been scheduled for that night in Marin county, and we knew a lot of our audience would be playing in it, so we scheduled the Soft Concert late, starting at 11

p.m. to give people a chance to get to 321 Divisadero. The concert was a beauty, including Roman Haubenstock-Ramati's *Decisions I* for piano and tape (Moran), three piano pieces of Cage's followed by Sylvano Bussotti's *Piano Piece for David Tudor 3*, LaMonte Young's *42 for Henry Flynt* played on a quiet, meditative gong by Peter Winkler, Shinichi Matsushita's *Hexahedra* (I forget the personnel), Morton Feldman's *Durations* for piano, violin and cello and for piano, violin and tuba, and two small pieces of my own for two cellos. A lot of interesting things about this concert: Jim Basye had never played solo tuba before, it was his 16th birthday and the performance was gorgeous; Matsushita had never been heard in S.F. before; *42 for Henry Flynt* almost brought me and Bob Hughes to blows, in a disagreement which was finally healed later when he heard the piece again, improvised at Esalen--an interesting story I'll run one of these EARS. The house, by the way, was full.

The final concert was Sunday, April 4, at a more civilized hour. (We turned people away from this one.) Matsushita's piece was repeated, with different instrumentation; my own *Accompanied Vocal Exercises* were tolerated--whether a terrible piece or a terrible performance I'm still not sure--Moran played Galen Schwab's *Homage to Anestis Logothetis* when he discovered he'd forgotten the music to the Logothetis he's programmed, and followed that with his own *Invention, Book I*; then we joined forces on Logothetis' *Centrés* and Cage's *Variations II*.

Where Are They Now: Moran is in Berlin; Winkler teaching at Stony Brook in New York; Ian was (last I heard) one of the Mothers of Invention; Nelson is in Hamburg playing opera (a future EAR will be devoted to the Nelson Green-Douglas Leedy joint discovery of the French horn); Georges Rey is here at the moment, now a philosophy prof (I guess); the others I've lost track of.

I still have the tapes of the concerts, which KPFA broadcast. Probably they have them too: they ought to rebroadcast them--too bad they missed the tenth anniversary.

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## THE STRING QUARTET?

Last issue promised a canvass of composers on the possibilities of the string quartet for new work. The first two define the possible range of answers.

David Scheinfeld, who plays violin and coaches a quartet besides teaching and composing himself, states (not surprisingly) that there are plenty of things still to be found in the medium--lots of sounds, endless potential for expression.

Javier Castillo, whose Geese fly elsewhere in this issue, disagrees, saying that the medium is dead, no longer capable of yielding interesting material, a mine played out--but he continues to listen to new quartets, because someone will surely find the hitherto unknown vein.

Two or three things prompted the question. First, Ives' Second Quartet, a work which seems to me to carry on the late Beethoven ones, carrying on the "democratic" "people's" thematic interest, the composerly concern for a counterpoint of affect paralleling that of tunes, the awareness of a metaphysical, transcendent vision being legitimate "meaning" for a chamber work. In the time since the C# Minor quartet the ensemble itself seems inexorably to suggest this sort of process, involving as it does the cross-embodiment of individual and ensemble, a fabric in which the individual instrument, by yielding, connecting to its colleagues, can reach statements otherwise beyond it.

Then, the whole range of quartets composed in this century--Bartok's, of course, and Schoenberg's; Webern's two statements on the potential of the instrument as embodying the abstract record of the metaphysical search alluded to above; Shostakovich's long and honorable

series, confronting the problem of the accessibility of an intrinsically elite medium; Carter's definition of the quartet as an intellectual object; finally Lutoslawski's magnificent labor in which the Bartok continuation of Beethoven is itself continued, as the Ives continuation must surely soon be in this country.

There are more negative promptings, however--those which seem to justify Castillo's reply. Most recently in my experience, the Nonesuch recording of George Rochberg's Third Quartet, in which the Beethoven specter is met head-on by resorting to the tonal language he developed between 1824 and 1826. (An absurd statement: surely Opp. 74 & 95, and 59 for that matter, urge the late quartets forward!)

Granted, the Beethoven cycle is a formidable affair. The quartet composer doesn't give Brahms or Schubert a second glance, not to mention poor Schumann whose quartets are all too unjustly neglected. Bartok's solutions are even beginning to take on more human proportions as time goes by. It's the Beethoven, especially the last five, that cast the long shadow.

This country has not given up. The tradition of the American string quartet goes back even beyond Benjamin Franklin, who tinkered with an eccentric one before the Revolution. It's a tradition given a nod of recognition on records, thanks to Vox, whose two sets devoted to early and experimental quartets will be reviewed here in forthcoming issues. And it's a tradition which has generated some fine scores: the Ives, the Carter 2d and 3d, and John Cage's brilliantly modest 1951 work come to mind.

Readers are invited to contribute their thoughts on the quartet, because this series could be more useful as a colloquy than as a continuing meditation. More to the point, nominations for American 20th century quartets for discussion are open, and scores and tapes are invited. To a great extent music took its leap from the Baroque into the 19th century because of the string quartet; it's time to see if the leap can be repeated.

### RECTIFIED REVIEWS

It was good to see Alfred Frankenstein at the Philadelphia C.F. concert, because you knew the thing would get a fair review. It's possible to disagree with his judgment, but he has an enviable record of expressing his own bias out-front, of noting the critic's fallibility as he proceeds, which makes him particularly good as a critic of new music. He also has a long view: note the remark about Crumb, put precisely, incorporating a historical perspective into a daily review. Note also the disagreement with Felciano's piece: another critic would have indulged in carping or clever preaching. I would only add that Thome's piece was about communication, often about communing, and enormously effective, reminiscent at times of Robert Ashley's "Frogs" for the hermetic but moving vision it expressed.

This is also the place to note that the Cleveland Quartet played a wretched recital at Hertz Hall April 18, tearing with relentless hard double-fortes into Mozart's C Minor Adagio and Fugue and the "Death and the Maiden" quartet, and prefacing Ives' great 2nd Quartet with a long lecture about how comic it was, then playing it as if it didn't express a Transcendentalist's view of human reconciliation. Paul Katz played a long section of the last movement pizzicato, although Ives does not call for it. When asked why, he blandly explained it as a "liberty he took to bring out his part" and justified it by saying I was the first to complain though they'd played it 100 times. I suppose Ives is lucky he doesn't bring the part out with a bass tuba. Don't trust your scores to this group!

--Fikret YUSSUF.

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### Philadelphia Composers' Forum

By Alfred Frankenstein

The phrase "Composers' Forum" conjures up memories of earnest young men sweatily pounding out their grim 12-tone sonatas on the piano, but the times have changed, and the Philadelphia Composers' Forum, which gave a concert Sunday night at Hertz Hall, brought along all the percussion instruments you can think of and a good many you can't, as well as tons of electronic equipment.

And the conventional instruments they employed -- violin, piano, bass, guitar and cello -- were electronically altered more often than not.

All of which means that we are now deep into an era of color, and so it is scarcely surprising that the finest thing on the program was by one of the century's greatest masters of color, George Crumb.

Crumb's "Songs, Drones and Refrains of Death" is one of that composer's numerous settings of poems by Garcia Lorea. They were shouted, declaimed, chanted, whispered and sung by a young man, presumably Lawrence Weller, who was also one of the three percussionists in the ensemble of six players.

The range of color Crumb brought forth from his huge battery plus piano, harpsichord, bass and guitar is beyond description. In addition to the normal uses of the instruments, their timbres were enriched by electronic amplification, and many unusual devices like jew's harps and water-glasses struck with sticks enlarged the composer's already enormous coloristic vocabulary.

The whole was an immensely dramatic and totally satisfying experience, which may mean that before many decades are out, George Crumb will be one with Niels W. Gade. Music that pleases everybody so fast seldom continues to please anybody for very long.

Second on the program was a piece called "Chod," by our fellow townsman, Richard Felciano. This also used an infinity of colorful devices, but I found it tedious and sterile except in the big climax toward the end, when the passion required to produce that volume of sound brought the music to life.

One of the sadder aspects of criticism is that a work produced with great sincerity and skill can be dismissed in this fashion after one hearing. But candor demands that one record one's impressions, adding in this case that the audience seemed to like Felciano's piece no end.

The program ended with "Time Spans," by Joel Thome, conductor of the Philadelphia ensemble. This was a fascinating montage of sounds recalled from past time and culled from outer space, including radio signals from Mars and Venus, recited passages of Joyce, fragments of music from Bach to Schoenberg, and radio commercials that are still bouncing around out there in man's spatial garbage heap, along with the gases from aerosol cans that are going to snuff us all out, as we deserve.

How curiously false the snippets of right-note music sounded in this context, where the "wrong" note was axiomatic!

Performances were superb throughout, and one hopes the Philadelphians will return despite their meager audience of Sunday night.