

OLIVEROS, Pauline

February 1980

Muir Provost

REVIEWS

✓ Attached are the following reviews:

"Women in Music", Concerts at IHC, Araguzelimian,
Los Angeles Times, August 2, 1978.

"Women's Symphony Debut", Richard Buell, Boston Globe,
December 5, 1978.

"Coinciden Peter Reinecke y Pauline Oliveros: Necesaria la
Continua Interaccion entre la Musica, su Proceso
Creativo y el Individuo", Juan Arturo Brennan,
Uno Mas Uno, Mexico City, 1978. (Commentary)

"Contemporary Festival in 1979 Finale", Los Angeles Times,
May 4, 1979.

"California Music, Part One: The State of the Art",
Alan Rich, New York Magazine, May 28, 1979.

"Underground Music Surfaces for a Nine-Day Festival",
John Rockwell, New York Times, June 3, 1979. (Commentary)

"California Music, Part Two: The State of the Art",
Alan Rich, New York Magazine, June 4, 1979.

"Music: Kitchen Offering Experimental Festival",
John Rockwell, New York Times, June 10, 1979.

"Impressions of New Music", Tom Johnson, Village Voice,
June 11, 1979. (Commentary)

"New Music, New York, New Institution", Tom Johnson,
Village Voice, July 2, 1979.

"New Music", Joan LaBarbara, Musical America, August 1979.

Pauline Oliveros

PAULINE OLIVEROS

MUSIC REVIEW

'Women in Music' Concerts at IHC

Not very long ago, a woman composer qualified as a pioneer simply by being a woman in a field thought to be the exclusive domain of men. That has been changing ever so gradually during this century. Composers from Ruth Crawford to Pauline Oliveros have gained recognition by virtue of their pioneering musical contributions.

The joys and sorrows of that ongoing transition were among the subjects of a conference on "Women in Classical Music" held last weekend at Immaculate Heart College. Composers, performers, researchers and students met to share ideas and information, to offer support and, perhaps most important, to present two concerts devoted to the works of women composers. The guiding spirits for these events, organized by composer Anna Rubin, included pianist Nancy Fierro, researcher Judith Rosen and Pauline Oliveros.

The history of music by women composers seems to be neatly divided into two periods—the 20th century and everything before. For a variety of reasons, pre-20th-century works tend to have much more historical than musical interest. Societal and personal pressures too often prevented women from developing beyond the status of talented amateurs and much of the music reflects that. What exceptions there were usually occurred in the protective environment of a musical family. Clara Schumann, whose Piano Trio was performed Saturday night, certainly ranks among the best of the pre-20th-century composers.

Standout Contemporaries

Among contemporary composers no longer alive, Ruth Crawford and Grazyna Bacewicz easily stand out. Crawford (1901-1953), who also devoted much effort to important research in American folk music, created one of the landmarks of early-20th-century music with her 1931 String Quartet. She was represented on Sunday by four piano preludes that share some kinship to the early piano works of Copland but are even more direct and communicative. The striking performances were by pianist Virginia Eskin, who also has championed the music of Mrs. H. H. A. Beach.

On the evidence of her First Piano Quintet and other works (including the Second Piano Sonata recorded by Nancy Fierro), Bacewicz (1913-1969) deserves to be far better known. Like her countryman Lutoslawski, she certainly felt the influence of Bartok in her early works, but gradually incorporated that influence into a distinctly individual style. The jazzy, angular Quintet, like her other works, is strong-minded and appealing in every way; all enterprising performers should take note.

A Virtuosoic Range

There was much merit in the newer works as well. Joan La Barbara has dramatically extended the possibilities of vocal technique by incorporating a seemingly infinite and virtuosoic range of sounds, timbres and colors. Her "Twelvesong" (1977) combines 12 prerecorded vocal tracks with a live singer (the composer herself on Sunday afternoon) into an extraordinarily inventive tapestry of sounds. With its subtle awareness of how a listener perceives and orders sounds, "Twelvesong" is a visceral, exciting experience.

Anna Rubin's "Songs to Death" depends on an altogether different kind of singing and provides a most sympathetic setting for the powerful, sometimes devastating words of Sylvia Plath's poetry. In her "Triplex," Ruth Still

played Saturday by Joyce Johnson, Betty Scott and Ellen Taylor.

One problem, however, about these admirable concerts: They took place in the unfriendly, cavernlike setting of the IHC Auditorium (capacity: 712), with small audiences making the place seem even more forbidding.

—ARA GUZELIMIAN

Women's Symphony debut

THE NEW ENGLAND WOMEN'S SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA—In its debut concert, conducted by Kay Gardner and others at Sanders Theater, Cambridge, on Sunday night.

By Richard Buell
Globe Correspondent

The grievances of the past—and present—make it understandable why the New England Women's Symphony should have been established. The male-female ratio in a student orchestra at the New England Conservatory is often close to 50-50, but is nothing remotely like that in any professional orchestra you will ever encounter; what has happened en route? And worthy women composers do go unperformed. Why, for instance, don't we hear more of Dame Ethel Smyth (1858-1944), the author of many delightful books of reminiscence ("Female Pippings in Eden" and "Inordinate Affection" among them) and the composer of a grand opera that Beecham conducted at Covent Garden to great effect, namely, "The Wreckers"? Why, indeed?

For the above reasons and some others that would make up a rattling good feminist manifesto, the fledgling New England Women's Symphony (hereafter NEWS) is among us. Its principal violinist is called a "concertmaestra," its supporters are called "matrons," and its audience Sunday night was young, enthusiastic, and overwhelmingly female.

The performance of Vivian Fine's "Romantic Ode," conducted by the composer,

wasn't very promising. The piece is a leisurely, long-lined, rather melancholic adagio much of whose effect depends on the sort of secure, warm-toned string playing that the one-third professional, two-thirds student NEWS can't at present muster up. At one point Ms. Fine could be heard shouting "126" (the bar number) to the players. However that may have been, "To Valerie Solanas and Marilyn Monroe; In Recognition of Their Desperation" (1970) by Pauline Oliveiros did receive a performance that made many points. The business at hand was spatial-atmospheric-theatrical, with three small bands of instrumentalists positioned variously about the balcony, trading coolly-voiced sustained chords that would be antiphonal, overlapping, joined, never quite predictably, with little crests in volume serving as subtle punctuation. It made for a quiet, faraway, meditative mood, one that was very considerate of one's Sunday evening biorhythms, not an ounce of agitprop in it.

The closest thing to a chestnut on the program was Mabel Daniels' "Deep Forest," which, as a child, this reviewer can remember Arthur Fiedler having conducted on the Esplanade. The performers, by now, had really gotten it together (what are the differences in efficiency, one wondered, between goal-oriented men-in-groups and women-in-groups?), and the result was "echt," idiomatic Daniels—tasteful, pastel Impressionism with real birds, real leaves, and real flowers. For that, we shyly offer one nose-gay each to all concerned.

▷ Coinciden Peter Reinecke y Pauline Oliveros

Necesaria la continua interacción entre la música, su proceso creativo y el individuo

La necesidad de continua interacción entre la música, el proceso de creación musical y el individuo, fue un punto común en las ponencias de Pauline Oliveros y el Dr. Hans-Peter Reinecke, presentadas el miércoles en el Seminario Internacional de Estudios en Creación Musical y Futuro.

La primera conferencia estuvo a cargo de Pauline Oliveros, compositora estadounidense que actualmente trabaja en la Universidad de California, en San Diego. El título de su conferencia fue *Software para personas*. Cabe la aclaración de que el término *software* proviene del léxico de la cibernética y se refiere a los programas, documentos y otros tipos de información con los que trabajan las computadoras y otros sistemas de procesos de información, a diferencia del *hardware*, que se refiere al equipo tecnológico empleado en dichos procesos.

La conferencia de Oliveros se dividió en cuatro secciones; en la primera, expuso algunas consideraciones generales sobre el tema, presentando la tesis de que la gran aceleración en los procesos de cambio generados por la tecnología puede dar como resultado dos respuestas ante el cambio: la adhesión a la tradición, o la adaptación flexible a las nuevas circunstancias.

En la segunda parte de su exposición, Oliveros habló sobre su experiencia personal en el campo de la música, sus preocupaciones al respecto y su interacción con el medio. Oliveros respeta cada tipo de música dentro de su propio contexto, pero afirma que las grabaciones divorcian a la propia música de su contexto, y que por ello, ella ha tratado de absorber la música directamente de las fuentes originales que la producen. Su propia trayectoria en la composición ha abarcado varias etapas: la música tradicional, las técnicas de improvisación, la música electrónica, la música teatral (o teatro musical) y actualmente, la música meditativa. De la amalgama de su experiencia, Pauline Oliveros

ha propuesto su teoría del *software* para personas; en sus trabajos al respecto, ella toma su material de cuatro fuentes: toda la música que ha escuchado, todos los sonidos naturales (incluyendo sus sonidos interiores), todos los sonidos del mundo tecnológico, y todos los sonidos de su imaginación.

Hacia fines de los sesentas, la compositora comenzó a trabajar con lo que llama meditaciones sonoras. Este trabajo, que explicó en la tercera parte de su ponencia, se basa en la conciencia de que existe un tipo de atención global y un tipo de atención focal, que pueden ser dirigidas al interior o al exterior del individuo con todos sus sentidos.

Uno de sus intereses primordiales es la interacción de ambos tipos de atención en la producción de la música. Como ejemplo, mencionó su obra *Reflexiones y Generaciones Willowbrook*, que fue ejecutada el lunes pasado. En esta obra, hay un programa o *software* para el grupo generador de sonidos, programa que les obliga a cambiar constantemente de la atención focal a la global y viceversa.

Para finalizar, Pauline Oliveros realizó con los asistentes un experimento basado en control de respiración, conciencia del cuerpo y el espacio y atención global a los sonidos que es cambiada instantáneamente por la atención focal

Juan Arturo Brennan

por medio de un estímulo. Como conclusión, Pauline Oliveros habló de su visión personal sobre el futuro de la música, futuro en el que la interacción entre la inteligencia humana y las inteligencias artificiales deberá ser mayor para ayudar a expandir la conciencia a través del *feedback* entre los individuos y los sistemas cibernéticos.

Después de un intervalo, el doctor Hans-Peter Reinecke, director del Instituto Estatal de Investigaciones Musicológicas de Berlín, expuso un documento titulado *La música como factor emocional y racional en la dinámica de la interacción social*. El doctor Reinecke principió haciendo un poco de historia para apoyar su tesis de que el desarrollo de la música occidental ha estado siempre ligada a catástrofes naturales y sociales que han dado como resultado respuestas de tipo musical.

El avance de la civilización permitió desligar la música, en la cultura occidental, de los elementos de brujería y magia, y el desarrollo de la ciencia permitió asociar ciertas ramas de estudio con los sentidos humanos: la acústica con el oído, la óptica con la vista, la mecánica con el sentido kinestético. Esto permitió un enfoque más racional de muchos fenómenos humanos, y en particular, del papel de la música en la interacción humana.

Sobre el entrenamiento para la música, el doctor Reinecke sostiene que sólo podrá ser fructífero si el aprendiz se marca sus propias metas, en vez de ser forzado a realizar interminables ejercicios que le pueden llevar incluso a un colapso. Los sistemas tradicionales de enseñanza musical dan a la música connotaciones emocionales negativas y ésta se convierte en una actividad vacía y sin sentido.

El ponente habló después sobre los experimentos que ha realizado en la materia de percepción musical en Berlín, y sobre los resultados que ha obtenido con ellos.

Como conclusión, el doctor Reinecke habló del comportamiento anónimo e impersonal de hombre moderno en sus relaciones interpersonales y mencionó que, en la juventud, estas relaciones producen estados de angustia a los que los jóvenes responden naturalmente con su propia música, que en muchos casos produce angustia en la generación anterior y ello genera reacciones represivas.

Y para finalizar, el doctor Reinecke analizó brevemente el probable futuro próximo de la música, a partir de un enfoque basado en la psicología, la sociología y la filosofía, y en general a partir de una visión más humanista de la música como factor importante en la interacción social.

Presentan hoy en El Juglar 2 libros de Salvador Elizondo y Carmen Parra

Los libros de *La grafostática u oda a Eiffel* de Salvador Elizondo, ilustrado con grabados originales de Carmen Parra y *Salvador Elizondo como proyecto de Torre Eiffel*, serán presentados hoy, a las 19:30 horas, en la librería El Juglar (Avenida Revolución 1915).

El primero contiene un poema de Elizondo ilustrado con grabados originales de Carmen Parra hechos en el taller del pintor Luis López Loza. El segundo es un "libro sorpresa", con el mismo texto de *La grafostática* y con un tetratema del escritor trazado en *blue print*, en recuerdo a la construcción de la Torre Eiffel.

Este libro viene firmado por el propio Eiffel.

También se presentará al público una exposición de 45 dibujos a pastel y tintas de Carmen Parra, que consiste en el juego visual que se establece entre un pez rojo que da vuelta, dentro de una pecera, a la Torre Eiffel, un toro y un rinoceronte.

Asimismo presentará un códice con el mismo tema en que el pez acaba devorando a la Torre Eiffel hasta quedar convertido en un fósil. La colección, fechada en París, forma parte de la muestra que realizó la artista en Sarcelles, Francia, en 1976 con el nombre de *Torre Eiffel, ali*

MUSIC REVIEWS

Contemporary Festival in 1979 Finale

Sunday afternoon and evening the final CalArts installment of Contemporary Music Festival '79 was presented. The music, mainly by Southwest area composers, proved mostly inspired and inspiring, as did the performances.

The formal—if that is ever the word on the campus that Disney built—afternoon concert was graced by the world premieres of "Four Madrigals" by William Brooks and "El Relicario de los Animales" by Pauline Olivaros. Brooks' madrigals are wonders of direct musical communication over a broad emotional and conceptual spectrum. They exploit the most advanced vocal techniques, which were handled with astonishing ease by EVTE (Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble), a mixed quartet from UC San Diego.

Oliveros' work is a gripping, albeit enigmatic, musical drama, almost a liturgical drama of some primeval tribe of animists. It begins with a vocalist alone in the center, barefoot in a small circle of dirt. The rest of the performers enter to the sound of conch shells and clapped rocks, taking positions in the shape of a mandala. All very symbolic, very somber and very intense. Carol Plantamura was the earnest high priestess.

Also on the program were Vinko Globokar's "Accord" (1966) and "Twelve for Five in Eight" by Joan La Barbara. "Accord" is an eclectic ensemble piece in which a vocal word-collage is both contrasted with and integrated into the instrumental fabric. La Barbara's work is a deft rescoring of a piece composed for Radio Bremen in 1977, stunning in execution but conceptually mundane.

Following this, one could sample miniconcerts of electronic or improvisational music, or amuse himself in the Game Room. Morton Subotnick's "Game for Two People" is a fascinating multimedia creation; a strategy and memory game where each move on an electronic board is scored according to the audio-visual effect it produces.

The energy and interest of these events was largely

missing on the evening concert, due in part to devoting almost as much time on rearranging the stage between numbers as in actual performance.

Soprano Carol Plantamura was featured in Stephen Mosko's "Night of the Long Knives" and Virko Baley's "Words—VII." She coped ably with the demands of Mosko's coy, schizophrenic theater-of-the-absurd composition, but seemed understandably to be tired vocally in "Words."

Two ensemble works, "Less Than 2" by Roger Reynolds and "Deja 2" by Bernard Rands, and two solo pieces, "QUOQ" by Robert Erickson and "Themen per un percussionista" by Carlos Alsina, filled out, indeed bloated, the program. Flutist Bernhard Batschelet and percussionist Daryl Pratt were the skillful soloists.

—J.H.

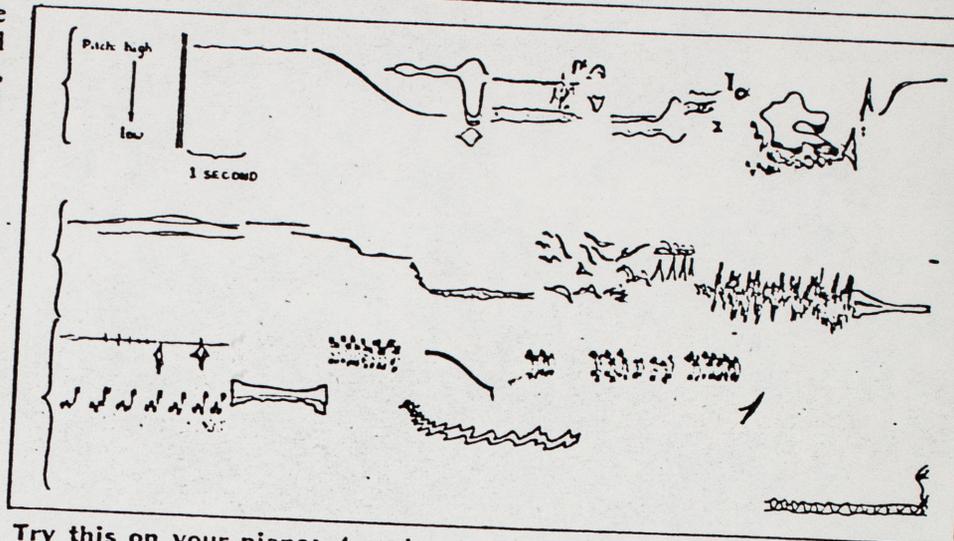
Music/Alan Rich
**CALIFORNIA MUSIC, PART ONE:
 THE STATE OF THE ART**

"...In New York a California composer is often seen as an unusually accomplished chimpanzee. It's time that attitude changed..."

Over the past six weeks I have made two round trips to California. I heard some excellent opera in San Francisco, as reported here three weeks ago. I heard Carlo Maria Giulini and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in their own garish home—including a performance of the *Freischütz* Overture with the horn quartet beautifully balanced beyond any previous experience. But the main purpose of my two trips was to check out a rumor that there is a great deal of important new music and new musical outlook being generated on the West Coast that we in New York don't know about, and that it is high time we did. I found this to be exactly, and rather exhilaratingly, true.

It is traditional for East Coast musicians to ignore West Coast activity. A California composer, in certain eastern circles, is looked upon as a chimpanzee of unusual accomplishments. To some extent this attitude is understandable. The two cultures are different. The New York new-music scene is, as everyone knows, made up of many tangential cliques, but it derives a certain homogeneity from the fact that its energy is all from the same source: competition and dirty politics within and between cliques. New York is the world's major musical marketplace. Small wonder, then, that the East Coast music establishment—which actually fills a triangle with Boston, Philadelphia, and Buffalo at its corners—cannot afford time or energy to deal with upstarts from bizarre regions where people eat alfalfa sprouts and drink milk.

Morton Subotnick is one of the elders at the California Institute of the Arts, invited there in 1969 when Walt Disney family money first set up that extraordinarily un-Disneyish, freeform school for all the arts in their farthest-out manifestation. Subotnick was widely known by then as the most creative figure in electronic music, the first to demonstrate the solid musical possibilities in that new medium. His fame rested on a few large-scale works that had been recorded (*Silver Apples of the Moon*, *The Wild Bull*, etc.); they had been recorded because Subotnick had been smart enough, in the mid-sixties,



Try this on your piano: A student "composition" from Music 1 at UCSD. The squiggles represent taped sounds in the composer's own graphic notation.

to move east from his native California and shuck off the West Coast-composer stigma. But I asked Subotnick why his own music, and some stuff by his colleagues and pupils that I've recently gotten to hear, has the enormous, surging vitality that, from my New York vantage point, I thought had died out in serious music.

"The main reason," he said, "is that we can work here in California without that overpowering East Coast feeling that everything has to count. New York is a great place, but it's an awful place if you're interested in any kind of experimentation. The record companies are there, the concert managers are there, the publishers are there, and the *New York Times* is there. The *Times* hasn't had a critic in years who knows anything, or cares anything, about new music, but it's still the paper that tells everybody what to think. Maybe California has better critics, maybe worse; the important thing is that nobody takes them seriously. That means that we're a lot freer out here to try things, to experiment. It doesn't matter nearly so much if we bomb once in a while."

It works both ways. I sat for a long session with some graduate students in composition at the University of California's San Diego campus (hereafter, UCSD). I was curious about what composers they most listened to from

the contemporary pantheon. I named the reigning cultural heroes in New York: Elliott Carter, George Crumb, Steve Reich, Phillip Glass. Yes, the UCSD students knew their music; one or two were impressed with *Einstein on the Beach*. But these are not the gods at San Diego. Harry Partch looms large, as do the theories—if not the music—of John Cage. Toru Takemitsu, barely known in the East, is much admired and imitated.

Yet, despite differences in musical taste, I never ran into the snobbery in California, the tendency to stigmatize an artist from the opposite coast, that one encounters continually in New York. It exists not only in avant-garde circles. Igor Stravinsky officiated graciously at tea in his Hollywood mansion, but he knew that he had to come to New York to take his final bows and die. Roger Sessions forsook the idyllic life at Berkeley and returned east in 1953, out of a fear that the East would dub him a Californian and ignore his music. Two decades ago the west-to-east composer rush rivaled the east-to-west land rush of yore: the older composers in search of New York reviews, the younger composers to sit at the feet of Milton Babbitt at Princeton and study total serialization and sine waves.

But now it's 1979, and no progressive composer in his right mind would



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want to come east from California, unless he wanted to sell out, write in C major, and thus earn raves in the *New York Times*. The creative energy is all in California. Every conceivable musical possibility is now being studied and pursued there; even more important is the fact that an astounding amount of California's new music is exceptionally good. The best schools, the best teachers, the best technical facilities are now on the West Coast, and so is the best creative atmosphere. The ferment follows the fault lines, from the San Francisco Bay Area (Berkeley, Mills College, and the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford), past the wonderfully oddball California Institute for the Arts, 35 miles north of Los Angeles, to UCSD at the southern end of the line.

UCSD had no music department at all until 1966, when, in a burst of academic imagination rare in the annals of higher education, the most progressive teacher-composers money could buy—Wilbur Ogdon, Pauline Oliveros, Robert Erickson, among many—were brought in to found a curriculum. From the beginning the department resolved not to turn its back on the musical past but to lead students through past, present, and future as part of a single continuum, regarding nothing as strange or exotic.

In 1966 the musical world shivered with fear of the unknown: Electronic music would take over, reducing composers, performers, and listeners to robots. It wasn't clear then, but it's perfectly clear now, that electronic music was, most of all, a shortcut for the composer around the technical inadequacy, not to mention the hostility, of live performers of the time.

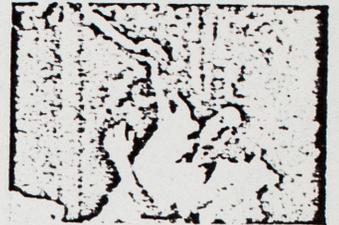
Now it's a generation later and from the schools—UCSD and CalArts most of all—have come performing musicians who seem to have taken the electronic threat as a challenge to develop their own techniques. At UCSD there is a chamber ensemble of young faculty members, called SONOR, whose performers use "normal" instruments with such skill that no abstruse performance problem seems beyond their grasp. Another ensemble, called KIVA, uses a magnificent array of invented instruments—pots and jugs hung on resonators, plastic tubes played with brass or woodwind mouthpieces. A third group, EVTE (Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble), consists of four singers who warble, keen, ululate, and draw upon a wide variety of invented, plus Asian and African, techniques. All these ensembles produce work of endless fascination, a fabulous and

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varied set of new sound sources—all produced, please note, by live musicians. Already some extraordinary music has been created for these new sound resources, including a 25-minute Requiem for EVTE by one of its members, Deborah Kavash, which I had no difficulty identifying as beautiful.

Stretched out on the floor of the main room at UCSD's Center for Music Experiment, serenaded by tape after tape of work by students of remarkable talent and variety of expression, I began to evolve my own picture of a brave new generation of composers for whom not one of the definitions I acquired in my own musical studies (at Berkeley and elsewhere) is of any but historical interest. How fortunate, my fantasy ran, that these people could revel in the freedom to express themselves 3,000 miles out of earshot of the *New York Times* or the New York talent scouts.

These things, among others, I heard: a 30-minute piece for nothing but twelve cymbals having the hell beaten out of them, on top of which, after a few minutes, I began hearing ghostly melodies of my own devising within my own head; a harrowing piece made up of nothing but the wail of a bereaved Vietnamese mother, gradually submerged into electronically produced out-of-phase echoes of itself; some lovely little pointillist settings of Ezra Pound poems for voice and instruments by a composer whose own preferences for an earlier compositional style had not been stifled; combo pieces that drew on contemporary rock styles. The variety was fascinating, the quality amazingly high. I know of no music school in the East that encourages composition students to range over so vast a spectrum of personal artistic vision.

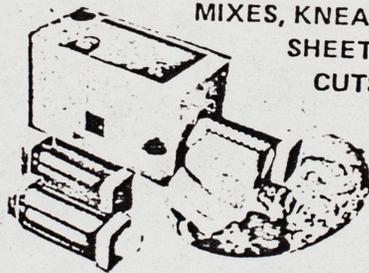
Yet, UCSD does not function, as Ivy League composition departments tend to function (and as U.C.-Berkeley and UCLA functioned, at least in my day), as a clique where composers create abstruse exercises to entertain one another and nobody else. Perhaps the most extraordinary emanation at UCSD is the course called Music 1, open to all students at the university, modern music's answer to those masterpiece surveys we all got stuck with somewhere along our student years.

Music 1 propounds the dangerous notion that anyone can compose music if the definition of music is stretched far enough. It starts by telling its students, sometimes as many as 150 at a time, about how any kind of sound can be converted into an art form through recording on tape and through manipulation of the taped product to

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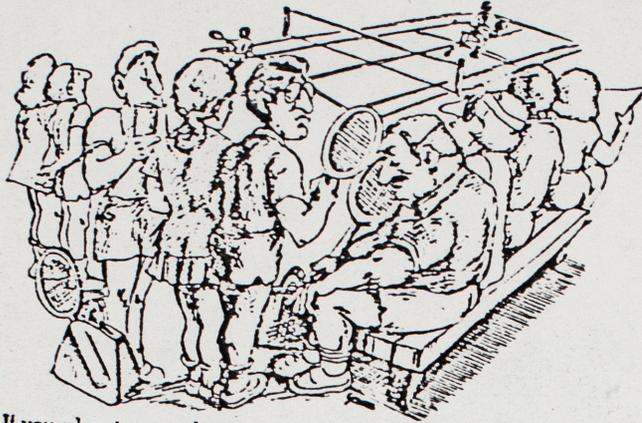
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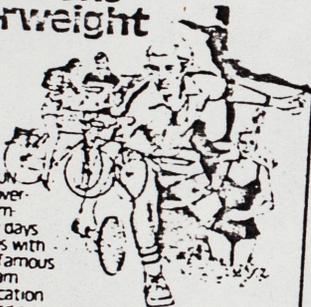


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take on the rise-and-fall of an shape. Instead of standard manu- students are guided to develop own graphic notation to descri- sound they hear or want to hear. they go out with tape recorders, in sounds, edit these sounds, run through filters, or backward, or side down, or against one another, til the results begin to resemble n- Nobody is out to create a ma- piece. The real aim of such a cours- first of all, to develop a new audic- that won't start looking for exits w- confronted with a piece later t- Rachmaninoff, and, second, to s- students an insight into musical str- ture that they can then apply to- derstanding any music of any time- culture. By accident or design, so- of the Music 1 products I've he- have a lot more vitality than some- the solid academic music that N- Yorkers are handed in the name- newness. And some of those amate- composers' squiggles are rather attra- tive too.

The essence of the UCSD music outlook is a wide-ranging worldlines a stylistic caldron into which ever- thing that has attracted or concerne- composers since, say, 1945 can b- mixed. The presence of certain patro- saints is felt: surely John Cage, wh- first suggested that any sound or de- sign could be taken as music if it- composer said it was; just as surel- the saintly Harry Partch, with hi- crazy instruments made from labora- tory jars, kitchenware, and brake drums- out of which he drew a glassy, hypnot- ic music like a cry from another galaxy. The condition of this musical en- clave today suggests, furthermore, that —for all the eagerness of the naysayers to write "finis" to the art at the dawn of the electronic age—music in the past generation has actually proceeded on the traditional pathway of any music of any period: a time of negation, followed by a time of experiment, followed by a time of synthesis. Only in the last has society the right to expect masterpieces.

In California I felt the imminence of masterpieces. Why is it harder to sense this in New York? Fear that a New York failure can be definitive surely breeds cautious composers. I suspect another problem too. Nowhere in the East is there the easy congress between the public and the academy that there is elsewhere in the country. That most of the best new music in the world is now being created at universities may not be an ideal situation, but it is a fact of life. In California the results are at least accessible. (To be continued next week.)

Underground Music Surfaces for a Nine-Day Festival

By JOHN ROCKWELL

Starting this coming Friday and continuing through June 16, there will be a music festival in New York that most music-lovers won't even be aware of. But it promises to be one of the most significant musical events of the season, a cry of self-assertion by a whole variety of underground musics.

The festival is called New Music, New York, and it will take place nightly at the Kitchen, New York's premier performance space for new music and video art, located at the corner of Wooster and Broome streets in SoHo.

The artists involved — there'll be roughly six per night — include leading figures on the experimental music scene of the city, the area and the country, with a few European composers represented, as well. They come mostly from the realm of "classical" avant-gardism, what might very loosely be called the post-Cageian school of American music. But there are also people from the loft jazz scene, the underground, "no-wave" New York rock scene, sound-related performance art and more.

A few of the many composers involved include Robert Ashley, Robert Fripp, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, Steve Reich (his ensemble but not the composer himself, who is in Europe), George Lewis, Don Cherry, Philip Corner, Phill Niblock, William Hellermann, Charles Dodge, Alvin Lucier, Larry Austin, Laurie Spiegel, Gordon Mumma, Jill Kroesen, David Behrman, Charlemagne Palestine and Laurie Anderson. There will also be a festival-related late-night presentation of no-wave bands at the Mudd Club on June 12.

In addition, there will be a Kitchen-sponsored, three-day conference of managers and administrators from

around the country associated with performance spaces like the Kitchen and music like this. And finally, beginning the day of the festival and extending one day past its close, there will be an "institute" on this music and related subjects sponsored by the Music Critics Association and consisting of talks, workshops and panel discussions, free and open to the public.

Just what all this means will presumably be a subject for rumination by the many critics coming from around the country and, one trusts, from the New York area. But a few preliminary thoughts might be in order.

First, the title "New Music, New York," is both catchy and thought-provoking, but part of the reason it provokes thought is that it can't — inevitably? — quite encompass all the ramifications of what this festival means.

"New music" suggests anything that is new, and more than any recent American festival that this writer knows of, New Music, New York is indeed broadly inclusive. But it is also exclusive, deliberately or otherwise. What's excluded is mostly what might be called "uptown" or "midtown" contemporary classical music. And it is just this music, rightly or wrongly, that is normally considered the *totality* of new music by most classical music critics.

In other words, this is the music of conservatory-trained classical composers who feel themselves direct descendants of the "Great Masters" of Western music. The leading figures on the New York scene of such music — Elliott Carter, Jacob Druckman, Charles Wuorinen, Milton Babbitt, et al., not to speak of the earlier generation of William Schuman, Peter Menin, Vincent Persichetti and the like — tend either to despise the lower Manhattanites or not to take them seriously in the first place.



Their loss. One needn't get too polemical about this: There is a lot of fine music still coming out of the uptown new-music establishment, and one day, with the mellowing perspective of time, future music historians will be able to neatly categorize and relate stylistic camps that now seem desperately antithetical.

In the meantime, we're left with a nexus of new musicians who, for all their radically different stylistic perspectives, share something intangible yet somehow perceptible. And it will be the task of the festival and its ancillary conference and institute to help make that intangibility tangible.

The first links are sociological, relating to shared geography and sources of patronage. In New York, at least, these musicians tend to cluster with the painters, poets, dancers and video artists where the rents are cheap, in the



Photographs by The New York Times. Robert Maplethorpe, Alex Jeffrey, Michael O'Brien

Music by Meredith Monk and Philip Glass, left, Steve Reich, center, and Robert Ashley and Pauline Oliveros, right, will be heard in the "New Music, New York" festival beginning Friday at the Kitchen.

manner of all Bohemian communities for the past 200 years. The result is that they share ideas with others in the community more easily than with practitioners of what is supposed to be their own art: in other words, composers in SoHo have been as much influenced by SoHo painters, dancers, etc. as by Elliott Carter.

There are those who argue that all money is corrupting, and to be sure vast sums have been wasted in recent years in the commissioning of dead new operas and symphonies. But the New York State Council on the Arts has been an incalculable help to the development of the New York new-music scene. Not that the city hasn't always been a center for new music, what with the heavy concentration here of the music business and press. But money helps, and the SoHo arts scene has been

clever about getting hold of some of it. Furthermore, unlike their midtown counterparts, they've evolved (grudgingly, sometimes) a style that doesn't need a vast amount of money to survive. While uptown composers lament (legitimately) the absence of a full-scale symphony orchestra that has the skill and time to perform new orchestral works, the lower Manhattan composers either work with smaller forms or avail themselves of amplification to make lots of noise with a small number of players.

There are shared esthetics, too. A pervasive Orientalism can be discovered in SoHo new music, much of it attributable to John Cage's writings (more than his music, really), and much more sophisticated than the Chinoiserie of earlier generations of Western composers. Balanced with this meditative quiescence has been a renewed interest, especially in the past few years, in kinetic rhythmic energy — not only in the dancing structures of Mr. Glass and Mr. Reich but in the whole coming together of the classical avant-garde and the underground rock and jazz scenes in New York.

Of course, this is hardly just a New York phenomenon, and one thing the events of the next couple of weeks will help clarify is the nature of New York's role today in American new music.

A case can be made that much of the finest American music has been composed by rugged individualists, cut off by geographical or psychological isolation from the mainstream of American culture. On that theory, New York, with its bustling cosmopolitanism and its rewarding of immediate success, might seem inimical to the best of American creativity.

But SoHo has arisen as a place where the contradictory tendencies of isolationism and cosmopolitanism can meet.

The result has been, for those of us who have followed the scene over the past few seasons, a remarkably lively and potentially promising source of new music. Not all of it is "good" or lasting, of course; little of any new music lasts. But the scene itself is exciting, and already its finest creations have won a place among the best new music, anywhere. The Kitchen festival should not only be instructive for anyone who wishes to partake of it but also enjoyable in a way that the stereotypical midtown "new music concert" — all gray, dutiful and boring — rarely manages to be. ■

Music/Alan Rich

CALIFORNIA MUSIC, PART TWO: THE ART OF THE STATE

"...For most of the active West Coast composers, the era of pure experiment has now become an era of substantial achievement..."

I wrote last week about the tired old East with all its cliques and infighting, as compared with California, its healthy creative genius with alfalfa sprouts bestrewn. That was, I knew all along, a simplification out of touch with reality. California, too, has its lines of division. Composers at the University of California in San Diego tend to regard music on the university's Berkeley campus as old-fashioned; in Berkeley I hear only about "those nuts" at UCSD and at the California Institute of the Arts. At Mills College in Oakland, Robert Ashley's Center of Contemporary Music—one of the first in the country, directly descended from the San Francisco Tape Center, which Morton Subotnick founded in the early 1960s—produces a kind of theater-oriented electronic style which, by standards of the Center for Computer Research in Music and Acoustics at Stanford, is extremely old hat. Since all these disagreements occur under the academic umbrella, the politicking can be dirty and just a bit silly. You get the feeling at a new-music concert out there that controversial composers ought to show up with their own cheerleaders and pom-pom girls. If California didn't exist, nobody could invent it.

Yet, there are also alliances in this music scene, and shared concerns. Nobody working in any area of new music can afford to ignore the work going on at Stanford, whose center was the prototype for the computer-music division of Pierre Boulez's IRCAM in Paris. To put it in its simplest form (which is all that I can understand, at any rate), the ability of computers to accept any sound, any acoustic condition, any information about form, melody, musical texture, etc.—and then to "study" this material, analyze and break it down into its digital equivalent, to store it and produce it on demand—carries implications that are both vast and thrilling. Some of these possibilities have already reached the consumer world in the form of digital recording. Here the computer translates a performance into a digital equivalent which can then be duplicated on a piece of plastic software, as an LP master is dupli-



cated in a record press. Then that plastic piece is "read" on home equipment by a laser feeding into your present amplifier, re-creating the original sound without the loss in the usual music-to-tape-to-groove process. As a halfway step, digital recording can also be pressed onto LP discs—with, of course, the same wear problems and time limitations as ordinary discs. Even so, some of the digital discs now available—London's new album of Strauss *Waltzes* (LDR 1000½), for example—make anything else on records sound like Edison cylinders by comparison.

All this, however, is tangential to the way the computer can serve the composer. Stanford's gadgetry can study the sound of, say, an orchestra, so that a composer can create his own music using that sound as his instrument. He can store ideas in the computer and gain instantaneous information on how they will sound. He can draw on the computer's trove of studied and remembered sound and subject it to further manipulation to achieve an infinitude of still more sounds.

Stanford's computer center has so far done the most work in this field, and some of its staff (notably Loren Rush, who has had some works played in New York) are already famous. More significant is the fact that Stanford's machines have already spawned

smaller yet sophisticated spinoffs for teaching and home use. Computers do, thank God, stop short of imagining. That remains the composer's job.

At the California Institute of the Arts late last month I attended a three-day festival of new music, consisting largely of works from CalArts itself, UCSD, and the small but thriving department at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. It was an absorbing event, brilliantly planned, with somewhat greater attention to certain key works of the past than had been the case at last year's festival. Yet I had the bizarre experience of finding such scores as Peter Maxwell Davies's ten-year-old *Eight Songs for a Mad King*—a work I have always revered for its dazzling, iconoclastic theater sense—suddenly sounding terribly aged. And in Elliott Carter's *Syringa*, introduced in New York last winter, I heard only wheels.

The best of the music was brand-new, two big works that involved both live instruments and tape. One was *Less Than 2*, by UCSD's Roger Reynolds, a vivid, elegant piece for two pianos, percussion, and a pre-recorded tape track. The other was *Parallel Lines*, by Morton Subotnick of CalArts, for piccolo solo with chamber ensemble and tape. In the latter work, the tape actually takes on the function of both a live instrument and a small computer, used as it is to create a "ghost track," an ongoing electronic trope on the line of the solo piccolo. The implications here are, to say the least, arresting: the use of computerized, "live electronic" manipulation to expand the sound possibilities of a group of live instrumentalists. And when you consider this in the light of the already awesome technical prowess of today's new-music performer, the prospects stagger the imagination.

None of this would make any sense if the music itself were mere technical exercise. The most striking thing I learned in my recent immersion in music of the West Coast is that, for most of the active composers in that area, an era of merely trying things out has passed into an era of substantial achievement. The Subotnick and Reyn-

olds pieces each ran about 25 minutes, and both were constructed with a fine sense of artistic management, with an emotional sweep that moved the listener along a consistent path.

Still, there is no excess of consistency in California's new music, nothing yet that can furnish pedagogues with textbook material about the emergence of a single stylistic "school." At CalArts, Subotnick works with his marvelously inventive, wide-ranging musical language, which lends itself to large-scale, rational structures, while Mel Powell (formerly of Yale) still creates the elegant, monocellular miniatures that he was writing twenty years ago. At UCSD Roger Reynolds continues to produce a dynamic, tense music whose form seems to derive from unwritten poetry; Pauline Oliveros, represented at the festival with a sprawling, improvisatory work built partly out of imitated animal sounds, is clearly caught up in the bright fantasy of music-as-theater. And Loren Rush of Stanford, although none of his computer works were on the program, plied me for hours with tapes of his own and students' music—works of wonder, delight, and, best of all, artistic stature. O brave, new, noisy world!

Listening Assignment

Given the world's need for multiple recordings of *Swan Lake*, the large record companies are understandably reluctant to deal at any length with abstruse contemporary music. The following will give you a smattering of some of the new music in California, from either its present practitioners or seminal figures.

Erickson: *End of the Mime*, a setting from *Finnegans Wake* for chorus (CRI S-325); *General Speech*, for trombone (New World 254).

Ogdon: *By the Isar*, for chamber ensemble (Desto 7128).

Oliveros: *Sound Patterns*, for extended-vocal-techniques ensemble (Odyssey 32160156); *I of IV*, electronic (Odyssey 32160160).

Partch: Several short works (Columbia MS 7207).

Reynolds: *From Behind the Unreasoning Mask*, for trombone, percussion, and tape (New World 237); *Quick Are the Mouths of Earth*, for chamber ensemble (Nonesuch 71219).

Rush: *A Little Traveling Music*, for piano and computer-generated tape (Serenus 12070).

Subotnick: *Four Butterflies* (Columbia M-32741) and *Silver Apples of the Moon* (Nonesuch 71174), both electronic; *Lamination*, for orchestra and tape (Turnabout TV-S 34428).

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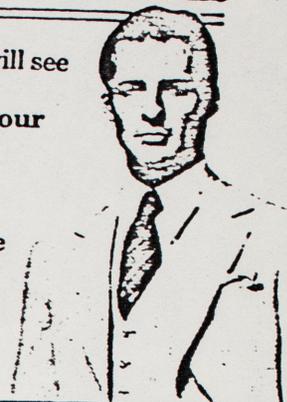
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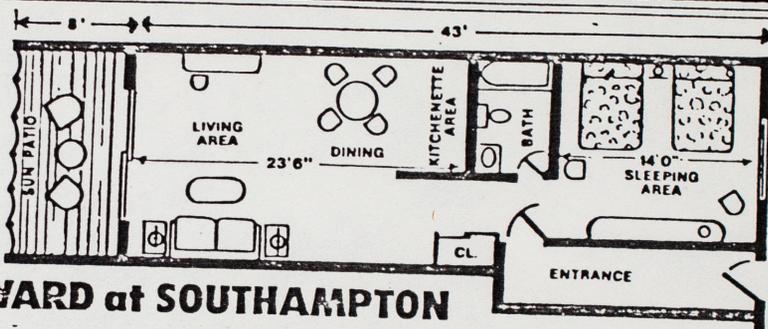
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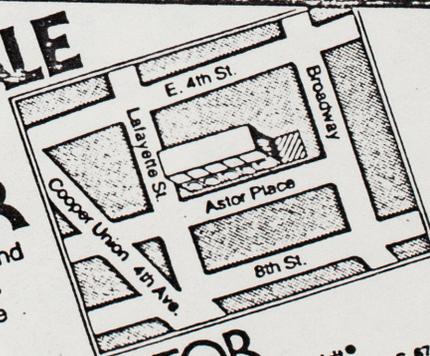
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Music: Kitchen Offering Experimental Festival

By JOHN ROCKWELL

The Kitchen's New Music, New York festival of experimental music got under way Friday night with two identical benefit concerts. The program was an interesting one, full of good or at least stimulating music. But only some of it was new, and the composers selected, being well-known ones, didn't really constitute a preview of the evenings to come (the festival runs nightly through Saturday).

The first four were Steve Reich (represented by four members of his ensemble), Pauline Oliveros, Philip Glass and Meredith Monk. All these people work in idioms that are in some sense static or meditative. Of the four, the best effect was made by Miss Oliveros, who did an audience-participation piece that was lucidly simple in its instructions and lovely to hear and to participate in.

People were asked to sing long notes on a pitch of choice, and to alternate between that pitch and the matching of their voices to somebody else's pitch. The result was a shifting, dappled choral texture of sound, and the very timidity of many of the audience helped lend it a magically distant and ethereal quality.

The trouble with these benefit or festival potpourris is that composers whose work needs time or large ensembles aren't usually heard at their most characteristic. The first part of Mr. Reich's "Drumming," for instance, exemplifies his rhythmic interests, but it doesn't get into the coloristic variety of later sections of the same score.

Mr. Glass did a solo electric organ section of a forthcoming work, and while it had its merits, his solo pieces are to this taste usually less challenging than his ensemble works. And although Miss Monk's remarkable vocal

techniques and hieratic allure never failed to make an impact, her solo works from 1970 and 1973 don't suggest her more complex recent ensemble scores.

It was left to Robert Ashley at the end to provide the evening with a real climax, the only bit of old-fashioned avant-garde aggression of the night. Mr. Ashley performed his "Wolfman," which dates back to 1964 and succeeded in driving a good portion of the early-show audience from the premises.

"The Wolfman" consists of a cacophonous barrage of distorted electronic squawking on tape, fevered electric-keyboard effects and Mr. Ashley grimacing and moaning into a microphone, his sounds twisted by howling feedback. It was a little bit of nostalgic history, a blast from the avant-garde past, a new-music golden oldie, and, at least in retrospect, amusing as such.

GIVE TO THE FRESH AIR FUND

Impressions of New Music

By Tom Johnson

The forthcoming 10-day festival, "New Music, New York," has already made quite an impression, and it hasn't even begun yet. Music critics across the country have been so impressed that more of them applied for fellowships to the Institute on Contemporary Experimental Music, to be held in conjunction with the festival, than to any of the other institutes scheduled by the national Music Critics Association this year. Directors of alternative centers across the country have been so impressed that at least 50 of them have arranged to attend their own New Music Conference, also to be held in New York during that time. The *Voice* editors were so impressed that they felt a column of prior comments would be in order, even though this page is almost never given over to advance publicity. They even agreed to provide enough space on the music page this week to list all of the seminars, workshops, concerts, panels, times, and places.

Perhaps I should not have been impressed. Since I have been following the development of experimental music rather closely throughout the '70s, and have participated in much of the activity myself, I was already aware that there was a lot of experimental music going on, that much of it was of high quality, and that the audience for this work was growing. Perhaps I should have taken it all in stride when I learned that a festival package of this sort was being put together. And yet, as I look down the list of the 53 composers whose works are scheduled for the concerts, I am impressed too.

I am impressed, for example, at the maturity of most of the artists. The SoHo scene, or the Kitchen scene, or the experimental music scene, or the new music scene, or whatever you want to call it, is still widely regarded by outsiders as a radical avant-garde genre, the implication being that it is carried on by rebellious young freaks who are still reacting against what their teachers taught them and trying to startle audiences with their iconoclasm. Such a description might almost be appropriate if we were talking about the Fluxus events that took place in the early '60s, or about those first Kitchen seasons that took place in the former kitchen of the old Broadway Central Hotel in the early '70s. But the present situation is very different. Most of these musicians sowed their first artistic oats long ago, and while their work may still seem bizarre to the general public, most of it now comes out of a good many years of experience, and most of its creators are over 35.

I am also impressed by the diversity of the music scheduled for the festivals. The influences reflected in the work of these musicians range from John Cage and Indonesian music to jazz and rock. The instruments they use may be non-Western, homemade, or simply pieces of furniture. They experiment variously with vocal and theatrical techniques, and make use of electronic devices ranging all the way from the most rudimentary to the most sophisticated. Some are involved with forms of meditation, new ways of improvising,

or sound poetry. It is still common practice to summarize the history of experimental music as a phenomenon that began with La Monte Young and then proceeded to Terry Riley, Steve Reich, and Philip Glass, in that order. But, of course, this progression has been only one aspect of the very intricate history of recent music, and while it may be the best known at the moment, it is probably not the most profound so far as fresh musical insights are concerned or the most influential as far as the future of music is concerned, and maybe not the most successful as far as sheer musical quality is concerned. If the festival does nothing more than to make critics and other listeners more aware of the complexity of experimental music as a whole, it will still be valuable.

I am also impressed by the omissions. This festival by no means takes in the entire experimental music picture. I can think of many composers from England or Australia or Rome or Tokyo or California or Illinois or other places whose work would have fit neatly into a festival of this sort, and I'm sure there are many others I'm not aware of. For that matter, I can think of a number of musicians based right in New York whose work would have had to have been included in a truly comprehensive or definitive festival. Still, this series is probably more comprehensive and more definitive than any assemblage of experimental music anyone has ever put together before, and it will bring together more new ways of making music than we have ever had an opportunity to hear in one package before. The concerts, and the many private and public discussions that will surround them, will probably also bring together more new insights and questions about new music than any of us have ever thought of before. Of course, some of these will probably be more disturbing than reassuring. But then, that will be valuable too. ■



TOM JOHNSON

New Music, New York: When, and Where

Friday, June 8

10 a.m.: Remarks by Mary MacArthur and Rhys Chatham of the Kitchen Center; talk by John Rockwell on "Experimental Music Today" (Loeb Student Center)

6 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.: Special benefit concert with works by Robert Ashley, Philip Glass, Meredith Monk, Pauline Oliveros, and Steve Reich Ensemble. (The Kitchen)

Saturday, June 9

10:30 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.: Tom Johnson and Michael Nyman on "The History and Esthetics of Experimental Music" (Experimental Intermedia Foundation)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by John Adams, Karl Berger, Marc Gafé, Garrett List, Leo Smith, and Peter Zummo.

Sunday, June 10

10:30 a.m.: Workshop with Tom Johnson on "New Performing Techniques" (Experimental Intermedia Foundation)

2:30 p.m.: John Rockwell and Brian Eno, with Jerry Casale, Robert Fripp, Philip Glass, and Leroy Jenkins on "Commerciality, Mystique, Ego and Fame in New Music" (Collective for Living Cinema)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by Charles Amirkhania, Connie Beckley, Jon Deak, Scott Johnson, Jill Kroesen, and David van Teighem (The Kitchen)

Monday, June 11

10:30 a.m.: John Rockwell and Michael Nyman, with Rhys Chatham, Brian Eno, and Chris Stein on "Rock and Experimental Music" (Collective for Living Cinema)

2:30 p.m.: Robert Palmer, with Robert Ashley, George Lewis, and Wendy Perron on "Improvisation in Experimental Music" (Collective for Living Cinema)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by Michael Byron, Philip Corner, Malcolm Goldstein, William Hellermann, Petr Kotik, and Charlie Morrow (The Kitchen)

Tuesday, June 12

10:30 a.m.: Robert Palmer on "Jazz and Experimental Music" (Loeb Student Center)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by Barbara Benary, Joe Celli, Don Cherry, Tom Johnson, Jeanne Lee, and Phill Niblock (The Kitchen)

Wednesday, June 13

2:30 p.m.: John Rockwell, Tom Johnson, Robert Palmer, and Michael Nyman on "Criticism and Experimental Music" (Loeb Student Center)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by Larry Austin, Joel Chadabe, Charles Dodge, George Lewis, Alvin Lucier, and Laurie Spiegel.

Thursday, June 14

2:30 p.m.: Robert Palmer and Tom Johnson, with Barbara Benary, Brian Eno, Philip Glass, and Gordon Mumma on "The Relationship between New Music and Third World Music" (Collective for Living Cinema)

8 p.m. Concert of works by David Behrman, Tony Conrad, Jon Gibson, Annea Lockwood, Charlemagne Palestine, and Ivan Tcherepnin (The Kitchen)

Friday, June 15

10:30 a.m.: John Rockwell, with David Behrman, Charles Dodge, and Laurie Spiegel on "Electronic Music" (Collective for Living Cinema)

2:30 p.m.: Brian Eno on "The Recording Studio as Compositional Tool" (Collective for Living Cinema)

8 p.m.: Concert of works by Jon Hassell, David Mahler, Gordon Mumma, Michael Nyman, Richard Teitelbaum, and "Blue" Gene Tyranny (The Kitchen)

Saturday, June 16

10:30 a.m.: Rhys Chatham, with Michael Byron, Peter Gordon, and Frankie Mann on "Young Composers" (Experimental Intermedia Foundation)

2:30 p.m. John Rockwell, with Laurie Anderson, Connie Beckley, RoseLee Goldberg, and Meredith Monk on "The Relationship between New Music and the Other Arts" (Experimental Intermedia Foundation)

8 p.m.: Concert with works by Laurie Anderson, Rhys Chatham, Peter Gordon, Jeffrey Lohn, Frankie Mann, and Ned Sublette. (The Kitchen)

Sunday, June 17

10:30 a.m.: Michael Nyman on "British and American New Music" (The Kitchen)

2:30 p.m.: John Rockwell, with a panel of Institute fellows on "The Relationship between New York and the rest of the United States in Experimental Music" (The Kitchen)

Loeb Student Center is at 566 LaGuardia Place; the Experimental Intermedia Foundation (aka Phill Niblock's Loft) is at 224 Centre Street; the Collective for Living Cinema is at 52 White Street; and the Kitchen is at 484 Broome Street. Tickets are \$15 (\$12 for Kitchen members) for the opening-night concert, \$4 (\$3.50 for Kitchen members) or TDF Music voucher for all other concerts, and may be purchased in advance. Other sessions are free. For further information call 925-3615. ■

MUSIC

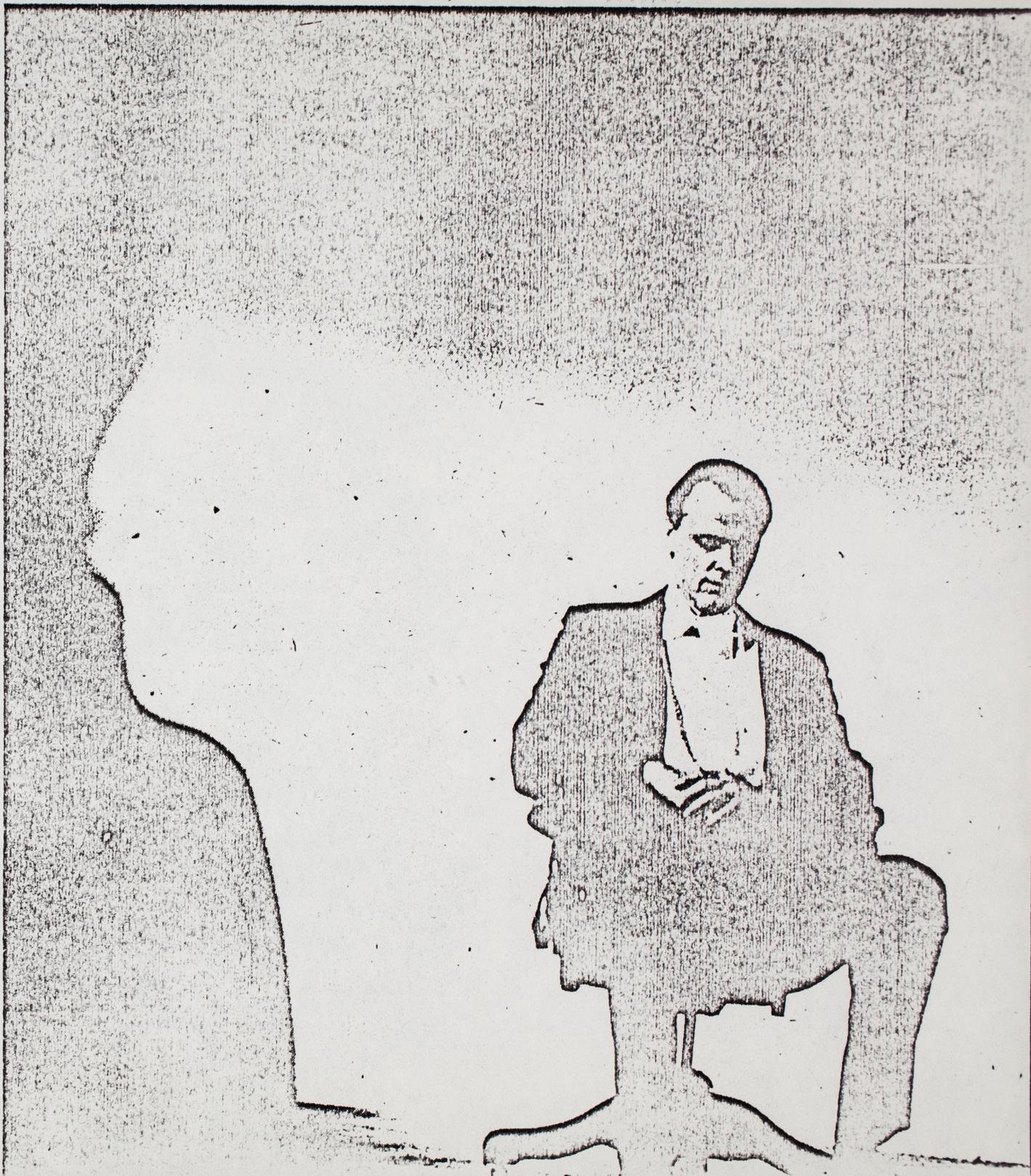
New Music, New York, New Institution

It suddenly became clear that the genre has accumulated quite a bit of support and momentum.

By Tom Johnson

For all the value of the 53 specific pieces included on the 10-day festival of *New Music, New York*, the discussions surrounding them were perhaps even more valuable. And for all the confrontations and new insights, the mere fact that the affair had taken place was perhaps most valuable of all.

This was not just another music festival, but a genuine landmark in the evolution of a genre. The event, hosted by the Kitchen, marked the first time that such a broad spectrum of experimental music had ever been put together into a single, highly visible package. Critics from consumer magazines,

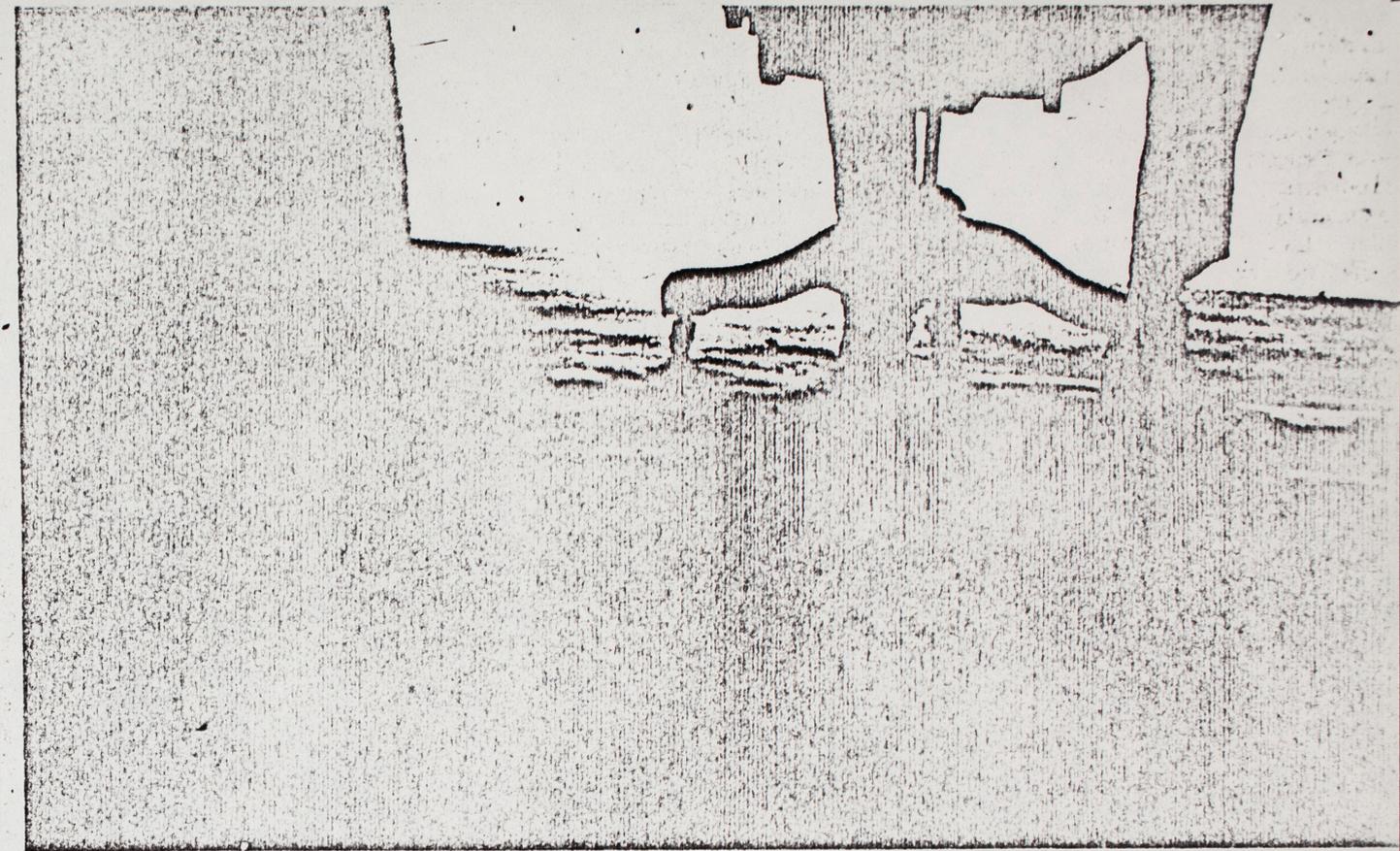


New York, the discussions surrounding them were perhaps even more valuable. And for all the confrontations and new insights, the mere fact that the affair had taken place was perhaps most valuable of all.

This was not just another music festival, but a genuine landmark in the evolution of a genre. The event, hosted by the Kitchen, marked the first time that such a broad spectrum of experimental music had ever been put together into a single, highly visible package. Critics from consumer magazines, jazz magazines, and entertainment magazines, which normally ignore experimental music, arrived in significant numbers. Nine critics from across the country arrived to participate in the Music Critics Association institute held in conjunction with the festival. Representatives from about 50 groups that present new music in one format or another arrived from all over the country to hear the music, to talk, and to form an organization for their mutual benefit. John Duffy, whose "Meet the Composer" program is expanding to support new music in more and more states, arrived to coordinate his efforts with theirs. There were representatives from the National Endowment and other funding organizations, representatives from European radio, along with publishers, scholars, and music professionals of all sorts. And there was such public response that the Kitchen, with its capacity of 250, had to turn away dozens, if not hundreds, for every concert. In effect, the event turned out to be a kind of new music trade show, and a more vital one than even the most optimistic seemed to anticipate.

This is particularly significant for music that has always been considered experimental or avant-garde and has thus far evolved strictly on the fringes of official culture. The activity has been gradually increasing all around the country but I don't think anyone quite realized how much it has been increasing. Now it suddenly becomes clear that the genre has accumulated quite a bit of support and momentum, that it is becoming organized on a rather broad scale and that, from here on, it will be pretty hard to sweep under the carpet. In short, new music is now an institution.

Of course, this particular institution was never intended to be one. It was more often



William Hellermann performing "Squeak," a careful, intricate piece for rocking chair and rocker.

thought of as a guerrilla unit, or a collection of guerrilla units. After all, a place devoted to new music and video, and having no intentions whatever of selling food, does not name itself "The Kitchen" if it is looking forward to the day when it will be well established and when the name will be a constant source of public confusion. Yet for better or worse, the Kitchen, along with the And/Or Gallery in Seattle, Real Art Ways in Hartford, 1750 Arch Street in San Francisco, and all the others, is not just a guerrilla unit anymore. It is clear that such places are now being administered quite professionally by people who know how to raise funds, know how to work together, and even know how to put on a trade show. Most of the groups represented are now stable enough to think two seasons ahead instead of one, solvent enough to consider taking on rather grandiose projects, and able to make decisions that will have signifi-

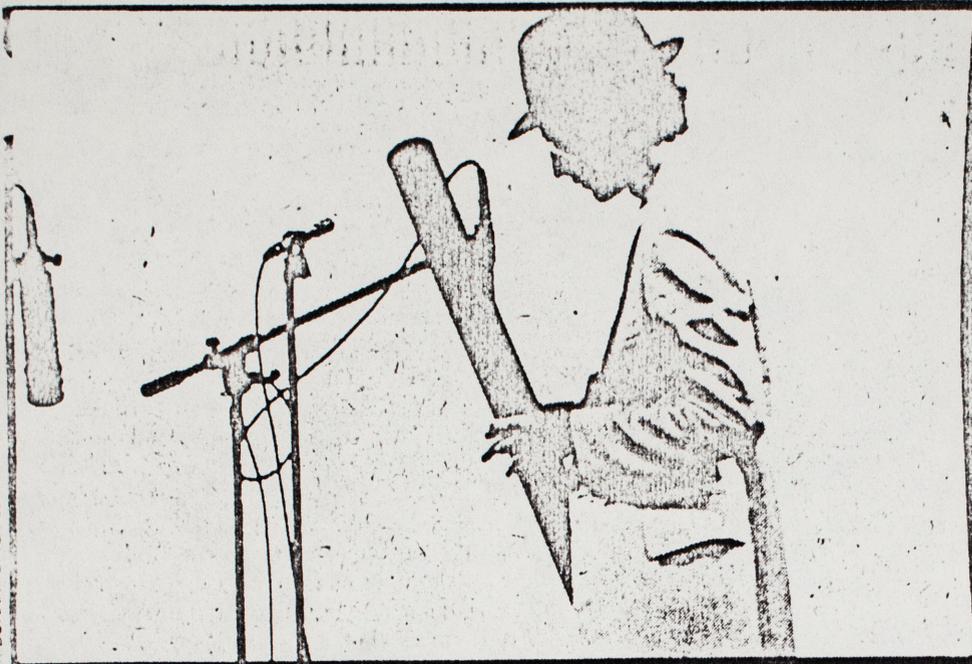
cant impact on the history of music. At the same time, they are becoming significant targets for all kinds of criticism, and must now be ready for the blows that will inevitably come from left-out composers, irate consumers, and competing artistic categories. They, like the composers they present, can no longer hide along the fringes of American culture.

This situation raises a number of questions, several of which were expressed emphatically by composer Ivan Tcherepnin: "Is the conference showing that it is responsible in face of the problems which are choking the western world—oppression, collusion, passed bucks, control, enslavement, greed, self-indulgence and waste? Are its participants not facing the danger of being seen as Collaborators, by the underground? Is not the stand being taken, viz. to 'establish' the Experimental music scene and provide an endowment for its sustenance also tying the

participants into the system, which will eventually incorporate it? Was not one of its functions its independence from such poisonous tendencies? Isn't there an implicit complicity with Big Business and Government involvement here?"

Many would say that the greatest value of avant-garde work throughout this century has resided in its subversive nature. Questioning bourgeois values, raising political issues, redefining art, throwing stones. Many experimental musicians and performers of the whole movement, now exist in a greenhouse of their own. The milieu has changed and the term "avant-garde" seems less and less appropriate.

Laurie Anderson's work had never pressed me much before, but her three songs from "Americans on the Move" did. Her lyrics have something to say, the music is inven-



Some of the music was resolutely secular: David van Tieghem with toy instruments

she uses electric violin in unique ways, and her singing and general charisma are hard to beat. Some were speculating that, with the help of a good record producer, she could emerge as the '80s' answer to Patti Smith.

"Blue" Gene Tyranny presented the only political statement of the festival, unless there happened to be another one on the June 9 concert, which I had to miss. Tyranny's "The White Night Riot" is an expertly mixed collage of documentary recordings and electronic effects, with some simple staging involving two men who walk around slowly, eyeing one another. The subject is Harvey Milk.

One of the biggest surprises for me was the realization that there's now a fairly distinct generation gap within experimental music. Perhaps I should have noticed this before, but I still tend to think in terms of the artists who have been making it for some time. Reich and Glass, Ashley, Behrman, Lucier, Mumma, Mo:k, Corner, were all represented, and aesthetic similarities can be observed among all the composers of their generation. But the festival also included a number of musicians in their twenties or early thirties, and in them I began to hear a somewhat different set of similarities. The older group derived much from Cage and almost nothing from popular culture, while the younger

ballads, this composer from Texas and New Mexico set them to an old-fashioned modal melody of his own devising, and sang the results himself. His singing ability is marginal and there was no accompaniment to cover it up, and yet the long ballad was quite convincing.

Another contrast which began to interest me had to do with the religious and the secular. Of course, this is not the sort of context where one is likely to encounter religious titles or hear settings of actual religious texts. Specific references of that sort always become denominational in some way, and new music audiences are not nearly homogeneous enough to enable one to make denominational statements without offending someone. Still, religious instincts make themselves felt in all human societies, and they have had much to do with the evolution of experimental music. Composers, perhaps more often than their contemporaries in any of the other arts, have been quite aware of spiritual values.

Pauline Oliveros is a case in point. On the opening night of the festival, she came on stage and simply offered a few brief instructions to the audience. "Sing a tone on one breath, sing someone else's tone on the next breath, and continue in this way." Then she just closed her eyes and waited. It was an act of faith, and an uncooperative audience could

vid van Tieghem's toy instruments, Larry Austin's somewhat humorous lecture-as-song, Tony Conrad's shaggy-dog piano piece which ends with the piano being played by a machine, and Jeffrey Lohn's neoclassically structured work for a rock ensemble.

In discussing the concerts with others, I noticed that some listeners tended to derive quite a bit more satisfaction from religious works, while others preferred the more secular, and that many of my own favorite pieces had been of the first type. Most experimental composers, like their audiences, seem to have drifted away from organized religion long ago, but that does not mean that they have abandoned the spiritual. In a way, one might even say that a place like the Kitchen serves as a non-denominational shrine as often as it serves as a place of entertainment.

Philip Corner presented one of his many recent works for gamelan, This one, "Gamelan: Italy Revisited—III," is for four players, and it involves a repeated two-note phrase in which one note gradually becomes longer while the other gradually becomes shorter. Eventually they merge into simultaneity. The work goes on to treat a three-note and a four-note phrase in a similar way. The music is the height of simplicity, yet it is difficult to perform and challenging to follow in detail, and it attains a profound meditative calm.

Joel Chadabe made a strong impression, partly because his latest set-up involves two theremins, partly because it is so interesting to watch him move his arms in and out of the theremins' field of sensitivity, partly because he first explained how the whole rig works, and mostly because his computer responds in a language of rich sounds, well-chosen harmonies, and exceptional variety.

Some participants asked why this collection of experimental music did not include more work from the jazz tradition, much of which is as innovative as anything in the classical avant-garde. Despite the performances by Cherry, Jeanne Lee, and George Lewis, the festival was clearly weighted toward white musicians, but the reasoning seems to me to have more to do with recent history than with overt racism. As I see it the black-dominated loft jazz scene has evolved right alongside the white-dominated experimental scene throughout this decade. Loft jazz has been quite visible and successful in its own way, and for an institution like the

heard. I have frequently written about this, but of course, such a point never comes across in print as strongly as it can in an actual demonstration. Those who do not follow music activity very closely seemed quite surprised to discover that almost none of the work resembled the familiar Reich and Glass models by which the genre is often defined.

Jon Gibson played better than I have ever heard him play before. His circular breathing was fully under control, and his soprano saxophone sound was really sumptuous. His new work, "Crisis Cross," is a rather fast white-note piece that is of some interest in itself, but with unaccompanied pieces of this sort, it is the performing that really counts.

Gordon Mumma presented his "Schoolwork," playing his musical saw along with Ned Sublette's melodica and Joe Hannan's bowed psalter, and the high sustained sounds of these instruments produced remarkable blends, as well as occasional difference tones. The piece is conceived as a kind of folk music, since there is no score, and the work can only be learned firsthand, by working with someone who already knows it.

As listeners confronted unfamiliar samples of meditation music, unfamiliar instruments, unfamiliar types of electronic music, and unfamiliar performance styles, they seemed on the verge of giving up the search for any unity or cohesiveness in the genre. As a result I found myself trying to figure out what characteristics were shared by all of this music.

There are actually quite a few. None of the works here climaxed in anything like the usual sense. None involved a dialectic between two opposing sets of material. The vast preponderance of the work was tonal or modal rather than atonal. Most of the works involved elementary performance skills, and only a few could be considered virtuoso pieces in the usual practice-five-hours-a-day sense. Most of the pieces were not notated on conventional music staves, and often could not have been, due to the nature of the materials. In almost all cases the composers performed their own works. Many of these points had been emphasized by John Rockwell, who organized the music critics' institute, moderated many of the panels, and played an important role throughout the 10 days.

The music itself was up and down, as large programs of music usually are. The low

who have been making it for some time. Reich and Glass; Ashley, Behrman, Lucier, Mumma, Molk, Corner, were all represented, and aesthetic similarities can be observed among all the composers of their generation. But the festival also included a number of musicians in their twenties or early thirties, and in them I began to hear a somewhat different set of similarities. The older group derived much from Cage and almost nothing from popular culture, while the younger group almost reverses these priorities. While the song form is almost never used by the older composers, it occurred several times in works by the younger ones. While the older group tends to play synthesizers, homemade electronic devices, piano, or other standard instruments, the younger group is more likely to be involved with electric guitars or with some of the performance art trend of the '70s. The influence of Eastern philosophy is far more apt to be felt in the older group, while loud volumes are somewhat more common among the younger.

It is not really a question of accessibility. One could hear rather severe approaches in the older composers like Corner, but Rhys Chathan, 26, is equally severe in his current work, in which the relentless restriking of drums and guitar strings is varied only by subtle changes in the way the harmonics are allowed to ring out in the high register. And if Don Cherry was able to please just about everyone with his friendly manner as he sang and accompanied himself on an African stringed instrument, Peter Gordon, 28, reached everyone with a good old-fashioned tenor sax solo, played against a hard-rocking pretaped accompaniment with idiosyncratic chord changes.

Phill Niblock's music came off extremely well. Eight tracks of prerecorded oboe and bassoon tones, all slightly out of phase, beat wildly against the live oboeist and bassoonist who wandered around the space. Niblock's music is purely sonic, with no actual melodies harmonies, or rhythms, and the importance of these massive sonorities is becoming clearer and clearer.

Ned Sublette did a strange and rather courageous thing. Having found a set of lyrics related to the Sublette family in a collection of frontier

than their contemporaries in any of the other arts, have been quite aware of spiritual values.

Pauline Oliveros is a case in point. On the opening night of the festival, she came on stage and simply offered a few brief instructions to the audience. "Sing a tone on one breath, sing someone else's tone on the next breath, and continue in this way." Then she just closed her eyes and waited. It was an act of faith, and an uncooperative audience could easily have ruined the whole thing, and yet, as the gorgeous choral texture began to rise very gradually out of the audience, it began to seem almost impossible that any thing could go wrong. There was something irresistible about her, about her belief, and about how she was able to somehow plug herself, and us, into an almost cosmic experience. The result was not really a Buddhist statement, and certainly not a Christian one, and yet it was a devotional act. Something mystical, something superhuman seemed to be controlling that performance, and even those who would rather not think about such things were respectful of the atmosphere that took over the space. As the last voices were dropping out, after perhaps 10 minute of this unrehearsed chanting, the room fell into an extraordinary peacefulness.

As the week progressed, I began to hear other works in religious terms. Annea Lockwood's prerecorded mixture of natural sounds seemed like a clearcut example. Alvin Lucier often refers to his work as a kind of alchemy, and it does seem to involve a semi-mystical manipulation of electronic phenomena. The random structures in the excerpt from Petr Kotik's "Many Many Women" and the rational permutations of Jon Gibson's work also seem connected with higher forces. And Charlie Morrow's contribution, in which he chanted for a few minutes and then told us what visions he had had during his chant, was an overt case of trusting powers outside human control.

On the other hand, much of the repertoire seemed clearly secular. These pieces are rooted in the here and now, and convey greater respect for human skills than for outside forces. A few examples might be Jon Deak's one-man-band act, Jill Kroesen's songs, Da-

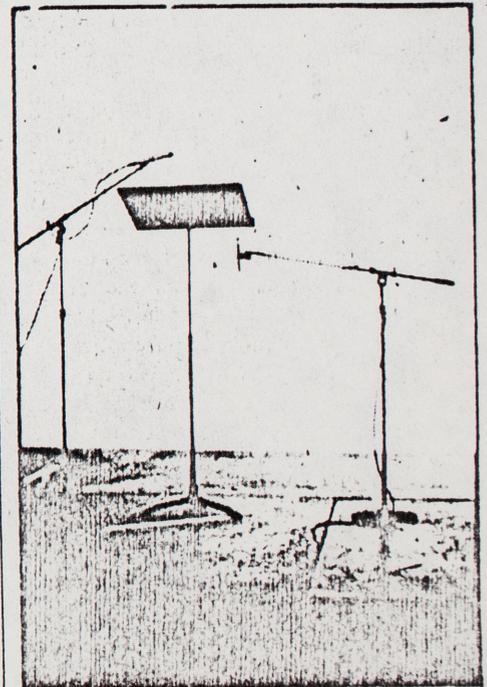
classical avant-garde. Despite the performances by Cherry, Jeanne Lee, and George Lewis, the festival was clearly weighted toward white musicians, but the reasoning seems to me to have more to do with recent history than with overt racism. As I see it the black-dominated loft jazz scene has evolved right alongside the white-dominated experimental scene throughout this decade. Loft jazz has been quite visible and successful in its own way, and for an institution like the Kitchen at attempt to take this genre under its own wing would be far more patronizing than constructive. Moreover, I am beginning to feel that the most important racial issues go beyond black Americans vs. white Americans to involve a lot of other groups. A truly ecumenical festival of new music in New York would have to include some of the klezmer musicians I wrote about two weeks ago, along with shakuhachi players, khamancheh players, Irish groups, Balkan groups, and so on.

Brian Eno sparked off other controversies. This articulate figure from the rock world, who took part in two panel discussions as well as presenting an informative lecture called "The Recording Studio as Compositional Tool," began the week somewhat arrogantly. He told us that experimental music involves too much intellect and not enough sensuality, that creating charisma is a useful and even necessary thing, and that experimental composers should think more about marketing their work. By the end of the week he had admitted that works which were not sensual for him might still be sensual for someone else, was soft-pedaling the charisma theme, and seemed to agree that music should not be considered merely a commodity. On the other hand, much of Eno's practical point of view did seem to be getting across. It would have been difficult for any composer attending those sessions not to concede that, as Eno points out, the phonograph record, rather than the public concert, is the major means of musical communication today. The exchange proved useful on both sides.

But what seemed to make the strongest impression on festival audiences was the sheer diversity of the experimental music they

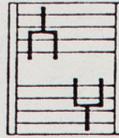
not have been, due to the nature of the materials. In almost all cases the composers performed their own works. Many of these points had been emphasized by John Rockwell, who organized the music critics' institute, moderated many of the panels, and played an important role throughout the 10 days.

The music itself was up and down, as large programs of music usually are. The low points occasionally made me wonder if the artists in question were really ready for this kind of exposure, but more often they reflected the restrictions inherent in the festival situation. With the small stage, the 15-minute time allotment, the low budget, and the need to set up and break down quickly, the conditions presented obvious difficulties for composers who work best with large ensembles, large timespans, large budgets, or large conglomerations of equipment. Still, the vast majority of the music was professional and provocative, and not a single piece struck me as imitative of something else. I think the genre will survive quite well, even as an institution.



DEBORAH FEINGOLD

Joan La Barbara



About a half hour's drive north of Los Angeles one arrives at the hills of Valencia, the edge of the desert where the land has a raw quality and one can experience the aliveness of this planet in the places where the earth has cracked and shifted, leaving huge shelves of rock jutting at odd angles toward the sky. It is a perfect setting for an adventure into newness, and in late spring was the site of Contemporary Music Festival '79. This event is the continuation of a dream conceived at California Institute of the Arts for a traveling festival of contemporary music connecting the entire West Coast, a dream shared and co-sponsored by the Universities of California at San Diego and of Nevada at Las Vegas. Hopefully it will expand to include northern California and the Pacific Northwest.

The opening weekend of events held throughout the CalArts complex had a magical excitement, with the contemporary chamber groups of each school (San Diego's SONOR, directed by Bernard Rands; Las Vegas Chamber Players, directed by Virko Baley; and CalArts Twentieth Century Players, directed by Morton Subotnick) cooperating with a host of guest artists to produce a delightful set of concerts in a truly joyful atmosphere.

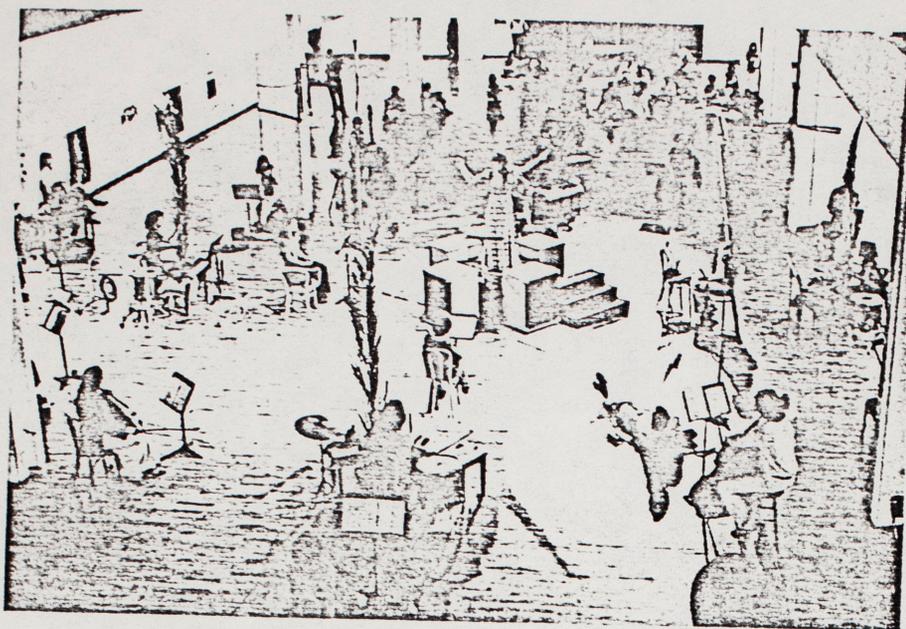


Los Angeles' Mayor Tom Bradley declares "Elliott Carter Day," with the composer in attendance

Elliott Carter, who in his seventieth year appears to have entered a period of the continuous celebration of his life by a country that has just begun to recognize the wealth of creative talent born within its shores, spent a week as visiting artist. April 27 was declared Elliott Carter Day in the City of Los Angeles, and a concert of his music that same evening included the West Coast premiere of *Syringa*, juxtaposing fragments of Greek texts against John Ashbery's complex poem of the legend of Orpheus, set for mezzo-soprano, bass, and chamber ensemble. It was superbly performed by guest vocalists Barbara Martin and Thomas Paul, with a faculty-and-guest ensemble. Cellist Robert Martin and pianist Daniel Shulman gave a brilliant performance of the intricate and difficult Sonata for Cello (1948), imbuing their impressive technical precision with romance and warmth.

Throughout the weekend the audience could choose from an array of events. There was an eight-speaker representation of the original four-hundred-speakered production of Edgard Varèse's *Poème électronique*; continuing performances by the improvisation group KIVA from San Diego, mixing an assortment of percussion, electronics, invented instruments, and the sinuous movements of a trance dancer; Subotnick's *Game Room* installation in which participants cause a subtly shifting array of electronic sounds and films to collage by placing small steel cylinders on a chess-like board; mini-concerts of individual works in separate rooms, including Roger Reynolds' *Voicespace: I, Still*, a mood work employing the skills of the Extended Vocal Techniques Ensemble (EVTE) on tape to produce a mysterious sense of coldness, death rattles, and desolation; Loren Rush's *soft music, HARD MUSIC*, exploring the pitch and percussive possibilities of the piano; and a wide assortment of electronic works.

Most of the formal concerts took place in the Modular Theatre and included an impressive number of world premieres. Mel Powell produced his first composition in nine years, the delicate, spacious, and beautiful *Settings* for soprano and chamber group [see comments following this article]. EVTE sang William Brooks' *Four Madrigals*, a collection of new and old vocal techniques exploring resonance areas, extreme ranges and dynamics and performance styles. Stephen Mosko's *Night of the Long Knives* explored the theatrical as-



Pauline Oliveros' *El Relicario de los Animales*, in its premiere, was a "ritual performance of magnetic power"

pect of a detached and disturbed personality on the same program with Virko Baley's *Words—VII*, a setting of Sylvia Plath's somber death poetry in dark, dolorous colors, both works skillfully performed by soprano Carol Plantamura with SONOR.

Morton Subotnick's *Parallel Lines* for solo piccolo and chamber ensemble draws an almost orchestral sound from the eight instruments. The piccolo sound is processed and altered by means of electronics controlled by a "ghost" tape which has no sound of its own and is audible as a presence only when the instrument is played. There is an eeriness about the beginning, as the piccolo, centering on a single pitch, produces an undulating, chantlike warble that moves back and forth between left and right speakers while the other instruments provide shimmering textures that move without the use of electronics. There is a feeling of anticipation as all sounds begin to flutter and break into an energetic turmoil punctuated by strong rhythmic figures, moving into a sense of excitement, of emergence, as the butterfly discards its cage after the struggle, shakes the watery droplets from its wings, and begins to flutter tremulously. It is a work of almost mystical beauty. And Lawrence Trott's serene, controlled and skillful playing made the difficult piccolo lines seem effortless.

Performed in the Main Gallery, Pauline Oliveros' *El Relicario de los Animales* was a ritual offering of magnetic power, sensuality, and serenity with singer Carol Plantamura as a kind of goddess slowly turning on a pedestal in the center of a mandala of musicians, calling, crying, growling, and wailing at her command. The signaling of conch shells punctuated by the sharp clack of stones gathered the musicians into the performance circle, and as the spellbound audience watched from the balcony above and all round, the atmosphere metamorphosed into a jungle complete with huge dried palm fronds, shaking as if a dry wind had blown them open, permitting us to experience a sacred ceremony. It ended as it had begun, with the signaling of the shells moving the participants gradually away to the departing and ever more distant cries of the ancient horns.