

Opera in honor of Mandeville Center

February 18, 1985

A brilliant young composer and instrumentalist is the author of an opera which was commissioned for University of California, San Diego musicians in honor of the 10th anniversary of the Mandeville Center, the building which houses classrooms for the departments of music and visual arts, an auditorium, a recital hall, offices, studios, and the Mandeville Art Gallery.

Anthony Braxton of New Haven, Conn., has written a complex opera for orchestra, chorus and six vocal soloists who are paired with six improvising instrumentalists. "Trillium" is a natural outgrowth of Braxton's life as an improviser and composer, according to UCSD professor of music Cecil Lytle.

"The work relies heavily on the creative juices of singers who are supplied with a traditionally notated score, and improv musicians who are given decorative diagrams and numerology to serve as guidelines," he said.

The opera will be premiered at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 16. A second performance will be given on Sunday at 3 p.m. Performances will take place in the Mandeville Auditorium.

Braxton is from Chicago, and it was there that he encountered other musicians who together formed the Chicago Art Ensemble. His recordings have won the Prix-de-Rome, and he has won first place on the "Downbeat" polls on several occasions.

Braxton first toured Europe in 1968, and found the climate so stimulating that he stayed in Paris for five years. His first touring and recording affiliation there was with artists such as Leo Smith, Leroy Jenkins and drummer Steve McCall. Later affiliations found him teamed with pianist Chick Corea, bassist Dave Holland and drummer Barry Altschul, in the band "Circle." The group recorded three award-winning albums, toured Europe and America together, and taught classes at the University of California, Davis.

Teaching is an important part of Braxton's career, he says. "One of the problems that has surrounded trans-African teaching techniques has been the misinformation that has solidified in the educational system, as well as the media. I find teaching to be an important vehicle for expressing all kinds of different ways of looking at music."

During the 1980s Braxton has continued to explore new musical frontiers. His duet album with Max Roach, "Birth and Rebirth," won the Italian Jazz Society's album of the year award. He has received a Guggenheim Fellowship for composition, and won an National Endowment for the Arts grant for his creative orchestral work.

Braxton will be at UCSD for the month of March.

(February 18, 1985) For more information contact: Alixandra Williams, 452-3120