

VALERIE SAMSON: RICHARD FELCIANO p2  
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THIS IS THE

LAST



MAY 1976

VOL4 NO 5

... until next month,

EAR is published monthly except July or August and December or January by Charles Shere, 1824 Curtis St., Berkeley, CA 94702. Available only by mail subscriptions at \$6 per year. Advertising rates: \$25 per sixth page (5" x 5½"). Contributions are welcome and should be clearly typed, single spaced, or (if music or drawings) in black ink on white paper.

...when, funds willing, we will publish a DOUBLE ISSUE, before taking a summer vacation for a couple of months. The June-July EAR will be a collectors' item (aren't they all), with a bit of a retrospective flavor, as suits the Bicentennial, including

- : a complete index to all past EARS
- : reprints of favorite scores from the past
- : an entirely new article on 'patamusic' by Charles Remolif
- : the return (with apologies) of Fikret U
- : an interview with America's Greatest Living Critic
- : and all the news YOU SEND IN!

There will be no July EAR, and there may be no August EAR either, depending on finances. THIS IS NOT A RIPOFF. EAR will return in September, along with an expanded Ear Press. However... we anticipate a need to raise subscription prices this fall, for the first time since EAR began, three years ago. Needless to say, those who get in now will get a break...

#### SUBSCRIPTION BLANK

to: Charles Shere, editor,  
EAR, 1824 Curtis St.,  
Berkeley, CA 94702

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valerie samson: RICHARD FELCIANO

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Richard Felciano is one of the few composers who grew up in the Bay Area and developed right along with the exciting cultural growth that took place here over the last few decades. After studying at San Francisco State College, he went to Mills College and then to Paris, studying with Darius Milhaud. In Italy he studied with Luigi Dallapiccola, and at his return in 1962, he became active in the San Francisco Tape Music Center. He has won many awards including a Fulbright, a Guggenheim, and a Fromm Foundation prize for his opera *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*. Currently he teaches at the University of California, Berkeley.

VS: You were telling me about your tuba piece and from the abyss.

RF: Yes. It's for solo tuba and electronically generated sounds. The electronically generated sounds include purely synthesized ones, modified sounds of the tuba itself and of the tubist speaking into the instrument, and then a lot of sounds which are derived ultimately from sounds of animals and birds which are played at the wrong speed. I was commissioned to write the piece for Floyd Cooley of the San Francisco Symphony. After thinking about it for awhile, the latin phrase "tuba mirum" stuck in my mind. It's a little section of the *Dies Irae* and, as you probably know, deals with the day of judgement, when the earth opens and all these miserable souls come forth to be judged. (chuckling) And that's the abyss to which the title refers. The tuba player uses the words tuba mirum in a variety of ways. It comes out very gradually. He starts out with vowel sounds ooh and ahh, and then he gets hung up on the clicking sound t. Gradually he puts them together and it becomes tuba mirum. He puts the tuba down and simply whispers those two words.

VS: What's the name of the record company that's putting this out?

RF: Opus 1. This is going to be Opus 1 number 29, so I guess they have 28 records in print. They do primarily, if not exclusively, contemporary music. You can get them here, but you have to find a record store which is willing to go to the trouble to order it. The same thing is usually true of Composers' Recordings Incorporated. I just had a recording come out on CRI. It consists of four of my pieces: *Crasia*, for seven instruments and electronic sounds; *Spectra*, for flute and double bass; *Gravities*, for piano four hands; and *Chöd*, for six players and live electronics. The record number is SD 349.

I've always felt and continue to feel that the nicest encouragement a composer can have is when a performer who doesn't know him at all hears one of his pieces and then comes to him and says "I want to commission you to do a piece for me". That's what happened here. Cooley heard a piece of mine that was done on the Monday Evening Concerts in Los Angeles. It's nice to have institutional commissions too, but there's a particular kind of gratification in being commissioned by a performer.

There have been a number of cases in the past; two such pieces are on the CRI recording. One is a piece that I did for Bertram and Nancy Turetzky, for double bass and flute. They have played that piece over 200 times, literally all over the world. (laughing) Once I had agreed to do the piece, I think I got a post card from Bert at least once a week. He wrote either while brushing his teeth or eating his toast in the morning, or something like that, but every week I heard from him, saying "Where is the piece?" and sort of generating my enthusiasm, until finally one day he just said "Well this is it. I've scheduled the piece". So I really had to get busy!

The other one is a piece for piano four hands, which was my first commission. That was done for Milton and Peggy Salkind. Milton is now the head of the San Francisco Conservatory.

VS: Were they friends of yours, or had they heard, like Bertram---

RF: They were friends of mine at that time. What happened was, I wrote a rather long opera. After hearing that, they came to me and said "We want to commission you".

VS: So basically writing music generates more opportunities to write more music.

RF: Yes. There are those long hard years when you think that nobody knows that you're there and nobody knows what you're doing, and nobody cares. You collect the reject slips. I was, in those years, collecting reject slips from publishers and literally pasting them on the bathroom wall. But, you know, it's long hard work. When I was writing the opera, I was working on it until three o'clock in the morning. This was in 1963-64. As I finished each page, my wife Rita copied out the parts, like Anna Magdalena Bach. I could never have got through that part of it if it hadn't been for her.

VS: Now most of your compositions are commissioned?

RF: In the last eight years almost every piece has been commissioned. I've written maybe two pieces which were not commissioned.

VS: Suppose you got an idea that might be nice for a certain combination. Would you contact either a performer---

RF: That's true, except that there are also open commissions. I have been commissioned simply to generate ideas and do whatever I wanted to do. I really have always loved Stravinsky for having said that when he starts to write a piece, the first thing that he does is decide what he canNOT do. I do that too. And the reason for that is that as soon as I know what I cannot do, I know what I can do, and the form of the piece becomes clear to me. The worst thing that can happen to you is to have the sky the limit. If somebody else doesn't impose restrictions, I impose them on myself, because all art is essentially the process of elimination. What's eliminated is much more important than what's there. Look at a late Matisse. When he was bedridden he took colored paper and a pair of scissors and did those cutouts which turned out to be the most eloquent things that he did in his entire life. And they're the most restricted kind of expression, you would think. There's a whole vocabulary of expression there, but with an absolute minimum of means.

VS: So when you write, you choose slightly different restrictions for each piece so that you won't be exploring one small area all the time?

RF: Well, --- quite a while ago I tried to do pieces where I would start out and make the first gesture as interesting as I could, and then attempt to move in a very spontaneous way away from that, almost in a stream of consciousness sort of way. And that seemed to work. You can hook into it in a lot of different ways. I think when I have been least successful, I did not have a concept at the beginning on which I could build the piece. There has to be an idea there, whether it's purely musical or musical-literary, or whatever.

VS: This is why so many composers will emphasize that before you start to write a piece, you have to take time to sort out in your mind exactly what the piece is going to be.

RF: That's right. That's absolutely right. My wife says that all the time. There has to be a basic idea behind a work. And if the original conception that you have is itself potent enough, the work will almost fall right into shape. It's remarkable. There is a kind of purity in the conception itself. Conceptual art hasn't really got a lot into music, but there are a few people who do that kind of thing, and I'm very much in sympathy with that.

VS: In sympathy with letting that one beginning idea take over and become the piece?

RF: That's right. And if you carry it to its extreme form, which is I guess what we mean these days by conceptual art, it means that you almost arrive at a point where the concept itself is sufficient to the work of art. That is, there isn't really any need to realize it. I haven't arrived at that point, and neither have people like Bob Moran who do that kind of thing very well, but I'm in sympathy with the IDEA.

VS: How do you know when you've got a good concept? That's not something you're taught in harmony classes or anything. Do you just intuitively guess?

RF: I think someone can teach you to be autocritical enough so that you know when you have a good concept. But no one can give it to you, because it depends on that little spark, that combination of things in your own past experience and your own DNA which go to make up your particular being. And if it's there, it's going to be there. That's why I never worry about students having their creativity drummed out of them if you're very severe with them in your technical demands. I've never seen a single case where somebody who had a really strong musical personality stopped being creative because of coming into contact with very demanding situations. Sometimes they will rebel against it and leave it. They will either respond very positively and get a lot out of it in a positive sense, or they will respond very negatively and get a lot out of it in a negative sense. What I'm basically saying is that the only thing you can ever teach anybody is technical. You can't do a thing for their talent. I have a friend who said that creative people and mystics have one thing in common, and that is that they're both like people who have fingers inside of them pointing in a certain direction. You find yourself doing certain things because you're driven to do them. You're DRIVEN to the creative act. That's why all questions of whether you do it for yourself or for other people are really beside the point. You don't ask the oak tree whether it produces an oak leaf for itself or for other people. It produces an oak leaf because that's the nature of an oak tree.

VS: But you mentioned earlier how you're more likely to produce something in a certain amount of time if you have a commission and someone is asking for the work.

RF: That's a purely practical problem.

VS: You would still write even without commissions?

RF: Sure. I did! I stuck out a very tough technical training where at one point it was so difficult in Paris I really wondered if I belonged in this field.

VS: You don't regret now, that you went through this kind of training?

RF: No, no! My God no! I had already been through a fair amount of so called "training" in this country. There had been a lot of attention paid to my psychological welfare, and not enough to giving me the musical technique that I needed to be able to put notes together. And I got myself into an environment where they really didn't give a damn about my psychological welfare (laughing), but they were VERY concerned about giving me the technique that I needed to be able to manipulate the materials.

VS: Where were you studying in Paris?

RF: Well, I worked with Darius Milhaud at Mills, and he more or less took me to Paris with him. I worked at the conservatory for the following year he was there. He came back to Mills then, and I just stayed in Paris for another year and went on working. It was fantastic! My free writing improved by leaps and bounds. I got control of what I was doing. The pieces I had done before that were always based on a lot of adrenalin, and hoping that my toast wasn't burned in the morning before I started writing, and that the weather was exactly right. When you have to rely on those kinds of things, which isn't to say that they don't have a certain importance, it means that you really can't control the material. So that, if it doesn't fall down on the page the right way the first time, through sheer intuition, you're in a bad way.

VS: Do you generally trust your first impression and not revise?

RF: Pretty much. And I usually find that when I do go back to revise, I'll go back later and change it to the original idea. It's been found that in taking an examination, that if you know it all, your mind tells you the right thing the first time, even if you're not absolutely sure when you put it down. The thing which first pops into your mind is the right thing. That's true far more often than the reverse. And the same thing seems to happen in the creative act. Whatever the first thing that occurs to you as being the the next thing that ought to happen, is usually right.

VS: But only after you have that concept that you can really work with. If you sat down and just started writing it would probably come out like a stream of consciousness.

RF: That's true, but it all depends on how your mind works. When I entered college I was an art major and a music minor, then I switched. If I hadn't become a composer, I would have become an architect. And when my children are grown, I may still go and go a double career that way. This is why I'm very interested in environmental sounds and things like that. I say that by way of saying that my mind works structurally, even on a stream of consciousness basis. After writing for awhile I find myself referring back to an original idea, but not in an obvious way. What was originally a first level object moves subsequently to different roles, and this is what makes the structure.

VS: How has your music changed since you were in Paris? You mentioned how you had developed very rapidly up to that time.

RF: Well, that was a TECHNICAL development that happened at that time. I was still, as a composer, a slow developer, I guess. First of all my music became more atonal, and then I became interested in electronic music. I was one of the early members of the San Francisco Tape Music Center.

VS: It had a strong impact on you?

RF: Oh yes, a very strong influence. Oh, before that I went to Italy for a year and did 12-tone writing with Luigi Dallapiccola. His music was the only 12-tone music that I had ever heard that I was at all attracted to. I heard an ear functioning in his music which I thought was absolutely masterful. The sonorities he used were stunning. Also, there's a lyrical quality to his music. I didn't come away writing music like that, but he was very much a kindred spirit and I got a lot out of it.

VS: It seems quite a jump to go from studying with Luigi Dallapiccola to working at the San Francisco Tape Music Center. How did you know, when you came back here, that you wanted to do something so different?

RF: I didn't. It's just that when I got back here, the tape center was surfacing as one of the significant things that was happening, and so I got involved. I was involved to the point of getting up at four in the morning and going over there to use the equipment because that was the only time it was available. And you know, that expanded my ears a lot. I learned to cope with a lot of sound structures that I hadn't previously, but there were also some things that really interested me structurally. I was struck by the similarity between the problem of being given a cantus firmus against which you have to write a counterpoint, and giving yourself whatever sounds you put on channel A and then playing them over and listening to them, trying to determine what you could put against them which would be independent and at the same time completely complementary to what's on the other channel.

VS: Like counterpoint.

RF: Exactly. I don't want to oversimplify it, but I must say that when I was doing my first work in electronic music, I felt my mind working in an analogous way.--- It demonstrated to me that studying species counterpoint was not an effort to teach me to write music in the manner of the sixteenth century. It was an attempt to build musical muscles by the most rigorous manner possible, in other words, highly controlled, because if it's free you don't build the muscles. You have to have a very precise problem. And the muscles that are built are applicable to any time that you have the problem of posing one idea against another.

VS: You're doing quite different things now than other members of the tape center like Pauline Oliveros and Morton Subotnick.

# A NIGHT AT THE RENO HOTEL

Slum Palace of the Arts

The "Reno event" took place on Saturday, February 21, 1976. It was a mammoth undertaking organized by Ginny Quesada. She and Vivien La Mothe live in a large four story slice of the Reno Hotel. The aesthetic was one of "making do with what's available" and what's available at the Reno is space. A flyer sent out before the event offered "a room for the night" for "your event-dance, dream, game, image, music, poetry, ritual, roller skating, video, theatre, etc. invited." Over 85 participants answered the call.

Ginny says that, "The environment is the form, when you enter the environment you become part of the form." "We are trying to create the atmosphere and mobility of a party and the availability of participatory events to be outlets for energy."

In order to understand the Reno event it's necessary to understand the Reno. It's a large condemned building South of the Slot in downtown San Francisco. It has over 500 rooms and was probably intended for a very transient clientele. The 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors have long hallways with 6' x 9' rooms lining them. Ken Kesey and the Merry Pranksters used the Hotel as their living headquarters as recorded in The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test.

The first floor is about 35' by 130' and is divided into several spaces. The Big Room is over 60' long with width varying from 18' to 30'. Many different events took place in this space during the day. In the afternoon from 3-6 pm there was "Poetry at the Reno." This was largely organized by G.P. Skratz and was called an ACTUAL event on the program. This refers to the Actualist Conventions of poets and other artists which have been held in Iowa City, and Berkeley. The poets (in order of appearance) were Andrei Codrescu, Pat Nolan, Susan Efros, Rich Jorgensen, Liz Zima, Darrell Gray, Hash Flash, and G.P. Skratz. The selections ranged from the beautifully lyric to jivey and from surreal humor to fantastically autobiographical.

After the poets Russell Conlin presented a simultaneous slide and film projection show on a translucent screen hung in the middle of the Big Room. The audience could watch from either end. Then there was a break until 8 for dinner and last preparations.

Most of the other events began at about 8 and continued with or without interruption until 11 or 12. During this time the front of the Big Room featured two public interaction video pieces. People were given access to video cameras and a selection of lenses. The interaction was developed between the cameras, audience, and live monitor playback. The video was made available by the College of Marin video department and Gary Willis from Chicago.

Also in the front of the Big Room were percussion instruments designed by Zaum. At some point during the evening Vivien La Mothe and Richard Hayman performed Dice Piece. Throughout the environment Phil Harmonic did his mobile piece "Heaven on Earth."

The first floor back featured many things beginning with a bar hosted by Bill Parley, Alice Rollins, and John Adams. This was a somewhat successful attempt to recoup the losses any free event incurs. John Bischoff set up a bubble machine above the bar and NOVAK provided TV presence. Behind the bar there was a sauna which always seemed to have some folks in it.

Past the sauna was a dance studio where Pam Tripple presented neo-interpretive dance. She provided butcher paper and people wrote what they wanted her to interpret on it. Some of the suggestions were: ducks on their way to "quackville," Lao Tze, schizophrena, can opener, white feather grace tarsnooth, and what an interesting finger let me suck it- it's not an interesting finger take it away.

If one ventured back further through a work room and into the unlit, unused, full of junk lobby you'd see a string of Xmas lights. If you followed them up a stairway to the 2nd floor front from 8:30 until 10:30 you'd have found the caged champagne party held by the Boulevard Dance Theatre.

From the Big Room instead of going to the back bar/sauna/dance/lobby areas of the first floor you could climb a metal ladder (labeled "Not for the Meek") through the ceiling. This landed you in the 2nd floor front where a video installation by the Calif. College of Arts and Crafts played pieces by Max Almy, Tom DeWitt, Sue Fox, Kevin Kelly, Pat Kelly, and Megan Roberts. Also in this area were the first of Rich Gold's periodic, partially programmed, cartoon, wall diary. This continued for 200 entries winding its way up and down the halls of the 3rd and 4th floors.

The second floor front was about 18' square. During much of the evening there were lines of people waiting at either end of the ladder for their turn to ascend or descend. When people were climbing up those who wanted to get down just had to wait their turn. There was a stairway to the 3rd floor which featured a grim sign at its start, "You are standing in a fire trap, NO SMOKING." No one seemed to ignore this sign.

The 3rd and 4th floors held many different events in their long halls of 6' by 9' rooms. The rooms were lettered from A-X and due to space limitation it's impossible for this article to do more than list:

## Rooms

- A. Display of color video synthesis by Larry Roe & Tarik Peterson.
- B. "Things I do on a typical day of inactivity when I am not employing my creative talents to composing great music; drinking wine, eating cheeses, listening to music, looking at pictures of my dog, ISU, writing letters (on recycled stationery) perusing mythic books, and engaging friends in pleasant conversation." -Ingram Marshall
- C. A dance & vocal improvisation with a map and plastic bags filled with goldfish and water. Andrea Dupré & Cherrel Chester.
- D. Preparing Vangibath Marsala, an Indian spice-Paul DeMarinis.
- E. "Les Belles Dames Sans Merci" a bar from the book To the End of the World by Blaise Cendrars. Carla Liss and Nancy Reese read the whole book aloud while sipping ouzo and sake.
- F. "Death Piece" by Tony Gnazzo and Roger Pritchard. Tony painted the walls white and Roger drew his family tree on the walls and explained it with the aid of a large rack of documents.
- G. "Static Refinement" a room done during the event. It was painted white and the walls covered with strips of 35mm black and white film the frames of which were visible in the bright light- Jay Miracle.
- H. Daniel Noah Lepkoff a visitor from Vermont brought all his personal belongings and spent the evening talking with anyone and watching people peer into his room wondering what he was up to.
- J. A softly lighted room cut off from the hall by a translucent cheese cloth. You could look in but not enter. Inside 2 or 3 women danced on the sand covered floor- Peggy Burgess and Christi Svane.
- K. "Quiet American Junk in LO-FI" by John Adams & Bob Davis. Exhibitions of vintage American junk coupled with "Lo-Fi" sound; 78 rpm records played through incredibly funky amps and speakers. A mobile element of this room was a bearded man in Quiet American drag.
- L. Projection in a darkened room of a fire slide by Peter Wheel.
- M. "Nam June and Legs in Plastic" was sound and sculpture by Erv Denman and Megan Roberts.

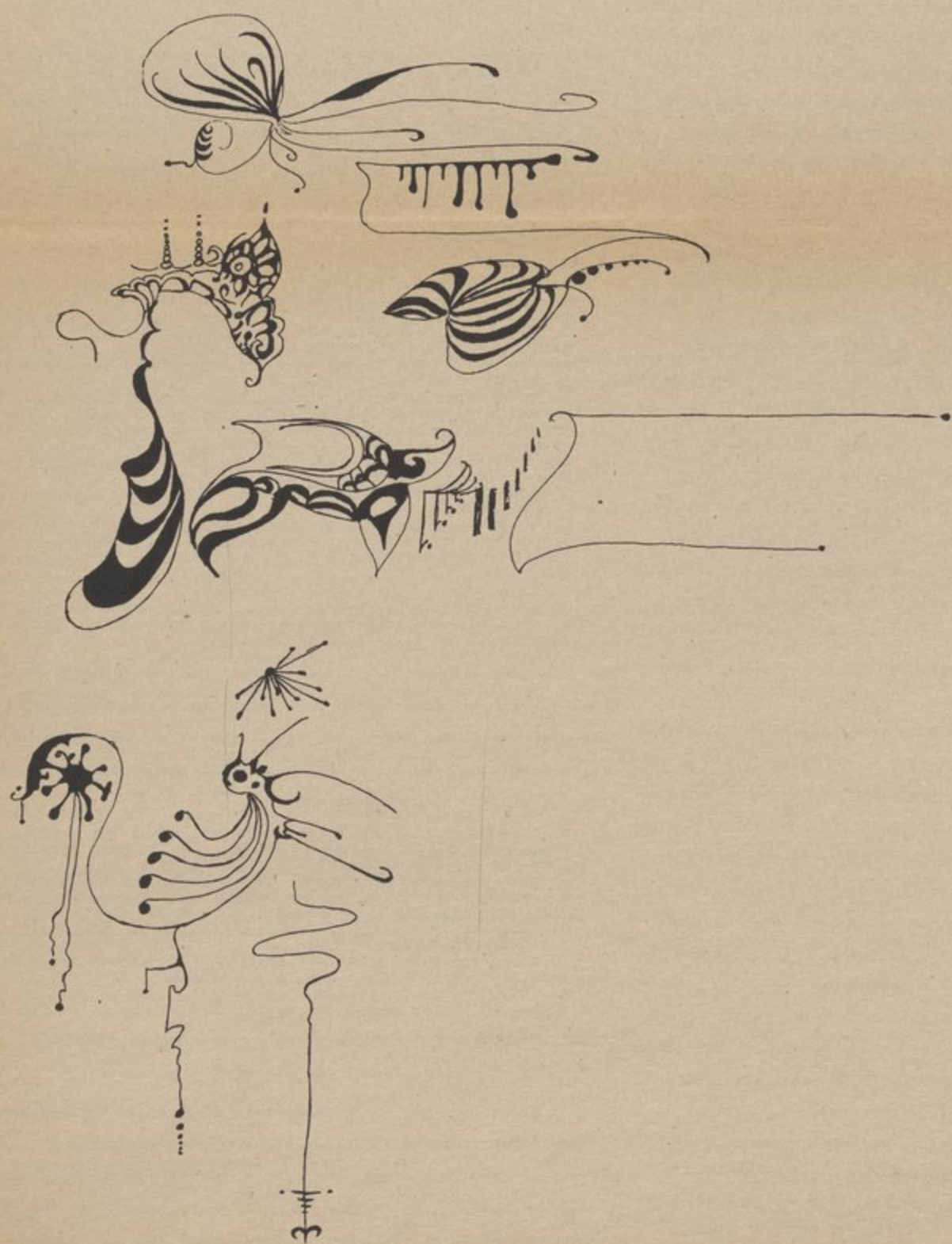
The 3rd floor also had two larger rooms. One was Ginny's which was a quiet free space with a bell garden set up by Andy Aldrich in a side room. The other room was Vivien's. It featured a window bed, hammock, and her black and white still photography. The 4th floor continued the 6' x 9' rooms.

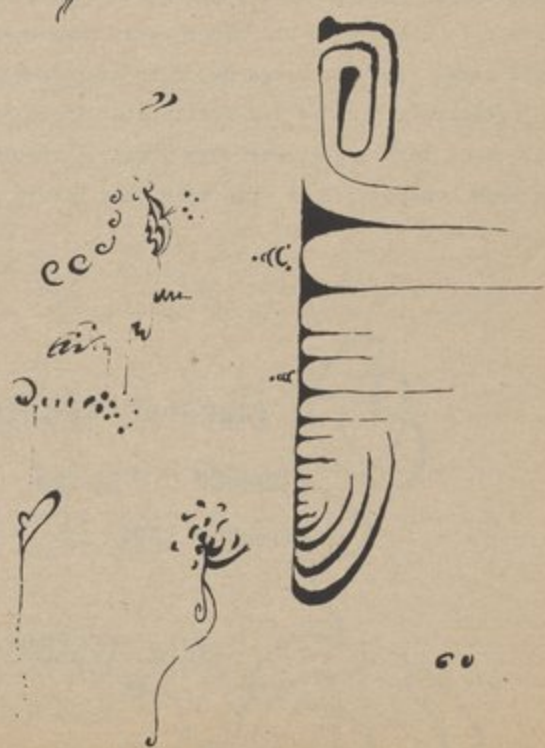
- N. Large sheets of sheet metal suspended from the ceiling made wonderful gongs. They were found in the lot next door to the Reno and carried up to the 4th floor by UBU.
- U. "Photozilla" was a light sensing circuit in a dark room. A flash light provided would change the sound's pitch and harmonic spectrum.
- V. A musical metal assemblage, installation of matalkonk, chimes, and nosecones by Other Music.
- Y. Meditation Room by Russell Bentley. A tamboura drone for vocal and quiet instrumental improvisation.

Also on the 4th floor was an 18' by 12' tent set up in a room. Inside the tent UBU, an exploratory acoustic music ensemble, improvised with conventional and home-made instruments.

At about 11 a rock-jazz improvisation began in the Big Room. The music was exciting and a marvelous display of jamming at its height. At the risk of missing someone of these fine musicians I list Don Cardoza, Erv Denman, Paul Drescher, Chris Greulich, Willio Lindfors, Fred Mayer, Paul Nash, Danny Sofer, and Blue "Gene" Tyranny as the members of this ~~NEVER AGAIN ASSEMBLED~~ group. (to page 6)

Two drawings which can be read as graphic scores.



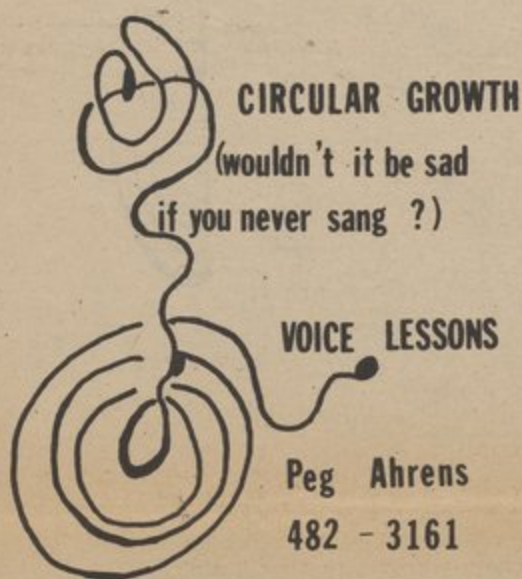


# 6. A NIGHT (from page 3)

A synthesizer and electronic music jam began at 12:30 in the Big Room. The performers were Ron Heglin, Jim Horton, Paul Kalbach, and Tom Zahuranec. These capturing sounds were interrupted when the police arrived at 2:30. Some people had been seen on the fire escape which is not allowed and the officers were just checking. By this time most of the people had gone, but the electronic music seemed cut off in the middle by the agents of the law.

There was no public announcement of the event and all word traveled through <sup>some</sup> more "underground" <sup>network.</sup> Even so, approximately 600 people attended from the poets' beginning to the police ending. A Night at the Reno brought together in a very exciting setting artists from all medias who might never have occasion to see each other's work. The event was major in its scope and in the amount of information presented and available. There was truly the feeling that this was a once only affair. Though the community needs more occasions like this they only occur rarely.

Bob Davis



LA MAMELLE ARTS CENTER is a not-for-profit educational arts organization. Presently, we are organizing an exhibition of sound recordings as art: RECORDED WORKS. This is an international exhibition. Open and non-juried. Playback limitations require all contributed material be contained on cassette tapes (stereo ok). Deadline for contributions is May 15, 1976. Please include return postage.

RECORDED WORKS  
June 11-August 1, 1976  
LA MAMELLE ARTS CENTER  
70-12th Street  
San Francisco, Ca.  
415-431-7524

In addition, contributors interested in the ARTS CENTER BOOKSTORE stocking their actual records or tapes should contact: Wa. J. Arkenberg c/o LA MAMELLE.

THE COMMITTEE FOR ARTS AND LECTURES  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY

HERTZ HALL

Thomas Harmon  
organ

May 9  
8 p.m.

Two Hundred Years of American Organ Music:

William Selby, John Christopher Moller,  
John Knowles Paine, Horatio Parker,  
Samuel Barber, Ulysses Kay, George Packer,  
Leo Sowerby, and Charles Ives.

General \$3.00; Student \$1.50

Berkeley Contemporary  
Chamber Players

Richard Felciano, director

May 17  
8 p.m.

Evening devoted to the music of  
EARLE BROWN: Corroboree for 3 pianos  
String Quartet  
Music for violin, cello and piano  
Four Systems  
Syntagma III for 8 instruments

General \$2.00; Student \$1.00

Tickets: CAL Ticket Office, 101 Zellerbach Hall, U.C. Berkeley  
(642-2561), all Macy's, major Bay Area ticket outlets.

EAR PRESS  
offers the following  
works by Charles Shere:

five piano pieces	\$ 2.
paragon for solo flute	.85
handler of gravity (organ)	5.
from calls and singing (chamber orchestra)	6.50
screen, for string quartet	3.50
perhaps use, voice & piano	1.50

in preparation: small concerto  
for piano and orchestra  
Ear Press, 1824 Curtis St.,  
Berkeley, CA 94702

## THE PORT COSTA PLAYERS

### New Music Concerts

co-sponsored by CAL. All events will take place at 8pm in Gallery A of the UAM. Tickets are \$3.50 general/\$3.00 student, and are sold at the CAL box office and at the door.

May 8: California composers chamber concert performed by the Port Costa Players: Neil Rohnick, Clare Franco, Robert Ashley, Douglas Leedy, Paul Chihara, Pauline Oliveros.

May 21/22: The Little Mahagonny by Brecht/Weill and choral works performed by the Port Costa Players, including Nuifs by Yannis Xenakis.

The University Art Museum  
2626 Bancroft Way  
Berkeley, California

RF: Mort and I are closer than Pauline, but I'm completely positive about what Pauline is doing with her meditations and things like that. What happened to me was, I went to do yoga when I was living in Boston and it made a very dramatic impact on the music that I wrote. I don't know if I can articulate precisely what the difference is. It's like the piece that I did last year for the Philadelphia Composers' Forum. It was based on the juxtaposition of what happens in Eastern music, where you have a very slow sense of change rate and do not put the music together in the sense of --- surrogate vocal gestures, related to the air supply of the lungs. Most of the phrases we have in occidental music are derived from the ability of the lung to form phrases. We use the sentence as the analogy to the phrase in Beethoven or whatever, and all of those things have certain implications of ego manifestation, and so on. That is, the violin becomes a surrogate voice, and one imagines what the voice is saying. One doesn't imagine it literally, but there is this aspect that is very different from what happens in a gamelan or something like that, where the music simply exists like the sounds of the spheres. As a matter of fact, the principle of Balinese music is that the sound is always there, and you DON'T deal with localized time structures at all!

I attempted to put together a piece using six players and live electronics which would juxtapose those two elements, that is, where ultimately the ego manifestation of the individual would be drawn into union with that exterior universal harmony. The piece is called *Chöd*, which is the name of a Tibetan mystery play about the ritual sacrifice of the ego to the universal order. That's the world and the universe as I see it. I can't simply go totally into sitting cross-legged with a bunch of friends who may or may not play instruments and doing meditation, because that's too compartmentalized in terms of Buckminster Fuller's shrinking world. We are all on that thing, and --- I don't think the East is going to take over the West or the West is going to take over the East. It's like---you can't opt for the left or the right side of the brain. They're both in there and the real problem is the delicious tension between the two.

VS: Did you first come into Eastern music in Boston?

RF: No. If you grow up in the west as I have, you come into contact with Eastern music. Forty percent of my elementary school class was Japanese, so I've been very influenced by the East for a long time. And sometimes I've done purely electronic scores or even non-electronic scores where I haven't been thinking in terms of the orient at all, and someone will hear the music and tell me ---

VS: It's simply a part of your personality.

RF: Yes, but of course, those things are subconscious in motivation. In terms of structure, I have to pose myself a problem, like I did in *Chöd*, of trying to reconcile two seemingly irreconcilable --- There HAS to be a way to reconcile the

VS: Have you been trying to reconcile them in your pieces since *Chöd*?

RF: No, no. That's just the shape it took in that particular piece. I've just finished a piece this year for the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston, which is the oldest choral society in the United States. The piece is an interpretation of the Gilgamesh epic, which predates Homer by 1500 years and is a very telling story about a king who was half man, half god, and a creature who grew up in the forest who was half animal, half man. They fight, and neither is the victor and they become inseparable friends. It's perfectly clear from the way the story works that what is being portrayed is that man is recognized in the evolutionary process as being more than animal and less than God.

VS: What's the name of this piece?

RF: It's called *The Passing of Enkidu*, who was the animal-man. It's not an orthodox interpretation of the epic at all. I treated it as a conflict between man's innate need to create, which is the god-like part of him, and his ability to co-exist with the natural perfection of the universe. That seems to me to be our major problem.

VS: In a sense, then, whatever you're writing has some sort of conflict in it, between two different elements.

RF: That's true, yes, except that I have a very strong kind of mystical bent at the same time. I have done pieces which are totally static, like I did in *God of the Expanding Universe* for organ and electronic sounds, where the organ doesn't do anything except play D natural. He never even lifts his finger. He simply adds stops until he gets full organ and then he withdraws them until he gets nothing again. The tape part that goes along with it moves from high frequencies down to very low ones and back up to high ones and fades out, so that there are two axes in the piece.

VS: Do you think you'll be doing more pieces using very static elements?

RF: I will be doing more, and I have done quite a few already. The environment I did for Boston City Hall was based on the idea of trying to produce an acoustic equivalent to the visual effect of what it would be like inside a prism where the various components of white light would be refracted and you'd be able to move around in them. I even did some light sculptures to go with it which carried out that idea. So what happened was, when you walked in the building, you got 14 electronic sound channels over two levels of this enormous, central space, and you heard them all together. And then as you walked through a curtain of white light, you passed into an area of white sound, and from that point on, the sounds separated and what you heard mainly were the speakers that you happened to be close to. And so by positioning yourself within this space, you could hear either a group of six of them or a group of two of them, or whatever. You could stay still and perceive it as a totally static experience, since each of the speakers either had a single tone, or a texture which was unchanging, or a reiterated pulse, or something like that. --- The idea was basically that the only way that you can perceive time is by moving your body in space. It was an attempt to operate right on that edge where time and space come together.

VS: The sounds represented the light? And each different speaker was a different frequency of light, in a sense?

RF: Well, I never carried it that far. What I was after was the static effect which the prism suggests, and the fact that the combination of all of those frequencies together, which gives you white light, could be refracted and divided up. Of course we can do this with electronic music and other sounds, but we don't have an acoustical equivalent to the prism.

I did a lot of work beginning in 1967 with experimental television at KQED in San Francisco where they had an experimental project which the Rockefeller Foundation set up. I was fascinated with the possibilities not only because I had an affinity for electronics, but also because television is the only visual experience we have in the modern world where the light that we perceive is not reflected light. This is the reason people get mesmerized by it. It really doesn't matter what you're looking at. People will look anyway because it has this kind of mystical quality. That's why I'm opposed to video projectors, which lose that magical quality.

VS: Were you doing electronic music for these KQED projects you were working on?

RF: No, it wasn't that simple. What happened was, five artists from five different fields were asked to study the television medium and come to grips with what it was, and then see if that medium could function as a logical extension of their own crafts. And my problem was to find out whether or not --- I was the composer involved --- a composer writing a piece of music could conceive of the piece of music WITH television, not just for it. The television medium was to be an inherent part of the compositional process, unlike in Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, which is always described as the first television opera but is really nothing but a proscenium-arch opera which is televised. Well, a proscenium-arch opera which is written to be televised is not a television opera. A television opera would have to be something that probably couldn't ever be performed on stage. It would have to use the unique characteristics of the television medium. For instance, you can make enough visual movement in a studio to have the effect of doing something which requires a cast of hundreds in an opera house, because the only thing that counts is what comes over the monitor. Also, the psychological experience of sitting in your livingroom is different from sitting in a movie theatre, much less an opera house. The medium

itself is electronic, meaning that there is an element of tension involved. It's not mechanical-chemical like film, which is totally static. If you stop a video tape, you don't even see any frames in it, it just runs continually like pure energy. The only way that it can make the picture on the monitor is by having a little dot which glides back and forth at millions of ---

VS: That's where the flicker comes in.

RF: That's right. And the moment that you try to work with that, there's tension involved. The tube has difficulty reading certain kinds of lines. For instance, the piece that I did is called *Linearity*. It's for solo harp, and the reason that I did it for solo harp was that in looking and studying the nature of the television monitor itself, I found that one of the things that one was very conscious of, and especially in black and white, which is what we had to work with, was the horizontal lines which move back and forth. It's like electronic etching. I asked myself, "What would happen if it had to read information which was essentially vertical and unstable, a la the harp strings?" When you pluck a harp string, it gets all these nodes and the lower strings have their own little horizontally-wound pieces of metal. If you put a strong light on those, you get the vertical string itself, all these little horizontal parts, and the nodes coming and going as the string comes to a stop. So we brought in a harp and tried it, and the system went just absolutely wild! It did all kinds of beautiful design things by virtue of what you might call a DEFECT. It wasn't able to read the information properly. I wanted the tension of the system's inability to do that to produce the beauty of these images.

VS: You took close-ups of this?

RF: The cameramen were restricted to her hands. Only at the very end of the piece do you see the harpist. You see nothing but the strings themselves vibrating, positive versus negative polarity, and visual envelopes where the hand is. You see the shape of it but not the content. And inside the content you see the same hand positively, but strumming the other way, if you see what I mean. Then there are exact parallels of that in the score, where at one point she works her way down to a single note which tapers off, right? Every time you get the tapering off, you begin to lose the content of the note, the number of frequencies and so forth. And what you get instead is a number of other things which are derived from reaching into the air waves of the city, like random radio sounds. Finally she ends up by playing her own applause. Every time she plucks that string, you hear an audience applauding. It's like the harp's memory bank. The harp remembers this from its past experience.

VS: How did you do this?

RF: Well, the same way. Electronically. I had a pre-prepared tape with applause on it, and that was playing but you would only be able to hear it when a gating device was told to release it by the amplitude of the played sound, as picked up by an envelope detector....

VS: You've really had quite a variety of experiences. What do you see yourself doing in the future?

RF: I don't know. The thing that keeps coming back is the fascination with the time-space continuum, which I've had since about 1967 when I first did a piece that was involved in that kind of a study. And last fall, I was commissioned by the Fort Worth Art Museum to do an outdoor environment for the cities of Fort Worth and Dallas using 14 carillons which they had there. Again, it was a very static kind of piece where you could move from one to another. We had a drive-through plan where you could move from one to another. I was very enthusiastic about that. It's one of the biggest turn-ons I've had in a long time. The museum is interested in making a record of it, and if we could get Boston City Hall to be interested in having their environment on the other side, they'll have an indoor-outdoor environment disc.

VS: It sounds difficult to record something like that, because it involves space.

RF: Well, every one of the bell towers made a recording for me, and I was able to make a composite. It's a very documentary-sounding recording. Along with the bells is has jet sounds in it, sounds of automobiles pulling away from stop signs, and whatever was just there. I guess it's not the kind of thing you could easily put on a recording, but ---

VS: What would you suggest for young composers to study?

RF: I don't think you have to give young composers any advice. The only thing all composers need is talent and technique. And the talent nobody can give them. The only thing I would hope is that the society as a whole doesn't provide such a uniform environment or tamper with genetic structure so that we lose what is capable of being unique in either the DNA itself or the richness of the varied environment. The alarming thing is that we don't seem to be too much better off than the Russians or the Chinese right now. Capitalist business seems to be moving in exactly the same direction. The bigger it gets, the less choice we have, because they can make more money off of whatever it is by producing less variety. And that's the way that we seem to be headed. I think people need variety, especially young children. It's very crucial.

It sounds as if you've had a very rich life.

Well, I'm grateful for what I've had.

## WEIRD MAGNETIC EVENTS

an evening of music,  
theatre, &  
video

by Peg Ahrens

CAT'S PAW PALACE / Berkeley

JUNE 6th 8 pm



...The way it happened was, I was riding home on my '63 Honda 305, which is pretty ratty, and Paul Nash's NINE FOR NINE was under the bungi behind me, and when I got home most of it was gone. Scattered to the four winds, I suppose. Appropriate, in a way: we'd just been talking about the difference between the hang-loose west coast and the more thoughtful east. But I feel bad about it, since, after all, it was his master's thesis and I was supposed to read it. Well, this ain't Princeton. You can hear NINE FOR NINE Wednesday, May 12, at 12:15 p.m. at Hertz Hall, U.C. Berkeley--along with other new pieces by Berkeley composers. And here's a little of what's left of NINE FOR NINE.

#### THINGS I LIKED HEARING LATELY

Lou Harrison's ELEGANT SYMPHONY (his second): a sober piece, almost celebratory of death, with very little traditional developmental material but instead descriptive music, noble, self-possessed, Handel-like in its dignity and its solid bass line, Brahmsian in the logic of its last-movement chaconne, sweet because of the just temperament of its bass harmonics, surprising because of its juxtaposition with Lou's insouciant music for MARRIAGE ON THE EIFFEL TOWER, played (very well) on the same San Jose Symphony concert...Darius Milhaud's 1968 TRIO played by the Francesco Trio for the Chamber Music Society...FOUR PIECES FOR PIANO by Glenn Smith, played at the Oakland Museum by Richard Fields...Janice Giteck's opera WIGITA at the University Art Museum: very entertaining, very touching, totally unpretentious, but substantial: don't miss the repeat at the Oakland Museum on May 28!

#### ALSO DON'T MISS:

Robert Hughes' CADENCES at the Paramount, May 9 ...the Earle Brown concert at U.C. Berkeley, May 17...the following, at Mills College:

**May 11** A concert of solo piano music by Marion Brown, Michael Byron, Leo Smith and David Rosenboom. Concert Hall 8 pm

**May 13** Presentation of results of the ten day workshop. Concert Hall 8 pm

...and next month's EAR: twice the enjoyment at no extra cost!



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7,8,9 THE 17TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF WEASELS. The Electric Weasel Ensemble, Novaj Kordoj, The Electric Eels, and many more. Electronic and acoustic music, dance, film and video. 8:30pm on Friday & Saturday, from 2pm on Sunday.

13 A PROGRAM OF MUSIC IN HOMAGE TO LUIGI DALLAPICCOLA. At the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. 8pm. Works by Dallapiccola, Berio, Robert Hughes, and M. Castelnuovo-Tedesco. Under the direction of Robert Hughes. General admission \$3.00, students, seniors, and students \$2.00.

14 BURKE SCHUCHMANN, CELLO, & LANDON YOUNG, PIANO. Bach, Beethoven & Schumann.

15 THE SAN FRANCISCO STRING QUARTET. Haydn, Mayuzumi, Ernst Bloch.

21 SPENCER BURLESON, CLASSICAL GUITAR. Brouwer, Lauro, Brindle, Falla & others.

22 JUDYABA, CELLIST AND FRIENDS. Bach, Kagel, Shostakovich.

23 KEYBOARD MUSIC OF THE 1740'S. Louis Bagger, harpsichordist. 2pm.

28 DOROTHY BARNHOUSE, MEZZO, SOPRANO. All German works.

29 TIMOTHY BROWN, PIANO. J.S. Bach, K.P.E. Bach, Haydn, Chopin.